

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2016 Regular Session
April 14, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Charles R. Chaney, member of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 10:23 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Cameron Henry, Chairman
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.
Representative Charles R. Chaney
Representative Franklin J. Foil
Representative Lance Harris
Representative Bob Hensgens
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Steve E. Pylant
Representative Jerome Richard
Representative Scott M. Simon
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Mark Abraham
Representative James K. Armes, III
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Lawrence A. "Larry" Bagley
Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Walt Leger, III
Representative Blake Miguez

Representative John M. Schroder, Sr.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Penny B. Bouquet, Administrative Secretary
Mr. Peter G. E. Conroy, Legislative Analyst
Ms. Nancy Keaton, Legislative Analyst

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

None

III. DISCUSSION

House Bill No. 1 by Representative Henry

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 1 were presented and discussed:

Department of Corrections

Mr. James M. LeBlanc, Secretary, and Mr. Thomas Bickham, Undersecretary of the Department of Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70884, (225) 342-6702, presented an overview of the department and discussed the impact of FY16-17 budget reductions.

Chairman Henry in the chair.

Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Bickham discussed moving inmates from private prisons to sheriffs' local housing, funding for re-entry programs, reductions to pharmaceutical costs, and per diem reductions with Representatives Miller, Pylant, and Smith.

Mr. LeBlanc discussed, with Representative Amedée, the department's efforts to improve the overall health of those incarcerated.

Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Bickham discussed the cost savings of privatizing more state prisons and the recidivism rate of inmates exiting local jails versus state prisons with Representative McFarland.

Mr. Bickham discussed the contributions of sheriffs' local housing and the employee turn-over rate in local jails versus state prisons with Representative Pylant.

Mr. LeBlanc discussed the utilization of the medical prison unit located within University Health Conway in Monroe with Representative Chaney.

Office of Juvenile Justice

Dr. Mary Livers, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Juvenile Justice, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 287-7900, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY16-17 budget.

Dr. Livers discussed the juvenile early release process with Representative Foil.

Dr. Livers discussed closing capacity of certain secure care facilities, the reduction of employee positions in those facilities, local juvenile detention centers, and merit increases to help curb the employee retention rate with Representatives Amedée and Simon.

Dr. Livers discussed the department's success rate and the types of services provided to youth in the state's secure care facilities with Representative Miller.

Department of Justice

Ms. Reneé Free, Director of Public Protection, no address provided, (225) 326-6400, presented an overview of the department and discussed the FY16-17 budget.

Lieutenant Governor and Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Mr. Robert Barham, Interim Secretary for the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8186, presented an overview of the department and discussed the FY16-17 budget. (See Exhibit A)

Mr. Barham discussed the self-sustainability and rate structure of state parks with Representatives Hensgens and Simon.

Louisiana Workforce Commission

Mr. Bennett Soulier, Undersecretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, no address provided, (225) 342-3110, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY16-17 budget.

Mr. Soulier discussed the budget reduction to the Louisiana Rehabilitative Services Program, the federal match associated with the program, and funded vacancies with Representatives Foil and Simon.

Department of Economic Development

Mr. Don Pierson, Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, 1051 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-3000, presented an overview of the department's FY16-17 budget, and also discussed the Fast Start Program with Representative Chaney.

Department of Environmental Quality

Ms. Karyn Andrews, Undersecretary of the Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 4303, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-3865, presented an overview of the department's FY16-17 budget, and also discussed the impact of budget reductions to programs that manage rural water systems throughout the state with Representative Zeringue.

Department of Natural Resources

Ms. Beverly P. Hodges, Undersecretary of the Department of Natural Resources, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8844, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY16-17 budget.

Department of Children and Family Services

Ms. Etta Harris, Deputy Undersecretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, no address provided, (225) 342-0863, discussed the department's FY16-17 budget.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Chaney offered a motion to adjourn, to which there was no objection. The motion passed by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Henry, Amedée, Carter, Chaney, Foil, Harris, Hensgens, McFarland, Miller, Pylant, Richard, Simon, Smith, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Cameron Henry
House Committee on Appropriations