

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ETHICS**

JUNE 28, 2022

9:30 AM

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

[9:32:26 AM](#)

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Conner Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and welcomed the audience and committee members, taking special care to welcome new Alternate Public Member Jerry McBeath.

Conner Thomas directed Jerry Anderson to conduct roll call.

Roll Call

Representative Sara Hannan (telephonic)

Representative DeLena Johnson

H. Conner Thomas, Chair

Deborah Fancher

Dennis "Skip" Cook (telephonic)

Joyce M. Anderson

Gerald McBeath, Alternative Public Member

Quorum present.

Representative Cathy Tilton announced that she was present telephonically. Conner Thomas asked if there was anyone else online that had not been identified. No response was heard.

Conner Thomas identified the other persons in the room:

Jerry Anderson

Jacqui Yeagle

Representative David Eastman

Mario Bird

Conner Thomas asked committee members and guests to identify themselves each time they speak for the benefit of others. He stated that he expected the meeting to last one to 1½ hours.

[9:35:09 AM](#)

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Conner Thomas directed attention to the agenda and entertained a motion for approval.

Motion made by: Skip Cook.

Conner Thomas entertained objections. There were no objections. The agenda was approved.

Conner Thomas stated that the situation was unique in that the House Subcommittee would be considering two complaints against two different legislators. Both subjects had waived confidentiality.

The subcommittee will address the preliminary examination stage of the complaint process, which is to determine whether the allegations in the complaint, if true, would be a violation of the Legislative Ethics Act AS 24.60. If not, the complaint would be dismissed. If so, the Subcommittee will adopt a scope of investigation and have an investigator proceed to investigate the allegations in the complaint. He said he would outline to the extent he could without compromising confidentiality with respect to the possible witnesses. After deliberations in executive session, the subcommittee would announce the outcome on the record in public session.

Conner Thomas summarized the complaints:

On 4/14/22 and 4/15/22, an unregistered lobbyist for an organization visited the Alaska State Capitol with the stated intent to distribute signed petitions to the legislature. He and his assistant apparently used the offices of two different legislators as his "base of operations" spending more than half a day in a representative's office, and almost a full day and part of the evening in Representative Eastman's office. The other representative, who has also waived confidentiality, is Representative Christopher Kurka. During that time, he was visiting other offices to lobby legislators and intimidate staffers. No other lobbyist would be allowed to do this and certainly no activist. Both Mr. Kurka and Mr. Eastman and their staffs were present at the time, and it is unknown if

he was allowed to use computers or telephones. Allowing an aggressive activist and lobbyist to use your office as his base of operating in the Capitol is a misuse of State resources IAW AS 24.60.030(a)(2).

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Conner Thomas opened the meeting to public comment and stated that public comments are limited to three minutes. He added that it is not the time to address the allegations in the complaint.

15:34

Mario Bird introduced himself and stated that he was representing Representative Eastman and Representative Kurka. He referenced documents he had submitted to the committee on behalf of the representatives and said that he would rest on the briefs, but highlighted at the request of his client AS 24.60.170(c), which says a proceeding conducted under this subsection, (he stated he understood the proceeding of the day to be the preliminary hearing) are to be confidential unless the subject of the complaint waives confidentiality as provided in subsection (1). Confidentiality has been waived for purposes of transparency and because his clients believe this is a frivolous complaint.

Mario Bird stated that after talking with Mr. Anderson, he understands the committee would likely move to executive session and that he and Representative Eastman would be asked to leave the room and stated for the record that both clients wanted to be present for the deliberations to make themselves available to the committee.

Conner Thomas asked committee members if there were questions. There were no questions for Mario Bird.

Conner Thomas asked committee members if there were any other comments.

4. COMPLAINT H 22-02 REPRESENTATIVE DAVID EASTMAN

5. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION into Executive Session

Hearing no objection, Conner Thomas closed public comment and entertained a motion to move to executive session to discuss matters which by law must remain confidential under AS 24.60.160, Uniform Rule 22(b) regarding executive sessions, and Rules of Procedure Section 5 Executive Sessions and discussion of matters, the immediate knowledge of would adversely affect the finances of a governmental unit, and discussion of subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of a person.

Joyce Anderson so moved.

Hearing no objection, Conner Thomas opened executive session and asked members of the public to leave the conference room.

18:40

[9:43:30 AM](#)

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

[10:48:51 AM](#)

7. PUBLIC SESSION

Conner Thomas called the meeting back to order. He announced the committee had concluded deliberations and they had decided the complaint[s] were in proper form, that they had jurisdiction in the matter, and the complaint[s] were] filed within the time limits. The complaint[s] allege specific and credible allegations, which if true, would amount to violations of the Ethics Act. The committee decided to proceed with a scope of investigation, which is not a determination of whether there has been a violation. That determination will be made at a future hearing after the investigation[s].

Conner Thomas stated that committee business for the day was concluded.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Conner Thomas entertained other business.

Hearing no other business, Conner Thomas entertained a motion to adjourn.

9. ADJOURN

Motion made by: Joyce Anderson

There were no objections.

Conner Thomas adjourned the meeting.

[10:50:03 AM](#)

ADJOURN: