

Notes from Presentation by Business Standards Division to Economic Affairs Committee members on Aug. 31, 2015.

All committee members except Sen. Vance and Sen. Whitford were in attendance when Business Standards Division Administrator Todd Younkin began his presentation in the large conference room on the 4th Floor of the Division's building at 301 S. Park Avenue in Helena around 5 p.m.

Also in attendance from the Business Standards Division were bureau chiefs Maggie Connor and Galen Hollenbaugh plus Derek Sherlock, who described application procedures, and Jennifer Schofield, who described compliance procedures, including the use of screening and adjudication panels comprised of board members and the use of continuing education audits.

Rep. Lynch asked about what background experience is considered when hiring employees. Mr. Younkin replied that they are looking for experience as well as critical thinking skills.

Sen. Facey asked if the computer software used for licensing and other program functions was an "off the shelf" program or built in house.

Mr. Younkin replied that the Acela program was off the shelf but tailored to Montana's purposes.

One question about complaints was whether boards accept anonymous complaints. Ms. Schofield responded that some do (like the Board of Outfitters), and others do not (like the Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists).

Rep. Lynch asked about the cost of complaints to a board.

Todd Younkin replied that compliance work is directly charged to a board. He noted that unexpected increases in complaints, which might not have been expected when budgeting, now can be handled by a contingency appropriation if a board has money in its account.

Sen. Facey asked how many applications are processed a month.

Mr. Sherlock answered that new applications ranged from 50 to 100 a month. Renewals might run as high 68,000 in one year or for years with biennial renewals up to 130,000 renewals.

Rep. Lang asked if the Department of Labor and Industry handles all licensing, including the Department of Agriculture's pesticide licenses. The answer was no - Agriculture licenses pesticide handlers.

Mr. Younkin described how some positions were being held open as the Division tries to determine what level of staffing is necessary.

Sen. Ripley asked if staffing would be filled before session.

Ms. Connor noted that efforts to save money have included using automation, providing electronic information to board members rather than mailing many-inch thick board books, and simplification.

Mr. Younkin said use of recording equipment allowed discontinuation of written minutes.

Mr. Younkin said there are plans to expand the software program Acela to handling complaints.

The presentations were followed by a tour of the 4th floor office spaces, ending at 5:45 p.m.