



PO BOX 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706  
(406) 444-3064  
FAX (406) 444-3036

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
**67th Montana Legislature**

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**SENATE MEMBERS**

Mark Blasdel - Vice Chair  
Margaret (Margie) MacDonald  
JP Pomnichowski  
Scott Sales  
Jon Sesso  
Fred Thomas

**HOUSE MEMBERS**

Casey Schreiner - Chair  
Kim Abbott  
Seth Berglee  
Wylie Galt  
Greg Hertz  
Shane Morigeau

**COMMITTEE STAFF**

Susan Fox - Executive Director  
Todd Everts - Attorney  
Fong Hom - Secretary

**MINUTES LOG**  
**2021 Session Working Group**  
Zoom Conference Meeting  
Remote Room 102, Capitol Building  
Helena, Montana  
June 30, 2020

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**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Sen. Mark Blasdel, Chair  
Rep. Kim Abbott  
Rep. Wylie Galt  
Rep. Greg Hertz  
Sen. Margie MacDonald  
Sen. JP Pomnichowski  
Sen. Jon Sesso

**Members Excused:**

Sen. Fred Thomas

**Staff Present:**

Todd Everts, Attorney  
Susan Fox, Executive Director  
Nadine Spencer, Secretary

## **AGENDA (Attachment 1)**

### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

13:01:15 Sen. Blasdel called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. The secretary called the roll. [\(Attachment 2\)](#)

### **OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

13:01:50 Susan Fox, executive director, Legislative Services Division (LSD), gave a presentation on the resources available on the LSD website related to COVID-19.

### **OVERVIEW OF AREAS FOR PLANNING**

13:04:27 Ms. Fox provided an introduction and said she took information from states that have already had special sessions and put together a menu of options based on Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 of reopening.

13:05:51 *Sen. Sesso joined the meeting.*

### **Personnel**

13:06:41 Ms. Fox provided an overview of what Legislative Services Division is doing to protect Legislative Services personnel, legislators, and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Committee Questions**

13:16:59 Rep. Hertz said he recommends having an adequate supply of face masks and hand sanitizers. He provided his comments on suspending the page program and on protective measures for personnel.

### **Facilities**

13:19:39 Ms. Fox provided an overview of what the Legislative Services Division is doing to provide safety measures for public access to the Capitol Building and other state facilities, and what could be done to provide safety precautions for staff, legislators, and the public during session.

### **Committee Questions**

13:28:20 Sen. MacDonald commented on the need to limit the number of people in the building and to provide temperature checks and installing better digital monitors in all the hearing rooms.

13:29:49 Sen. Pomnichowski discussed the idea of having remote locations for the public. She asked about public health policies for people who might have transmittable diseases. She commented on the page program and what the 2021 session might look like.

13:34:37 Sen. MacDonald asked Ms. Fox about the HVAC system at the Capitol. Ms. Fox said she can have General Services Division provide information at the next meeting.

13:36:22 Rep. Hertz said it is important to make sure that the public can participate even if there are capacity limitations. He said if the session is held

remotely there still needs to be a contingent of legislators working at the Capitol with staff.

13:39:13 Sen. Pomnichowski recommended drafting a plan for a virtual or partial session to be presented at the August meeting. She also recommended that legislators be provided with the technical capability to work remotely.

13:43:54 Rep. Hertz discussed the need to understand how much bandwidth is necessary in order to work remotely.

### **Members and Legislative Process**

13:44:58 Ms. Fox discussed possible locations for remote meetings and the legislative process if session is done by Zoom.

### **Information Technology and Support**

13:52:05 Ms. Fox discussed supporting the legislators' use of computers and phones to participate in remote meetings.

### **Committee Questions**

14:00:57 Rep. Hertz asked how the Chair of the Day can manage Zoom meetings during the House Floor session. Trevor Graff, research analyst, explained how Zoom participants are recognized by the Zoom manager during a meeting.

14:02:22 Rep. Hertz said if there is a short session, the legislature needs to think about its priorities; i.e., balancing the budget. Other items will need to be prioritized that the Legislature will have to act on.

14:03:12 Rep. Abbott said in order to have equal participation it would be better to have everyone connected remotely rather than trying to have a hybrid session.

14:04:58 Sen. Sesso asked Ms. Fox if she could discuss the current status of the televised meetings and whether there are limits on that and how the rest of the meetings are recorded. Jessica James, audio/video engineer, responded.

14:06:20 Sen. Sesso asked Ms. James about the ability to increase the number of video streams.

14:06:57 Sen. Sesso asked Ms. Fox if the Legislative Branch could submit COVID-19 related expenses through the fiscal year ending June 30th.

14:08:16 Sen. Sesso recommended increasing investments in technology and seeking reimbursement under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

14:10:36 Sen. MacDonald recommended having the capacity for every committee meeting to be a Zoom meeting so the public can participate.

### **Public Participation**

14:11:58 Ms. Fox discussed participation by the public.

**Applicable Remote Session Constitutional, Statutory, and Legislative Rule Provisions**

14:14:09 Todd Everts, Legal Division director, LSD, said he provided information on the applicable remote session constitutional, statutory, and legislative rule provisions. ([Exhibit 1](#))

**Public Comment**

14:17:38 Amy Carlson, Legislative Fiscal Analyst and Director, Legislative Fiscal Division, thanked the committee and said she is available to provide any assistance.

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

14:18:21 Rep. Hertz asked Ms. Fox about plans for the legislative session or a special session based on the phased reopenings.

14:19:21 Sen. Sesso commented on the work currently being done and asked staff about the direction and expectations for the session planning committee.

14:21:31 Ms. Fox said she wants to make sure she is covering the areas that the committee is interested in and if there are other areas they want to include.

14:23:42 Sen. Sesso said staff is moving forward on the right track and recommended making investments in technology to plan for a remote session for legislators and the public.

14:25:37 Rep. Hertz asked Mr. Everts if he needed more direction on the applicable remote session constitutional, statutory, and legislative rule provisions.

**Public Comment**

None

**DIRECTIONS TO STAFF/NEXT MEETING DATE**

14:26:40 Sen. Blasdel said any suggestions or further direction from the committee can be given to staff to be included in the next meeting.

14:26:48 Sen. Blasdel asked Ms. Fox about the next meeting date. Ms. Fox said she will send out suggested dates to the committee.

14:27:41 Sen. Blasdel asked about the next meeting date for the Rules subcommittee. Mr. Everts said both subcommittees can meet on the same day with the same format.

14:28:16 Sen. Blasdel thanked staff and everyone for their participation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

14:28:28 Sen. Blasdel adjourned the meeting at 2:28 p.m.