

MINUTES OF THE
MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPUTER APPLICATION
TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

November 10, 1998

A regular meeting of the Legislative Commission's Subcommittee on Computer Application to the Legislative Process (SCALP) (NRS 218.682) was called to order by Acting Chairman, Lynn Hettrick, at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 10, 1998, in Room 4100 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada, and was simultaneously video conferenced to the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, Room 4412.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Lynn Hettrick, Acting Chairman

Senator Bob Coffin

Senator William O'Donnell

Senator Dean A. Rhoads

Assemblyman Bernie Anderson

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Ellen M. Koivisto (Excused)

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU (LCB) STAFF PRESENT:

Lorne J. Malkiewich, Director

Steve Watson, Chief Deputy Director

Allan Smith, Manager, Information Systems (IS)

Brian Bunin, Internet Systems, Information Systems

Marilyn Maxfield, Administrative Assistant, Information Systems

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jack D. Close, Sr.

Robert Stoldal, Las Vegas One

A packet was provided to the subcommittee members and is attached as Exhibit A.

Mr. Hettrick announced:

Unfortunately Assemblyman Close lost the election in his bid for a Senate seat. In such event, subcommittee rules require that the next member of the same party and house to resume the Chairmanship. Therefor I will be Acting Chairman until further notice.

Mr. Close addressed the members:

Although I no longer share the responsibilities, I take this opportunity to express the importance of the accomplishments of this subcommittee. Despite accusations from my opponent of being a spendthrift for buying laptop computers for the legislators, and the expenditure of approximately \$400,000 to bring video capability to Las Vegas, if I had it to do again, I would do the same.

I believe it is critical that we bring the legislature into the next century being computer literate and get away from the paper trails which are slow and methodical, and not always accurate. There have been problems with the computer system, however challenges and detours are always experienced when we undertake travel in a new direction. Side trips were made and we learned from our mistakes. We have done this with good intentions for the citizens of Nevada. Hindsight tells us it could have been done smarter, but knowledge was gained through the process.

As a citizen, I pledge my continuing commitment to improving the computerization process for the legislators. Many legislators who never imagined they would use a laptop computer have done so. The press was incorrect in reporting that very few legislators used their laptop computer. On the contrary; the majority did use them. More legislators will utilize the computers in the future and will make the process more efficient and to assist in completion of legislative sessions within the allotted 120 days. Therefore I support the subcommittee and will assist in any way.

I wish to express my thanks to each one of you for your friendship. The greatest difficulty in departing is leaving behind the friendships. My feelings are sincere, especially to the staff, whose absence would make it impossible to do our job. My appreciation to all the staff members.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you and wish you God speed in your work. Thank you.

Mr. Hettrick expressed that the feeling is mutual among the subcommittee members.

Mr. Anderson commented:

Mr. Close and Senator O'Donnell are the only members of this subcommittee who were present from the beginning of the computer upgrade. Both were instrumental in accomplishing this task within a short period of time, which took other state legislatures several years to complete. Without Mr. Close's vision, hard work and persistence the achievements of the subcommittee could not have been realized.

It was a loss to the Assembly when Mr. Close decided to run for the Senate. I have enjoyed serving with him, on this subcommittee and others, and the legislature will benefit from the time and effort he has given. There is an old saying - You can always tell the leaders in any group because they are the ones with arrows in their back. Mr. Close is indeed a leader because he has the arrows and bruises to show it. From me, thank you.

Senator Coffin added:

Seldom are we given the opportunity to have a former member of a subcommittee before us to receive the appropriate humiliation that follows his departure. The Close family has been true public servants in southern Nevada for many years. Politics is a family tradition that I hope will continue. The political career of Mr. Close is not over, but rather this is a richly-deserved hiatus for

him to dedicate time to church, family and business before returning to politics.

Mr. Close did a wonderful job leading this. We served together on the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) and subsequent joint money committees. I have always admired his tenacity, questioning of witnesses, thorough analysis of problems, and pragmatic problem-solving solutions. A great big thank you from all of us.

Senator Rhoads added:

A long time ago, I served in the legislature with Jack's brother, Mel. My first acquaintance with Jack was on IFC and various money committees. I was impressed at the manner in which he did his homework and his attention to detail when answering questions, without being verbose and wasting the committee's time. I was most disappointed when learning that Jack lost the election because I was looking forward to serving with him in the Senate. It saddens me to see a man with such qualifications forced to sit back and be a private citizen. However, I hope he will run again at the appropriate time in the future. I will miss him.

Mr. Hettrick expressed:

I know I speak for both the legislature and staff when saying, thank you, Jack, for a tremendous job. I have never seen a subcommittee run smoother and accomplish more than this one. I also have the greatest respect for your work on the Ways and Means Committee, where no one was better prepared or more knowledgeable. Please attend the legislature often, e-mail us, and allow us to take advantage of, and be better informed by, your input and expertise. You will definitely be missed.

Item I--Approval of minutes from meeting of September 29, 1998.

ASSEMBLYMAN ANDERSON MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 29, 1998. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR COFFIN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item II--Review and discussion on purchase of laptop computers.

Mr. Smith reviewed Exhibit B:

This is a list of the laptop computers reviewed by Information Systems. The primary features considered were screen size, weight, and battery life. The Panasonic CF-41 model is currently used by the legislators. With the exception of two models, the screens are 14-inch displays. Battery life, for the most part, is in the two-plus hour range, with two exceptions - one with four hours on a single battery, and the remainder close to a 3-hour range. Most of the models are 9 to 11 pounds (one is almost 12 pounds). All the models, to some extent, fit the criteria being considered.

Underlined on are the items which eliminate some from consideration. Price is underlined on the first three models. However, the NEC model in the \$4,100 range was considered because of its light travel weight.

Listed in bold print:

- Hewlett Packard Omnibook 4100
- Dell Inspiron 7000

- IBM Thinkpad 770ED
- Tangent

Of these four models, two were considered best to meet the needs of the legislature.

The Omnibook 4100 is by far the lightest in weight of the laptop computers under consideration. It is slim and sleek in appearance and as easy to handle as a small binder. Battery life is within desired tolerances and it has a 14-inch screen. There is a choice of a track pad (the little square pad on which the finger is placed), or a track point (which resembles an eraser in the middle of the keyboard).

The Dell Inspiron 7000, while a heavier unit, has more features and a longer battery life. Included in the price is the combo CD/floppy drive. This feature eliminates removal of one drive to insert another and both drives can be inserted at the same time. However, the second battery is inserted into that location, should it be used.

Available on the Omnibook 4100 and the Dell Inspiron 7000 is a feature that allows a mouse to be plugged.

Responding to Senator Rhoads question Mr. Smith answered:

The laptop computer presently used by the legislators, with battery and adapter, weighs about 12 pounds.

Senator Coffin interjected:

The laptop computer presently used by the legislators is 13.75 pounds, which includes the case, which is 2 pounds, the converter, and the floppy drive insert. It is quite a bit heavier than the models under consideration.

Mr. Bunin responded to Senator Rhoads' question:

The Panasonic CF-41 laptop computer you have now is a lower-end Pentium. The models under consideration are Pentium II, with 266 megahertz, which is 6 to 10 times faster, depending upon the function being performed.

Mr. Smith added:

The Panasonic CF-41 is a Pentium 120 and the models being considered are Pentium 266's.

Mr. Hettrick said:

One issue was the length of time it takes for it to come back on when moving from a committee room to the chambers. The Panasonic takes three to four minutes, or longer, to become operational. The models under consideration are very quick and rapidly operational. We turned them on and off to determine how quickly they booted-up.

Mr. Anderson inquired:

At the last meeting there was a discussion with regards to having these laptop computers available for review by the legislators. Has there been any response from the legislators?

Mr. Smith responded:

They were taken to Las Vegas for demonstration, however, Senator Coffin was the only legislator who attended.

Senator Coffin stated:

I spent 3.5 hours on the proposed laptop computers and as you heard, I was starved for company. I become familiar with the machines' quirks and characteristics, conferred with the staff, and formed an opinion and a choice based upon the features and price.

The fact that few legislators attended the demonstration is unimportant and signifies their trust in this subcommittee to do the right thing.

Mr. Hettrick suggested that many of the legislators may have chosen not to be involved in the selection of laptop computers to avoid being beaten up over the subject again. Mr. Close addressed this in his earlier remarks, and is correct in his statement that the legislature must be brought along with the rest of the world into electronic communication. This subcommittee is attempting to accomplish that task correctly, effectively, and economically.

Mr. Smith stated:

Of the four laptop computers chosen for review by the legislators, Information Systems recommends the Omnibook or the Dell for their price and performance. The Omnibook is favored for its weight and dual pointer, which will make it more usable for the legislators. It is a little more expensive, \$3,900. However, on a lease basis, it would be approximately \$140 per month. The Dell has twice the memory, a built-in modem and a spare battery. The price is approximately \$2,800. It is heavier by 2 pounds and must use an external mouse or the touch-pad pointer. Both have merit and either would be useful to the legislators.

Mr. Bunin added:

I was purposely unaware of prices when testing the laptop computers. The only thing more expensive than purchasing an expensive computer, is buying a computer at any price, that is not used. Consequently, my guiding principal was to find the right laptop computer. All the models are good, however, I recommend the Omnibook 4100 because most individuals will be comfortable using the features. There is a two pound weight difference between the two models, which is an important consideration.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

Did you ascertain any significant difference in speed between the 64 and 32 RAM memory? Many legislators complained about the weight of the Panasonic laptop.

Mr. Bunin replied:

The models are equal in speed. Memory is affected by speed when six, eight, or ten applications are open at once, or when working with a large database file. It is important to note that although the Omnibook shows at 32 megabytes (mg), it is available with 64mg, and can be upgraded to 192mg. Our criteria was 32mg of RAM. None of the other models came with anything but 64mg as their base line. The Omnibook allows more choices. That point was present to save money, but it is possible to add memory should it be required.

Senator Rhoads asked:

Will 32mg be enough memory for the budget information to be put on the laptop?

Mr. Bunin answered:

Yes, 32mg would be sufficient memory, due to several factors:

- (1) The budget will be in Word format within a product called Papermaster, which means that the entire budget will not be loaded into memory at any one time, only certain portions of it.
- (2) The 4 gigabyte hard drive will be sufficient to store whatever is desired.
- (3) Thirty-two (32)mg of memory should be sufficient for e-mail, web browsing, budget, and legislative information.

Senator Coffin asked:

Is memory less expensive if purchased when buying the computers, as opposed to ordering it later? Additional RAM could be purchased later at a decent price should it be needed.

Mr. Bunin replied:

At the present time RAM is a commodity. While money may be saved by purchasing it at the same time as the laptop computer, it might be a mistake to acquire it for all the machines because not everyone will require additional memory.

Senator Coffin queried:

Is it synchronous RAM?

Mr. Bunin answered:

It is synchronous-D RAM.

Senator Coffin remarked:

I calculated a least six to eight moves with it during a legislative day, not including carrying it from place-to-place. Consequently, the added weight is significant, particularly when traveling.

Would the monthly cost be significantly less if the price of the laptop computer is amortized over a longer period of time?

Mr. Smith responded:

Should the laptop computers be purchased through the state, a 2-year lease will be procured. A lease option will save money and will cost approximately \$140 to \$150 per month. However, if one-third of the laptop computers were returned early, the cost would be equal to six or seven months lease, and the state would pick up the remainder of the cost. A legislator can return it after session if they don't want to use it.

Senator Coffin queried:

Are you saying that the state would purchase the laptop computers then the legislature would lease them from the state?

Mr. Smith said that is correct.

Senator Coffin said:

In essence then we would be borrowing from ourselves because we will end up taking that money from the budget of the agency to which the laptop computers are sent.

Mr. Smith said:

That is correct. The same process is done with the desk top computers used during the legislative session, in which case they are purchased by State Purchasing and leased to the legislature. At the end of the legislative session the units not distributed in-house are returned. It is essentially a win-win situation in which the legislature has use of the computers during session, at a reduced cost, then following the session the agencies receiving them are provided good machines at a reduced cost. The laptops would be handled in the same manner.

Senator Coffin said:

I have been informed that there is a demand for laptop computers, so the machines will be returned to service within state agencies.

Mr. Smith noted:

Actually, in lieu of purchasing new touch panels for each committee room, the chairmen might use the touch panel on a laptop computer for voting and speaker communication. State Purchasing will allow only \$800 for each laptop computer, which is another reason for us to keep them.

Senator Coffin summarized:

The cost appears to be a few hundred dollars to lease the laptops from the state for legislators during the legislative session, as opposed to a gross purchase price.

Mr. Smith agreed.

For those legislators who choose to return the laptop computers after session the lease will end. It would continue to be paid for legislators who choose to retain them. The cost would be amortized over multiple fiscal periods, which is more expedient in terms of accounting and bookkeeping.

Senator Coffin asked:

Would it be negotiated with State Purchasing?

Mr. Smith answered:

Yes.

Mr. Anderson inquired:

It is my understanding that in terms of fiscal cost, the laptop computers would be returned to the state to be sold to other agencies, and those dollars would be readmitted into the legislative budget to provide an offset in savings to cover the cost of a lease option. What is the cost impact

should the laptop computers be placed in committee rooms to be utilized by chairmen for the purpose of controlling the committee?

Mr. Smith replied:

State Purchasing agreed to pay a certain amount for each laptop computer which would offset the cost of new ones. The amount has decreased considerably to \$800 per laptop computer.

Mr. Anderson asked:

Is the decrease due to the change in the dollar and marketability of product coming from Asia?

Mr. Smith responded:

It is due to the age of the laptops and the fact there is little market for a Pentium 120 with a 10-inch screen.

Mr. Anderson asked:

Does that mean the dollar savings will not be realized when State Purchasing sells the laptop computers to other state agencies?

Mr. Smith answered:

Some savings will be realized. However, pursuant to the application placed in committee rooms, making them resemble mini chambers, difficulty has been encountered procuring the touch panels for a reasonable price. Retention of the Panasonic laptop computers appears to be a good backup for that application, particularly when their return would only bring \$800 each.

Mr. Anderson asked:

Will the legislators have use of the laptop computers for the full length of their term, or just during the legislative session? If they are allowed to retain them during their term, will they receive training on them in the interim period?

Mr. Smith responded:

That is a good point. Training could be scheduled to teach legislators the features that would be useful to them during the interim, as well as the use of dial-up, e-mail, Internet, and the LCB web page.

Mr. Smith responded to Mr. Hettrick's questions:

We have 65 Panasonic CF41 laptop computers. A laptop computer would not be used by the committee chairmen, but they would use the touch-screen while chairing the committee.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

Is the intent to return the balance of the laptop computers to State Purchasing for a credit of \$800 each?

Mr. Smith replied, "Yes."

Mr. Hettrick asked:

Because legislators are not required to use a laptop computer during the legislative session, will laptop computers be leased only for those who choose to use them?

Mr. Smith responded:

It is important to be prepared with a certain number of laptops at the outset of the legislative session should a legislator who choose not to use it changes their mind mid-term.

Senator O'Donnell suggested:

The legislators should have the choice of either the Omnibook 4100 or the Dell Inspiron 7000, according to their personal requirements. The number of laptop computers ordered should be pursuant to the number of legislators who choose to use them. Another one could be ordered should a legislator change their mind and decide to use it mid-term, which would be less expensive than leasing a number of them to sit idle on a shelf for an entire legislative session.

The speed of the laptop is secondary to the capabilities of the Internet or the communication speeds within the network. The major consideration should not be RAM, the number of megabytes on the disk, or the speed of the processor, which have nothing to do with the connectivity of the computer to the network. The important question to be considered is what is the speed at which the laptop computers connect to the network.

Mr. Smith responded:

Should a legislator decide not to use the laptop computer, the unit could be returned after paying the lease for one month. But it is best to have one available for all legislators at the beginning of session.

Purchasing both Omnibook and Dell laptops will limit the number of spares we can have on hand and to be able to respond to equipment failures which would result in the necessity to retain more spare units should both brands be purchased.

Concerning dial-in speed, should the Omnibook be purchased it would use the modems in the current laptop computers, which are at 33.6K. The modem in the Dell Inspiron 7000 is at 56K.

Senator O'Donnell commented:

The 33.6K is approximately one-third slower than the 56K, and whether or not it is a processor speed of 120, 266, or 366 means nothing because the data coming over the line will only come over in 2mg at 33.6 versus 56 kilobits. It is the lifeline to the network.

Pursuant to budget concerns, dollars are allocated for agencies in state government predicated on a budget closing of July 1st. Due to the 120-day structure, the legislative session will be over by July 1, therefore the laptop computers should be purchased and sent to state service on July 1. In any event, the majority of legislators do not use their laptop computers throughout the interim period and those legislators who choose to retain them through the interim may be allowed to do so.

Mr. Bunin said:

The legislators are allowed to return their laptops at any time, be it the first week of the legislative session or six months after it has ended.

In regard to speed issues, the 2mg wireless being used is more than sufficient for what is transmitted over the network. The internal network has been upgraded to 200mg from 10mg because applications are run over it, as well as other things not done with the laptops. The laptops primarily transmit data transfer of specific types, either a data base query against a sequel server, or transferring e-mail. In either case, 2mg is sufficient since most of those things are designed from the standpoint of a modem connection. When considering something designed for a 33.6 or 56 connection, and now it can be accessed with a 2.5mg, there is a significant leap in proof performance. In the respective modems, currently the dial-in access is 28.8 with one line of 56K. As such, no matter which modems are obtained for the laptops, that is the limitation for speed until the entire dial-in service is upgraded.

Mr. Hettrick clarified:

It is the output side from our network internally that is limited not the computer.

Mr. Bunin agreed.

Mr. Hettrick continued:

In terms of the radio, is the radio actually putting out more than what the modem is capable of taking in?

Mr. Bunin said:

The wireless interface is 2mg, which is significantly faster than the modem. The modem is not the issue when you are here, because here you are using wireless.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

The wireless does not go through the modem when used internally?

Mr. Bunin replied:

No, it is totally separate.

Senator Coffin remarked:

The Chairman and I are the two heaviest users of laptop computers, so we know as much as anybody about them. I found the system worked fine during last session even with slower computers and the same connectivity. The network was faulty in that we could not move from one floor, or room, to another. That problem has been resolved because I have moved from floor-to-floor, and room-to-room, with the laptop computer on and it works flawlessly. I suggest that all those who attend the IFC meeting December 4th test their laptops while they are here.

Is 2mg speed 40 times faster?

Mr. Bunin responded:

It all depends on the application. The problem has been overcome to a certain degree. Should an attempt be made to run Access or Excel over the network, there would be a significant difference between 100mg and 2mg. However, when running the program locally and just accessing data on the network, it is dependent upon IS to ensure it is maximized for whatever speed is used. Since it is taken into account that people are getting it over a modem and the system is tailored to that,

there is a dramatic increase when it is run over wireless or wired networking.

Senator Coffin continued:

On a more practical matter, from 8 a.m. to noon, 20 legislators will be in committee working with the budget which will be imbedded in the hard drive of their laptop computers, therefore, it will not be a burden on the system, other than e-mail or checking a message.

Mr. Bunin stated:

Should every single legislator turn on their laptops and attempt to retrieve the list of last actions for every single bill, it would not bring the system to its knees. The system has been designed for that kind of situation.

Senator Coffin concluded:

Is the budget withheld at the price of \$4,000 per machine?

Mr. Smith said:

As far as the budget is concerned, it is a legislative session expense.

Senator Coffin added:

I trust it is an anticipated expense. The cost is less than expected and a good deal financially because the machines will be utilized by state agencies longer than the legislative session, therefore, the session cost should be very low.

Mr. Smith stated:

The budget will receive approximately \$800 for the return of each laptop computer.

Senator Coffin asked:

After session the legislators will not return home with computers they won't use?

Mr. Smith replied:

That is correct. The legislators may return the laptops at any time to be turned over to the state and our cost will end.

Senator Coffin added:

The Governor's budget will contain more computers than the legislature will purchase. I would like the record to reflect that the laptop computers being considered for purchase are good enough for many state agencies and better than what we are using at the present time.

Mr. Anderson asked:

Will the system be upgraded in the future, and if so, when?

Mr. Bunin responded:

The system will constantly receive added capacity. The entire network was recently overhauled.

Although we cannot predict what will happen with technology in the future, based upon existing technology the system will stand through the next two steps up the ladder. I do not foresee having to pull existing wire within the next 5 to 10 years, unless it must be replaced to perform another application.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

What is the capability of expanding the radio transmission rate within the building?

Mr. Smith answered:

It would require replacement of the units placed throughout the building. The cost would be calculated at the time the expansion would take place.

Mr. Hettrick queried:

Is there capability to go from 2mg to 100mg?

Mr. Smith speculated:

My understanding is the capability is 10mg or 12mg.

Mr. Hettrick stated:

The increase is a significant five to six times faster.

Mr. Watson clarified:

When the building was constructed, the backbone was established to enable a move from wireless to hard cable should it be desired, so the building is already wired to accomplish the task. Hard wire was put in because at the time of construction it was unclear whether hard wire or wireless would be used.

A laptop computer will be ordered for every legislator who desires one, with a few to spare. When legislators depart at the end of session and indicate they will no longer need the laptop, it will be turned over to the state and the legislature will only pay 6 months of an 18-month lease. Considerable savings are incurred by using the recommended approach.

Mr. Hettrick commented:

In light of Mr. Watson's testimony, I calculate the cost for leasing the laptop computers over a 5-month period to be equal to what was spent in the 1997 session for seven laptop computers. The total cost would be equal should every single legislator accept a laptop computer and use it for five months. This method will produce significant savings.

Senator O'Donnell agreed.

Am I correct in assuming that the old laptop computers were purchased outright and are the property of the LCB?

Mr. Smith responded:

That is correct.

Senator O'Donnell queried:

Should the old laptop computers be turned over to State Purchasing, will the LCB receive \$800 for each unit?

Mr. Smith answered:

Yes.

Senator O'Donnell continued:

So someone decided to use those laptops as control stations for the presentation computer drives in the committee room?

Mr. Smith responded:

The old laptop computers will be used for voting system set up in each of the committee room.

Senator O'Donnell asked:

How many of the 65 laptop computers will be used in that capacity?

Mr. Smith answered, "Approximately 15 to 20."

Senator O'Donnell queried:

What will be done with the rest of them?

Mr. Smith responded:

They will be sent to State Purchasing.

Senator O'Donnell inquired:

Can the legislators be offered these laptops at a price comparable or higher than bid price from state government?

Mr. Malkiewicz responded:

The question has come up several times since laptops were purchased. There is concern that should they be made available to the legislators at a price not available to the general public, it will be perceived as a benefit received by the legislators that the general public can't and may raise some ethical issues. So we would rather use them for state purposes, either for legislators in their legislative service, for use by the legislature in the committee rooms, or for use by other state agencies.

Senator O'Donnell continued:

I agree with that and consider it a wise move. However, it raises the issue that State Purchasing is not give us the value of the computers. Should the public be interested in purchasing them, why don't we auction them at a rate higher than \$800 each or are we just stuck with State Purchasing?

Mr. Malkiewicz responded:

The recognition that we are selling these for less than the residual value is correct, which is one of the reasons we are attempting to make use of them, because the benefit of them exceeds the price we could get. But if we are not going to use them then the best alternative is that we get \$800 and state agencies still gets to use them.

Senator O'Donnell concluded:

I have no memory of prior discussions regarding the use of the old laptop computers as work stations in committee rooms. Was it discussed at the last meeting when I was absent? I question what other data processing events are taking place that are unknown to the subcommittee.

Mr. Smith responded:

This subject will be discussed under the multimedia discussion of SB 196.

Mr. Anderson stated:

Whether the legislators are tuning in the laptops or keeping them is a policy decision and a separate issue from the purchase of new computers. Although worthy of discussion, it is not part of the new laptop computer question, and I suggest returning to the issue at hand in order to reach a conclusion.

Senator Coffin inquired:

Does any member of the subcommittee feel the need to purchase another brand in addition to the Omnibook 4100? If so, how would it impact the purchasing power? These questions were only touched upon at previous meetings, and whether or not to purchase more than one brand should be determined.

Mr. Bunin answered:

There are reasons it is preferable to purchase one model.

(1) Purchase power. When units are purchased in large quantities, we can get a better price.

(2) Maintenance and support. Not only would we have to have spares maintained here and in Las Vegas for two different models, IS staff would have to be completely and thoroughly familiar with two different models and know which model each legislator has. If one model is purchased, all IS staff need to know is that a legislator needs help with their laptop, period, rather than needing to know which legislator has what and all the details that go along with that.

Senator O'Donnell interjected:

Mr. Hettrick made a good analogy as to how much savings we would have. The cost for the entire session would be the approximate purchase price of seven laptops for the last session. Is it a problem to purchase a spare for each model and allow the legislators to choose the one they prefer? The savings would still be tremendous and the legislators could be allowed flexibility to tailor the laptop computer to their specific needs, which would make them more productive.

Some technicians are able to work on 18 or 20 different kinds of units, which is a sign of a good technician. If the old computers are retained and used for control stations in the committee rooms,

you will have to know of two different computers anyway, so why would a third be a problem?

Mr. Smith commented:

It is not a major problem to order two different models. Obviously it would be easier to have only one model. However, the quantities purchased from a single vendor will impact the price. I am going to poll each legislator to determine if they are going to use a computer or not.

SENATOR COFFIN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO NEGOTIATE WITH STATE PURCHASING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF OMNIBOOK 4100 LAPTOP COMPUTERS AS DEEMED NECESSARY. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR RHOADS AND CARRIED. SENATOR O'DONNELL WAS OPPOSED.

Item III--Review and discussion of SB 72.

Mr. Smith said:

Item 21, the Front Desk system. Information Systems will begin training the Journal and Document Clerks on the application this Thursday, Friday and Monday, and following that the History Clerk and assistants will be trained. There are a few outstanding development issues including completion of reports for bill status and conflicts. Other issues deal with underlying pieces that provide the information that will be reported and from whence it will come. A meeting was held with Jan Thomas and Jacque Sneddon yesterday and we reviewed the status and brought them up to date. The rules that govern joint introductions on which the legislators will vote are now in place and the Front Desk application is prepared.

Mr. Hettrick inquired:

Do you foresee any problems with being ready on February 1st?

Mr. Smith responded:

Not at this time. I anticipate that by the end of this month we can run a mock sessions for both houses.

Mr. Hettrick requested:

I see Dan Miles from Fiscal Division, and Brenda Erdoes from Legal Division, and would like them to verify that they are comfortable with the progress.

Mr. Miles and Ms. Erdoes nodded, yes.

Mr. Smith continued:

Item 22, we had selected a vendor for this application, however, it was later discovered the primary contact we had no longer worked there, which brought up questions regarding their stability. After conferring with Ms. Thomas and Ms. Sneddon, the decision was made to cancel the project at this time, therefore the \$40,000 expenditure is returned to the coffers.

Item 22A was added because reapportionment contains a second phase, which is electronic filing with the census bureaus of the districts. To develop that information electronically it requires two good-sized systems, as well as supporting software. The amount expended is for the two

systems, and another \$17,000 will be expended for software.

Item 26, the upgrade of the message center. The software and PC's are currently being installed, with a completion date the end of November.

Item IV--Review and discussion of SB 196.

Mr. Watson stated:

Bob Stoldal from Las Vegas One, is present in Las Vegas. He expressed an interest in video communication between Carson City and Las Vegas and is attending this meeting to observe our video conferencing. If his schedule permits, he will be coming here on Friday to tour the legislative building.

This meeting is being run over a new video conference system at 15 frames per second. When we switched to the larger Picturetel system, that will be centralized, it will run at approximately 30 frames a second. We are hoping to have the new system in place to demonstrate to Mr. Stoldal during his visit.

At our last meeting, Tom Warden also discussed a hook up to Channel 4 at the Clark County Government Building, at an estimated cost of \$8,000 for the encoder, and \$14,000 for the fiber. He indicated he would investigate better prices and inform this subcommittee. Also, Mr. Warden commented on the super very high speed (SVHS) machine that records in a higher capability at a cost of approximately \$1,300. It is possible to utilize the SVHS by changing the system recorders, which was not done originally because the cost would have exceeded \$100,000. At that time various television stations were contacted but demonstrated little interest. Now several entities are expressing interest, including Mr. Stoldal, the counties and cities for access television, Channel 5, Channel 10, and PBS stations.

The original direction given by this subcommittee was not to spend a large amount of money for sound bytes, but rather attempt to transmit public hearings to Las Vegas in a less expensive way. We spoke with Maureen Lockhart at the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) and they are working on a microwave system, which would cost less for us to hook up to, and was also recommended by Mr. Warden.

Mr. Watson continued:

Regarding the use of laptop computers to enable committee chairmen to control hearings in the committee rooms, we did not consider this option originally, and we were planning to purchase new equipment, including a touch-screen panel and computer, for each committee room to replace the push-to-talk type of system currently used to recognize speakers. With the laptop computer, the chairman can control this by touching the screen panel which will recognize the member and activate or deactivate their microphone. Camera movement is also tied into the system, so as the chairman recognizes a member by touching the screen panel, the camera will move automatically to show the individual or sector. The cost for the touch screen and computer is approximately \$3,000, however, the cost is \$800 if the old laptop computers are utilized for this purpose, resulting in a saving of \$45,000.

This project is being brought to this subcommittee to determine whether or not it is acceptable to recycle the old laptop computers in this manner. Larger 15-inch screens have been considered, however, the smaller screen might be more expedient on the computer desk. The chairman does not actually use the computer, they only uses the touch screen to recognize the member. The

chairman has total control over the system, including whether or not to have audio over the Internet or in-house cable television is used, and the monitors and cameras are on or off, or can allow the chairman to relinquish control of the cameras to the secretary or control room.

Mr. Hettrick interrupted:

I would like to clarify that the camera is automated within the computer system should the chairman choose by default not to control it. In other words, the chairman is not required to manually control the camera.

Mr. Watson replied, "That is correct."

Mr. Anderson asked:

Will there be enough room on the desk for the chairman's personal computer, as well as the additional touch screen laptop computer?

Mr. Walters responded:

The problem of two computers occupying the chairman's desk was taken into consideration when utilization of the old laptop computers was contemplated. Added to the cost of purchasing touch-panel computers is an additional \$900 per committee room to put line drivers in the back hub room to drive the signal. The added cost made utilization of the old laptop computers more attractive. Placing a CPU underneath the desk station was also contemplated.

Mr. Anderson asserted:

My concern is in terms of the mechanics. Under the present system in the Assembly, the committee Chairman controls the speaking members by noting whose light is on, and the order in which the lights come on, and then allows the speaking member to have the floor in an orderly and equitable manner. How will the new process facilitate the activity of calling upon the members to ensure no one is left out of a discussion?

The chairmen are also a members of the committee and will require access to their own laptop computer. Is it possible to operate both computers while chairing the meeting?

Mr. Walters explained:

The touch panel will replace the buttons used in the old system and the screen layout will show every chair in the committee room. When a member of the committee wishes to be recognized they press the light on their panel, it lights up and blinks on the chairman's screen layout, the chairman acknowledges the member and presses the panel which activates the member's microphone.

Mr. Anderson asked:

How is the speaking member acknowledged?

Mr. Walters answered:

The member is acknowledged when the chairman touches the blinking light corresponding to the member's chair on the touch panel.

Mr. Anderson queried:

When the Chairman touches the light on the touch panel, does it indicate the member may commence speaking, or does it merely indicate to the member that they are in the speaking order?

Mr. Walters responded:

By touching the light on the touch panel the member is acknowledged and the microphone is activated simultaneously.

Mr. Anderson commented:

Therefore, the Chairman must continually be watchful to figure out whose light has been activated.

Mr. Walters stated:

The panel will light up informing the Chairman which legislator is requesting recognition.

Mr. Anderson asked:

Will all the committee room chairs be displayed simultaneously?

Mr. Walters answered, "Yes."

Mr. Anderson said:

In other words, the new system is no different from the old light panel.

Mr. Walters stated:

The new system takes the place of the old light panel, as well as providing the ability to run the sound system off of it.

Mr. Anderson interjected:

Although I am concerned about your ability to run the audio and video system, quite frankly I care more about operating the committee and ensuring the members receive their opportunity to be included in the questions and discussion.

Mr. Walters said:

The concern is not only with the cameras, but also to make the microphones user friendly.

Mr. Anderson commented:

The chairman will reach up and touch the panel to allow the committee member to speak.

Mr. Walters answered, "Yes, sir."

Mr. Anderson said:

Should a committee member change their mind after requesting recognition, how do they indicate

to the chairman their desire not to speak?

Mr. Walters replied:

The committee member will indicate to the chairman that their concern has been addressed and the chairman will acknowledge the next member in line.

Mr. Anderson asked:

Is there a method to override the system?

Mr. Walters answered:

The system can be overridden by acknowledging the next member in line which will automatically cancel the previous microphone.

Mr. Anderson queried:

Which previous microphone?

Mr. Walters answered:

The member who changed their mind and decided not to talk.

Mr. Anderson questioned:

Is the chairman required to respond to the lights in order, or can they choose which member may be recognized?

Mr. Walters responded:

The chairman may either recognize the members in order, or choose arbitrarily which member will be recognized. It all depends upon the manner in which the chairman chooses to run the committee.

Mr. Anderson queried:

Should the chairman inadvertently go out of order and skip from member one to member four, and then to member seven, will the skipped lights remain on and not be eliminated from the panel?

Mr. Walters answered, "Yes."

Mr. Anderson continued:

Should a member indicate to the chairman that they no longer wish to speak, the only way to get them off the panel is to touch the screen and activate the mike?

Mr. Walters explained:

The chairman would touch the panel again, which would cancel the light.

Mr. Anderson concluded:

In the event that all 63 members of both houses are using their laptops, the touch-panel computers are utilized in every committee room, the computer systems are activated on the Senate and Assembly chamber floors, and bills are being printed in the bill rooms, will any of those activities take precedence over any other should a system failure occur?

Mr. Walters answered:

The sound system in the committee rooms is separate from anything else on the network.

Mr. Anderson queried:

Are you saying the sound system is not tied to the network in any way? Is it possible for a person to enter an empty committee room, touch the panel on the screen, and obtain access to the Internet system?

Mr. Walters responded:

No, it is not possible to access the Internet from the chairman's touch screen panel in a committee room.

The chairman invited Robert Stoldal, General Manager, Las Vegas One, to testify.

Mr. Stoldal stated:

I have been a broadcast journalist in southern Nevada for more than 25 years. Las Vegas One is a 24-hour news channel that was launched in April 1998, by KLAS TV, the CBS affiliate in Las Vegas, Cox Cable, and the Las Vegas Sun. Presently we broadcast 12 hours of local news and the remaining time is split between national and business news. In addition, we provide the public access to community events. At this moment Las Vegas One is broadcasting the National Gambling Impact Commission hearings in Las Vegas today and tomorrow from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

I contacted Mr. Watson to be allowed to see the video equipment and review the process to determine whether Las Vegas One can broadcast the legislative sessions.

As a private citizen, I am proud of the work this subcommittee is doing to bring the work of the legislature to southern Nevada. During my tenure as news director at the CBS affiliate, I fought every two years to create a budget to send a full-time television crew to Carson City, and was successful for many years. For the past three or four years I worked for Landmark Communication in Nashville, Tennessee, which also owns KLAS TV. I am now back home and getting up to speed on the activities of this subcommittee. What you are doing is fundamental to the democratic process. The public needs to have access to the activities of the legislature and be able to communicate their opinions, and Las Vegas One would like to help the legislature do that job. We plan to use the cameras, equipment and process that you have established to broadcast full hearings on Channels 1 and 39.

I mentioned earlier that Las Vegas One is currently broadcasting the National Gambling Impact Committee hearings, and we also broadcast the Athletic Commission's hearing on Mr. Tyson. We have had our highest ratings so far when we broadcast the full proceedings, whether it was on Mr. Tyson's hearing or other long-form projects. Although "ER" ratings are not expected, the ratings received make it viable for a private company to broadcast this type of programming. Southern Nevadans often perceive themselves as separated from the legislative process and will tune into the proceedings.

Where does the legislature stand on bringing the equipment up to broadcast quality? Although the accomplishments to this point are impressive, the system is less than adequate for broadcasting. Secondly, the camera shots are too wide in comparison to that the public is accustomed to seeing. I volunteer my services to this subcommittee and the LCB to bring broadcast quality to the point of public acceptability.

Mr. Hettrick responded:

Your question is part of the debate undertaken by the subcommittee, which is whether to go with SVHS or the fiberoptic system. It was anticipated that Mr. Warden would provide the subcommittee with information regarding fiberoptic costs, however, he has been unavailable. Before making a decision, it is imperative to have those costs. There were concerns regarding fiberoptic costs as to whether or not the \$22,000 figure indicated by Mr. Warden, included the cost for equipment or whether it was the actual cost of bringing the fiber optics into the Grant Sawyer building. Consequently, research must be completed prior to making a decision and answering your questions.

Mr. Stoldal stated:

I am well acquainted with Mr. Warden because he previously worked for me at KLAS TV, so I will contact him. I think that SVHS is a short-term solution. Approximately eight different tape formats have been used over the last 10 to 15 years and we are moving away from video tape. However, in regard to communication, fiber optics is the way to go and there is potential to consider a private subsidy of the system through Cox Cable. Although I am unable to speak for Cox Cable, I will contact them to find out the status and cost.

Mr. Hettrick stated:

We do have the money within SB 72 and SB 196 to proceed with this project. We accept your help in contacting Mr. Warden to receive firm numbers in order to make a decision on whether or not to proceed with the project. The subcommittee has an obvious desire to save money and be cost efficient, as well as provide a signal that may be used effectively.

Senator Coffin commented:

I mentioned Mr. Stoldal's station at the last meeting as an outlet that could utilize the legislative activities for news broadcasts. Although I agree it is not broadcast quality, this could be used when there are key votes in committees and tense days on the floor that could be shown on this system.

Mr. Stoldal agreed.

I am impressed with the entire process accomplished by the legislature. The work of the legislature is extremely important and it is critical for the public to be part of the process. I would like to begin with the State of the State message, in which case it is imperative to establish a fully-operational system at least two or three weeks beforehand.

Mr. Hettrick stated:

You are encouraged to begin with the swearing-in ceremonies and anything that can be done to enhance public knowledge and understanding of the process is a positive step. However, the State of the State could be taped in order to show it several times.

Mr. Stoldal said:

The State of the State will be taped and played back a couple of times for individuals who work shifts that may not be accessed by local television stations with local information. We take the opportunity to present live news, and taped hearings at night to serve those people.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

Is there anything on which the subcommittee should take a vote before two members depart the meeting?

Mr. Watson responded:

Concurrence is needed in regard to utilizing the current laptop computers.

Mr. Hettrick stated:

It is my understanding that utilization of the current laptop computers is nothing more than an operational panel for what is done presently and essentially accomplishes the same thing. Although there is a small learning curve, the capability to control sound, camera, and microphones is added with one touch should the committee chairman so desire. The system is being automated quickly and inexpensively relative to whatever else might have been done. In any event, it is a positive and appropriate step and I suggest the subcommittee concur.

Mr. Anderson questioned:

I have served on committees where the vice chairman, rather than the chairman, kept track of the speaking order. Is it possible for the equipment to be moved in order to accommodate the vice chairman?

Mr. Walters answered:

The equipment is movable in order to accommodate both the chairman and vice chairman.

Mr. Hettrick commented:

I understand, due to awaiting concurrence from the subcommittee, Mr. Watson has not yet programmed the laptop computers for the committee rooms. Does the format show the committee member's seating positions? Is it possible to bring the names of the legislators who wish to speak onto the screen in the order requested? In so doing, would it eliminate the question of which legislator pushed their button first and keep the order automatically?

Mr. Walters explained:

It is possible to tag them in the software when the programming is written.

Mr. Anderson added:

As long as the chairman has the prerogative to choose the order in terms of the next member, even if it is out of sequence.

Mr. Walter replied:

The chairman would be able to select the next member, and in what order.

SENATOR RHOADS MOVED TO APPROVE TO UTILIZE THE NUMBER OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS REQUIRED TO CONTROL COMMITTEE ROOMS, WITH THE REMAINDER OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS TO BE RETURNED TO STATE PURCHASING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR COFFIN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Watson added:

The second issue is to provide authority to the LCB to continue with the project utilizing Mr. Stoldal to activate the signal to Las Vegas. The cost at the present time is approximately \$22,000, according to Mr. Warden.

Mr. Hettrick stated:

The desire to connect Carson City and Las Vegas was passed in SB 72 and SB 196 and significant funds have been saved in other aspects of those two bills.

ASSEMBLYMAN ANDERSON MOVED TO PROVIDE AUTHORITY TO WORK WITH ROBERT STOLDAL TO ACTIVATE THE SIGNAL BETWEEN CARSON CITY AND LAS VEGAS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR COFFIN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Watson stated:

For the subcommittee's information, the LCB has been given authority and is working with the PBS stations and Carson Access Television (CAT) as well.

Senator Coffin commented:

Although not on the agenda, I suggest the subcommittee take action to inform leadership of its approval to make legislative voting information available on our web site. Leadership was uncertain about doing this last session, and the decision was made not to put voting information on the Web. The capability is available at the present time and I would like to see it there each and every day.

Mr. Anderson inquired:

Are you referring to committee votes or floor votes?

Senator Coffin answered:

I am referring to floor votes, general file and third reading.

Mr. Hettrick said:

It seems a logical step to put voting information on the Web since committee meetings will appear on camera in one fashion or another.

Mr. Anderson interjected:

Due to the fact there is an upcoming meeting with the Director, the subcommittee may be moving on the prerogative of the members, and majority and minority leaders of both houses in terms of recording this motion. I suggest the motion be a recommendation from the subcommittee.

Senator Coffin stated:

This body is a subcommittee of the Legislative Commission, which is the leadership. In any event, I suggest the subcommittee express its support of this.

Mr. Anderson replied:

I support the motion as a recommendation and suggest it is appropriate for the subcommittee to make such a statement. To expect the recommendation to happen at the direction of the subcommittee is not at the level of understanding.

Senator Coffin said:

Nothing happens in the building without leadership's ultimate approval, however, there are four or five members of the subcommittee who recognize it as a good thing and we can submit our opinion.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

Do you have a problem with the motion being stated as a recommendation from the subcommittee to consider putting voting information on the Internet?

Senator Coffin confirmed:

I have no problem with it.

Mr. Watson said:

I conferred with Mr. Malkiewicz who said all recommendations from the subcommittee will go to the Legislative Commission.

Senator Coffin replied:

I brought the subject up to the staff during last session and they were informed that leadership did not want voting information on the Internet. After working for a year-and-a-half on this subject, it is now considered a good thing.

Mr. Anderson said:

I would like to clarify that members of the Assembly may call for a vote at any time in the chamber, and presume it takes place in the Senate in the same manner.

SENATOR COFFIN MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION THAT GENERAL FILE AND THIRD READING VOTES, IN BOTH HOUSES, BE PLACED ON THE WEB SITE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Senator O'Donnell interjected:

Before the quorum is lost, for the benefit of the legislators who dial into the computer system in Las Vegas, may I ask Mr. Watson if there are funds to upgrade the computers in Las Vegas to 56 kilobits.

Mr. Smith explained:

Upgrading the modems is not a major concern, however, there is equipment behind the Remote Access Service (RAS) part that needs to be upgraded. I do not have a price available at the moment, but I speculate it will not be a major expenditure.

Mr. Hettrick asked:

Senator O'Donnell, does your question regard the number of modems, or the speed of the modems?

Senator O'Donnell explained:

Before commencement of the legislative session, the legislators from Las Vegas should be able to dial in at 56 kilobits to receive the data. Should the cost be in the neighborhood of approximately \$1,000 to \$2,000, I suggest it be accomplished. If not, we will await the start of the session.

Mr. Smith stated:

There are already plans to upgrade, including Las Vegas, which will be worked on prior to session. Do you have a time frame in mind, other than prior to session?

Senator O'Donnell replied:

My time frame is just prior to session.

Mr. Anderson inquired:

Will the training methodology be changed to encourage legislators to keep their laptop computers when they realize there is information available to them? I suggest the next agenda include a discussion on creating a policy regarding whether or not legislators should be encouraged to keep their laptop computers. We were severely 'beaten over the head' by the press at one point in time because it appeared the legislators were utilizing the laptop computers after the session, when, in fact, some legislators turned them in and others chose to use their own computers. There was confusion about the matter and a survey was conducted to prove the point. Should the issue be revisited, it will be important to determine what is planned in regard to training new legislators, and old legislators on the new system.

Mr. Hettrick commented:

A survey will be required should an appropriate number of computers, and a few spares, be purchased according to the motion. In that event, I suggest the following aspects be included in the survey:

- (1) Whether or not the legislators currently use their laptop computer for e-mail;
- (2) Whether or not the legislators intend to use their laptop computer for e-mail after the legislative session;
- (3) Whether or not the legislators intend to keep the laptop computer after the legislative session;
- (4) Whether or not the legislators have e-mail capability;

- (5) Whether or not the legislators desire training;
- (6) How many legislators need training; and
- (7) What kind of training is needed by the legislators?

This will help us in planning training programs around the legislator's capabilities and needs.

Mr. Anderson added:

Some legislators chose not to use the laptop computer because they were familiar with their own system. During the discussion of whether or not to purchase one or two laptop computers, the subcommittee speculated the legislators might observe aspects of other systems and determine them to be more desirable. Computer envy is avoided when everyone uses the same laptop computer. It would be valuable for the legislators to recognize and understand there can be ongoing use of the laptop computer beyond the legislative session by which they may contact the LCB, as well as fax and telephone.

Item V--Public Testimony.

There was no further public testimony

Item VI--Consideration of future meeting dates and topics to be discussed.

The next meeting of this subcommittee will be at the call of the Chairman.

Item VII--Adjournment.

There being no further testimony, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Maxfield

Administrative Assistant,

Information Systems

Assemblyman Lynn Hettrick, Acting Chairman