

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2019 Interim Session
April 2, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Franklin J. Foil, Vice Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:08 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 Mark Abraham
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Lawrence A. "Larry" Bagley
Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.
Representative Charles R. Chaney
Representative Julie Emerson
Representative Reid Falconer
Representative Franklin J. Foil, Vice Chairman
Representative Lance Harris
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Walt Leger, III
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Scott M. Simon
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative James K. Armes, III
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Steve E. Pylant

Representative Jerome Richard
Representative Katrina R. Jackson, Interim Member
Representative Julie Stokes, Interim Member

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Alexis Normand, Attorney
Ms. Adrienne Wood, Attorney
Ms. Jane Schoen, Secretary

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Ms. Faye Talbot, Sergeant at Arms

III. DISCUSSION

House Bill No. 105 by Representative Henry

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 105 were presented and discussed:

Department of State

Ms. Christina Bastien Perrault, Budget Analyst, House Fiscal Division (HFD), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2412, presented an overview and discussed the FY19-20 budget for the Department of State.

Secretary Kyle Ardoin, Department of State, 8585 Archives Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 922-2880, discussed the purchase of new voting machines with Representative Foil and discussed the department's expenditure trends with Representative Bacala.

Secretary Ardoin discussed the effectiveness of using paper ballots during elections with Representative Zeringue and discussed the department's funding needs for FY19-20.

Department of Justice

Ms. Adrienne Wood, Legislative Analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9596, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Ms. Elise W. Cazes, Director of Administrative Services, and Ms. Melissa Gannuch, Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Department of Justice, 1885 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 326-6079, discussed the need for funding of two existing Table of Organization

(T.O.) positions within the department and the department's excess budget authority with Representatives Abraham and Bacala.

Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Ms. Jamie Tairov, Budget Analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-0474, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Dr. Mike Strain, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 922-1234, provided a status update on the department's programs and services.

Mr. Dane Morgan, Assistant Commissioner of Management and Finance, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 922-1234, discussed the department's fees and self-generated funding with the committee.

Dr. Strain discussed federal rules regarding the sale of Hemp products with Representative Foil, and discussed the Medical Marijuana Program with Representatives Bagley and Zeringue.

Ms. Tabitha Irvin, Commissioner's Executive Counsel and Director of the Medical Marijuana Program, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 922-1244, discussed the number of employees the Medical Marijuana Program's laboratory, and Dr. Strain discussed fee collections with Representative Zeringue.

Dr. Strain and Mr. Morgan discussed the department's excess budget authority, statutory dedications, and fees and self-generated revenue with Representative Bacala.

Dr. Strain discussed the effects of closing the Georgia Pacific Industrial Plant and the department's efforts to find other industrial jobs for plant employees with Representative Hodges and discussed the reduction of cotton production and the Boll Weevil Fund with Representative Chaney.

Ms. Irvin and Dr. Strain discussed the process and time line to produce and sell medical marijuana with Representatives Carter and Miller.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Mr. Tim Mathis, Budget Analyst, House Fiscal Division, 900 North Third Street, 11th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-9101, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Colonel Joey Strickland, Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-5000, discussed the department's goal to lower its use of state general funds and the impact of FY19-20 budget reductions.

Colonel Strickland discussed the decline in Louisiana's veterans with Representative Carter.

Mr. Mathis and Mr. Homer Rodgers, Undersecretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-5000, discussed the department's expenditure trends with Representative Carter.

Department of Civil Service

Mr. Mathis presented an overview, and he and Mr. Byron P. Decoteau, Jr., Executive Director, State Civil Service, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8272, discussed the FY19-20 budgets contained within the Department of Civil Service.

Board of Ethics

Ms. Kathleen Allen, Ethics Administrator, Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5600, discussed the impact of budget reductions in FY19-20 on the board.

State Police Commission

Mr. Jason Hannaman, Executive Director, State Police Commission, P.O. Box 66555, Baton Rouge, LA 70896, (225) 925-7057, discussed the impact of FY19-20 budget reductions on the commission.

Representative Miguez in the chair.

Board of Tax Appeals

Mr. Cade Cole, Vice Chairman, Board of Tax Appeals, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-3145, discussed the board's expenditure trends with the committee.

Department of Revenue

Mr. Chris Henry, Budget Analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-1394, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Ms. Kimberly L. Robinson, Secretary, Department of Revenue, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-4059, discussed the department's fund balances and tax return audits with Representative Miguez.

Mr. Clarence Lymon, Undersecretary, Department of Revenue, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-2150, and Secretary Robinson discussed the Office of Debt Recovery's efforts to collect outstanding debt owed to the State with Representative Miguez.

Secretary Robinson and Mr. Greg Albrecht, Chief Economist, Legislative Fiscal Office, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7233, discussed the amount of total income tax collections and average amount of tax refunds for the state with Representative Bacala. Secretary Robinson also discussed fraud within the Medicaid Program with Representative Bacala.

Secretary Robinson discussed the amount of time to receive income tax refunds with Representatives Bagley, and updated Representative Miguez on the department's efforts to recover the duplicate refunds issued to tax payers. Secretary Robinson also discussed an unconstitutional tax case and the with Representative Miguez.

Secretary Robinson and Mr. Albrecht discussed effects of federal corporate income tax changes on the state with Representative Miguez.

Mr. Luke Morris, Assistant Secretary, Department of Revenue, 617 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-2150, and Secretary Robinson discussed a tax analysis of Medicaid recipients given to the Department of Health with Representatives Bacala and Emerson.

Mr. Daryl Purpera, Legislative Auditor, 1600 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 339-3800, discussed Medicaid fraud with Representative Bacala.

Secretary Robinson and Mr. Purpera discussed the disclosure and utilization of tax payer information to audit Medicaid applicants with Representatives Henry, Bacala, and Miguez. Secretary Robinson and Mr. Purpera also discussed taxpayer privacy laws with Representatives Leger.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Miguez announced that Appropriations would meet on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 9:00 a.m.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Berthelot offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 21 yeas and 0 nays.

Representatives Henry, Foil, Emerson, Falconer, Abraham, Amedée, Bacala, Bagley, Berthelot, Billiot, Gary Carter, Chaney, Lance Harris, Hodges, Leger, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Simon, Smith, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Cameron Henry
House Committee on Appropriations