NEVADA LEGISLATURE'S
COMMITTEE TO CONSULT WITH THE DIRECTOR
(*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.225)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The third meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Committee to Consult with the Director was held on May 15, 2012, at 9:40 a.m. in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" (Exhibit A) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's website at http://www.leg.state.nv.us/interim/76th2011/committee/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Mo Denis, Chair
Senator Mike McGinness
Senator David R. Parks
Assemblyman Marcus Conklin
Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea
Assemblywoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Tammy Grace, Acting Director
Brenda Erdoes, Legislative Counsel
Jeanne Peyton, Secretary

OPENING REMARKS

- Chair Denis welcomed members, presenters, and the public to the third meeting of the Committee to Consult with the Director. He stated that the focus of this meeting was to interview the candidates selected for the position of director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No one came forward under this item.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 15, 2012, MEETING

- The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

  ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 15, 2012, MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR PARKS AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

INTERVIEWS OF FINALIST CANDIDATES FOR THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

- Chair Denis summarized the process used for recruitment and selection of the finalists. He noted that Ralph Andersen & Associates was contracted to:

  1. Assist with the search for qualified candidates;
  2. Compile a job announcement and conduct a nationwide search; and
  3. Screen the applicants based on the criteria provided by the Committee.

  Chair Denis indicated 38 résumés were received, 24 from Nevada and 14 of the applicants were from 8 other states. He noted that 5 candidates will be interviewed today and the Committee members received the cover letter and résumé of each finalist in advance of this meeting.

  To ensure the fairness and integrity of this process, Chair Denis explained each applicant is in a separate room without watching or listening to this meeting until they are called for their interview, and all candidates will be asked the same basic questions. He further noted that at the conclusion of each interview, the candidate would be escorted back to their room to wait for the interviews to be completed in case the Committee may have additional questions.

  In closing, Chair Denis noted that each candidate would have the opportunity to provide a brief introductory statement and at the end of each interview, a few minutes would be allowed for closing remarks. He indicated that the goal of the Committee today is to arrive at a recommendation for the position of director of the LCB for approval by the Legislative Commission at its next meeting to be held on May 30, 2012.

- Following is a list of the questions asked of each candidate by the Committee members:

1. Summarize the personal qualities you bring to this position, and tell us why you feel this position is a good fit for you at this point in your career.
2. If appointed to this position, what steps would you take in your first few weeks on the job to "hit the ground running"?
3. What do you believe would be the greatest challenges facing the Legislature and the LCB in the coming years?
4. How do you perceive the role of the Director in interacting with the legislators, staff, public, media and lobbyists? Please also tell us what challenges may exist for you in these interactions.
5. How do you think the nonpartisan nature of the LCB impacts the Director and what issues do you perceive could be raised as a result of this role? Please also tell us how you would handle those issues.
6. At the end of your first year as our new Director, what parameters should we use to evaluate your performance and how will you personally measure your own performance as Director?
7. As you know, employees of the LCB and other public agencies have experienced reduced pay and benefits in recent years. What is most important to motivate and prevent qualified and valued employees from finding employment elsewhere?
8. How would others describe your leadership style and why do you think your style is effective? In your role as director, how would you facilitate collaboration across the functional areas of the LCB?

- Below is a list of the finalist candidates that were interviewed (Exhibit B):

1. Paul V. Townsend, Legislative Auditor, Audit Division, Nevada LCB.
2. Kevin C. Powers, Chief Litigation Counsel, Legal Division, Nevada LCB.
3. Bryant R. Howe, Assistant Director, Utah Legislature.
4. Richard S. Combs, Assembly Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, Nevada LCB.
5. Nicolas C. Anthony, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, Nevada LCB.

DISCUSSION CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION FOR APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

- Heather Renschler, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ralph Andersen & Associates, indicated that the recruitment brochure was developed with input from the Committee members and division chiefs of the LCB. She indicated the qualities that were recommended for the Director of the LCB as being decisive, credible, trustworthy, and result-oriented. Additionally, Ms. Renschler noted that the candidate should have knowledge of human resources management, inspire loyalty, be trusted by legislators, and represent both the LCB and the Legislature to the media and the public. She asked the Committee members if they were in agreement with those key qualities or if they had additional assets to discuss. (Please see Exhibit C.)

In reply to Chair Denis regarding who was interviewed to gather input regarding the qualities requested by the new Director, Ms. Renschler noted that all the Committee members were interviewed, the division chiefs and some LCB staff.

- Chair Denis asked the members to comment on what they would consider a top priority in selecting the new director.

- Assemblyman Goicoechea said he has always been satisfied with the service received by the LCB in the past and would like to maintain continuity in the future.

- Assemblyman Conklin concurred with Assemblyman Goicoechea, however, the selection should also be balanced with the future in mind and he suggested the new director be open to change and capable of improving systems.

- Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick added that newer legislators would like to see change to the process while maintaining stability into the future.

- Assemblywoman Smith remarked about the excellent quality of the LCB staff. She also concurred that the main goal is to ensure legislators and staff are prepared for the 2013 Session, while the new director should also be thinking towards the future.

- Senator McGinness noted that the new director will need foresight, be able to maintain the present staff, and work well with new legislators.

- Chair Denis agreed that maintaining the present staff is important, along with the ability to make changes to improve the process. He asked the Committee its opinion on the most important quality the new director should hold.

In reply to Chair Denis, Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick said that going forward it is most important to do what is best for the State of Nevada. However, she added the LCB staff is the backbone of the Legislature and their support has helped her to become a successful legislator. Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick suggested the Committee establish the top three qualities it

is looking for in the new director to assist in choosing the candidate that stands out above the rest.

- Assemblyman Goicoechea stated the LCB staff provides stability to the Legislature and the person chosen as the new director should have a good rapport with division chiefs and all staff in order to maintain steadiness.

Discussion ensued among the Committee regarding additional questions to ask the candidates.

- Assemblyman Stewart remarked the candidates past records and association with legislators should be considered.

Responding to Assemblyman Conklin regarding the process employed in narrowing down the applicants to the top candidate, Brenda Erdoes, Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, LCB, remarked the Committee has no limitations in choosing a candidate, as long as it is not done in a closed meeting.

- Assemblyman Conklin remarked that all the candidates are well qualified and although not equal in all categories, they each have their own excellent qualities. However, in his opinion, one or two candidates stand out above the rest.

- Chair Denis asked if the members had any recommendations.

- Assemblyman Stewart said although all the candidates are impressive, he recommended Paul Townsend because of his experience as the Legislative Auditor, supervising over 30 employees and the way he has worked with staff of other LCB divisions over his years of service. In his opinion, Mr. Townsend would bring conciseness and experience in problem solving to the position of director.

- Assemblyman Conklin added that while Mr. Townsend has many credible characteristics, his first choice would be Richard Combs who has moved up the ranks to be a leader in the Fiscal Analysis Division. In his opinion, Mr. Combs has both fiscal and legal backgrounds, interviewed exceptionally well, demonstrating depth in his answers, and was sincere and personable in his responses.

- Assemblyman Goicoechea agreed that either Mr. Townsend or Mr. Combs would be a good choice as the director of the LCB; however, they would offer different management styles.

- Chair Denis asked if the Committee had a third choice to be considered as director. He also added that Bryant Howe provided an interesting concept regarding how to motivate staff.

- Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick added that each of the candidates has their own good qualities and she concurred with both recommendations. In her opinion, Mr. Townsend projected sincerity and recognizes the importance of legislators and the entire LCB staff.

She further noted that Mr. Combs was also sincere, has had to back up his staff on a regular basis and is aware of the importance of a successful 2013 Session.

- Assemblywoman Smith said she was a big proponent of conducting a national search because of the significance of bringing in the most qualified candidates. She agreed Mr. Townsend and Mr. Combs are the two best candidates, however, Mr. Combs is her first choice. She indicated that Mr. Combs' responses had depth and touched on issues that the other candidates did not. In addition, his experience in the different divisions has allowed him to acquire more knowledge about the entire LCB. In closing, Assemblywoman Smith stated that the 2011 Session was Mr. Combs' first legislative session as the Assembly Fiscal Analyst and he worked diligently to meet deadlines during a difficult session.

- Chair Denis informed the Committee that:

  1. Mr. Townsend spoke about developing relationships with legislative leadership, improving employee leadership skills, strategic planning, and creating a positive environment for staff; and
  2. Mr. Combs talked about developing good relationships with staff, the challenge of term limits, the increase in staff turnover, providing the same quality of service during the 2013 Session as in the past and looking to improve systems in the future.

  Chair Denis asked if there were any further comments from the Committee about these two candidates, or if the members had additional questions for the candidates.

- Assemblyman Goicoechea recommended bringing the two candidates back in to ask one additional question relating to how they would handle a disciplinary issue with an employee.

- Assemblyman Conklin added the question would have to be something specific, such as a behavioral problem or an example of a situation that may have happened in the past.

- Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick indicated the question would have to be specific so that the Committee would be able to make a selection from the responses received by the two candidates.

Committee discussion centered on whether to ask an additional question of Mr. Townsend and Mr. Combs, and the members opted to ask one question to facilitate making a final decision.

- Assemblyman Conklin outlined the question decided upon as: "If we were to survey your employees, what would they tell us your strengths and weaknesses are, and be specific?"

Mr. Townsend, identified earlier, was brought back to the meeting and Chair Denis informed him that he would be asked an additional question by the Committee. Chair Denis asked Mr. Townsend to comment on what his employees would say his strengths and weaknesses were and to provide a specific example.

- Mr. Townsend expressed his strengths as being patient, a good listener, fair, consistent, driven by data, and collecting information from staff to help make the best decision. He noted that his weaknesses include that he is sometimes slow in making decisions because he is searching for additional information in order to make a well-informed judgment.

Addressing Mr. Combs, Chair Denis asked him to comment on what his employees would say his strengths and weaknesses were and to provide a specific example.

- Mr. Combs said his weaknesses include his tendency to get anxious and worry about certain issues, which is not good for staff. He noted that it would be better for him to show more confidence at all times, which is a goal of his. He noted that his strength is to listen to his employees and address problems in the best possible manner. He further stated that he is a team player because everyone is working toward the same goal. Continuing, Mr. Combs noted another weakness is that he tends to rush at times to get things done. He expressed that one of his biggest mistakes as a manager was trying to rush a decision for the sake of efficiency, which can cause bad feelings. Mr. Combs indicated that he is working on trying to correct this weakness by putting more thought into problem solving and letting employees know they are cared about.

- Assemblyman Conklin said that although both candidates are listeners and genuinely care, he noted that Mr. Combs has a good understanding of his weaknesses, is sincere about his relationships, and cares about how others perceive his management style.

- Assemblyman Goicoechea expressed his concern about Mr. Combs' weakness to become anxious in certain situations.

- Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick stated that she is leaning toward Mr. Combs because it is admirable he is recognizing his weaknesses and is working hard to correct them.

- Senator McGinness added that Mr. Combs should not be penalized for his honesty because he has shown tremendous dedication over the years.

- Assemblywoman Smith expressed her appreciation for all the work that has gone into the process of finding the most qualified candidates for the position of director of the LCB by Ralph Andersen & Associates and LCB staff. She indicated that this is probably one of the most important decisions of her legislative career and the last question asked of the two finalists provided clarity for her to make a decision.

- The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION**:

  ASSEMBLYWOMAN SMITH MOVED TO RECOMMEND RICHARD COMBS AS THE CHOICE FOR DIRECTOR OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU TO BE FORWARDED TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Assemblyman Conklin suggested that the five candidates should be recognized for their qualifications. He further noted the excellent job the contractor did in assisting the Committee in the process of finding a director for the LCB.

- Chair Denis requested staff to draft a letter from the Committee to each of the finalists recognizing them as excellent candidates.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Chair Denis said that future meetings would be determined at a later time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No one came forward under this item.

ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Peyton
Secretary

Tammy Grace
Acting Director

APPROVED BY:

Senator Mo Denis, Chair

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit A is the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" provided by Tammy Grace, Acting Director, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

Exhibit B consists of the résumés of the finalists for the position of Director of the LCB and is titled "Interview Book" Director, Legislative Counsel Bureau, dated May 15, 2012, provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates.

Exhibit C is the Recruitment Brochure for the position of Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, provided by Ralph Andersen & Associates, the contractor hired to conduct the search for candidates.

This set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report" is supplied as an informational service. Exhibits in electronic format may not be complete. Copies of the complete exhibits, other materials distributed at the meeting, and the audio record are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library online at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm or telephone: 775/684-6827.