

# NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## Minutes of the

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 24, 1999  
Roughrider Room, State Capitol  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Larry J. Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**Members present:** Senators Larry J. Robinson, Ken Solberg, Rod St. Aubyn; Representatives Mary Ekstrom, Doug Lemieux, Blair Thoreson; Chief Information Officer Jim Heck

**Member absent:** Representative Robin Weisz

**Others present:** See attached appendix

Chairman Robinson called on Mr. Jay E. Buringrud, Assistant Director, Legislative Council, to review a memorandum entitled *Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Council*. He said the supplementary rules were revised and approved by the Legislative Council in November 1998. Although this committee is statutorily established and has specific duties and responsibilities set out by statute, he said, the committee operates under the same rules of procedure as other interim committees.

Chairman Robinson said the legislative branch has made a comprehensive effort to examine information technology on a statewide basis during the last two interims. He said 1997 House Bill No. 1034 set the stage for information technology planning in the state and last interim's Information Technology Committee continued to review the information technology resources and needs of the state. Although information technology will be in a constant state of transition, he said, state government must be proactive and must manage technology. He said this committee is a partnership with the executive branch to address information technology concerns.

Chairman Robinson called on committee counsel to present a memorandum entitled *Information Technology - Background Memorandum*.

Chairman Robinson called on Mr. Jim Heck, Chief Information Officer, for an overview of the services of the Information Services Division and the transition to the Information Technology Department. Mr. Heck submitted a written document summarizing his presentation, a copy of which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Heck said the Information Services Division will become the Information Technology Department on August 1, 1999. He said the budget for the Information Technology Department for the 1999-2001 biennium is \$49,659,295, including \$250,000 of general fund moneys. He said the department is authorized to employ 169 full-time employees and has

two temporary positions authorized. In addition, he said, the department will likely continue to contract with approximately 23 contract personnel. He said the Information Services Division provides computer center services, desktop support, application development, telephone services, network services, technology planning, security, records management, and micrographics for state agencies. He said the Information Technology Department will be completing an outline of its business plan to present to this committee. In addition, he said, the department will be prepared to present information technology plan guidelines to the committee by August. He said the department will be prepared to present a final draft of its business plan to this committee in October. He said agency information technology plans will be due in January 2000.

In response to a question from Senator Robinson, Mr. Heck said the Governor is conducting a search process for the position of chief information officer. He said Mr. Mike Ressler will likely serve as an interim chief information officer until the Governor makes an appointment to that position.

Ms. Nancy Walz, Information Services Division, reviewed written documents relating to the statewide information technology plan. The documents, which are entitled *Executive Summary - Vision for Information Technology* and *Issues and Recommendations* are on file in the Legislative Council office.

Ms. Walz said the four general components that form the nucleus of the statewide vision for information technology are:

1. State government should be customer-focused.
2. State government should be efficient.
3. State government should be well-managed.
4. State government should provide the leadership for developing a shared infrastructure.

In response to a question from Senator St. Aubyn, Ms. Walz said the policy of reviewing all technology purchases over \$1,000 is conducted through the same process used by Central Purchasing for other state agency purchases. She said the review process is often handled within one day.

In response to a question from Senator Robinson, Ms. Walz said the volume of purchase approval requests is not a problem. She said the process has worked well.

In response to a question from Representative Ekstrom, Ms. Walz said sometimes federal laws or regulations may preclude state agencies from disclosing certain information. Therefore, she said, the agencies may not share certain data with other state agencies or make it available to the public which affects the ability of agencies to coordinate their information technology systems and share information.

In response to a question from Senator Solberg, Ms. Walz said the new guidelines and the information technology plans that must be completed by January 2000 will represent a substantial change from the plans developed during the last interim. However, she said, the strategic portion of the plans will not likely involve much change. She said budgeting will be easier in the future and state agencies are aware of the changes that will be required. She said the development of the new information technology plans should provide for more continuity.

In response to a question from Senator Solberg, Mr. Heck said the first planning process was based upon the stated intent of the Legislative Assembly and was a good start. He said the subsequent planning process will enhance the first plan and improve the process.

Mr. Heck said the goals of the expansion of the statewide area network are to reduce the total cost by aggregating demand, to equalize costs, and to have the state government as an anchor tenant. He said the existing services provided by the state include telephone, data network, and video services. He said the statewide area network must provide flexibility for agencies, provide network security, and provide citizen delivery service or e-government.

Mr. Heck said state agencies are continuing to make progress and are very close to completing their year 2000 (Y2K) compliance projects. He said 26 percent of all agencies have completed their Y2K projects and 70 percent have completed 80 percent or more of their project work. In addition, he said, the state has distributed 150,000 Y2K informational brochures as an insert with motor vehicle license and registration renewals. He said the Information Services Division hosts monthly meetings with all agency Y2K project managers to provide a forum for exchanging valuable project information. He said 62 agencies have submitted monthly status reports and 14 agencies have completed their Y2K project efforts and have submitted good-faith compliance letters. He said only two agencies--the Division of Independent Study and the School for the Deaf--have not submitted a status report. He said conversion of mainframe applications software is now 100 percent complete. He said Y2K status reports are posted on the state's Y2K web site.

In response to a question from Senator St. Aubyn, Mr. Heck said the Division of Independent Study and

the School for the Deaf have been contacted regarding their status reports, but the two entities have not responded.

Chairman Robinson requested the Legislative Council staff to contact the Division of Independent Study and the School for the Deaf and request representatives of those entities to report to the committee at the next meeting of the committee regarding their Y2K status.

Mr. Heck said the committee may consider defining the role of the chief information officer with respect to service on this committee. The assistant director said the chief information officer is a member of the committee but does not have voting privileges. He said the chief information officer can work with the Legislative Council staff in developing agenda items and presenting reports at future meetings.

Senator Solberg requested the chief information officer to provide a report to the committee at the next meeting regarding updates and reviews of major information technology projects as provided for in North Dakota Century Code Section 54-35-15.2.

Mr. Heck said the Information Services Division will prepare a list of all projects and provide a status report to the committee before the next meeting so that the committee members can identify any specific projects that they may want to examine closer.

**It was moved by Senator St. Aubyn, seconded by Representative Thoreson, and carried on a voice vote that the committee follow the proposed study approach presented in the background memorandum, and include periodic year 2000 preparedness updates from state agencies.**

Senator St. Aubyn requested the Legislative Council staff to report to the committee at the next meeting regarding federal legislation limiting year 2000 liability for private businesses.

Chairman Robinson thanked Mr. Heck for 40 years of service to the state and wished him well in his retirement. There being no further business, Chairman Robinson adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

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John D. Bjornson  
Counsel

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Jay E. Buringrud  
Assistant Director

ATTACH:1