MINUTES LOG
December 16, 2021
Room 137
Helena, Montana

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MEMBERS PRESENT:
Sen. Janet Ellis, Chair
Rep. Marta Bertoglio, Vice Chair
Sen. Mike Cuffe
Rep. Julie Dooling
Rep. Jessica Karjala
Sen. Doug Kary
Rep. Kelly Kortum
Rep. Wendy McKamey

MEMBERS EXCUSED:
Sen. Edith (Edie) McClafferty
Rep. Marvin Weatherwax
CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - OVERVIEW OF AGENDA

08:33:06 Sen. Janet Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

HJ 8: Interim Study of Montana's Public Pension Systems

08:34:11 Rebecca Power, Legislative Services Division (LSD), began her review of the "Game Wardens Overview" handout. (Exhibit 1)

08:36:21 Dore Schwinden, MPERA Executive Director, and William Holahan Deputy Director, presented the "Overview of Game Wardens’ and Peace Officers’ Retirement System…” handout. (Exhibit 2)

Questions from the committee

08:53:40 Sen. Kary asked Mr. Holahan asked if those inactive in the plan had been paid out, were they suspended and what does the plan owe them. Sen. Kary asked if that influenced amortization because those numbers would be rolled in. Sen. Kary asked Mr. Holahan if any pension funds give the employee a certain amount of years to be paid out when inactive, and if so, would that help this plan.

08:56:27 Rep. Garner asked Mr. Holahan if there were standards used or more of an eyeball test for determining when to do an experience study and/or adopt. Rep. Garner asked Mr. Holahan how they determine when to adopt and when not to adopt, how do they determine what that period is, and is there any value in adopting a schedule for that.

09:00:11 Chair Ellis asked Mr. Holahan if the last time the employer contribution was raised was 1997.

HJ 8: Interim Study of Montana's Public Pension Systems

09:01:04 Ms. Power began her overview of the “FY Green Sheets” and “Pension Acronyms” handouts. (Exhibit 3) (Exhibit 4)

Public comment

09:04:52 Sara Piper, MFPE
Discussion from the committee

09:06:46 Chair Ellis reviewed the “Public Pension Design Options for Future Montana Employees” and the “Does the Montana PERS Defined Contribution Retirement Plan Meet Design Gold Standards” handouts. (Exhibit 5) (Exhibit 6)

RECESS
09:09:11 Recess until 9:30

Transition from MT Votes to electMT

09:29:47 Christi Jacobson, Secretary of State, reviewed the “Montana SOS” handout. (Exhibit 7)

09:33:42 Stewart Fuller, Election and Voter Services Manager, presented.

09:36:25 Rep. Weatherwax has joined the meeting.

Questions from the committee

09:40:34 Sen. Kary asked Mr. Fuller if security patches were still available for the existing Vote MT.

09:41:44 Rep. Karjala asked Mr. Fuller what had occurred between the last meeting and this one, in terms of the system not being used if it’s not ready by the 20th. Rep. Karjala asked Mr. Fuller what will be done with the two different software programs moving forward.

09:44:38 Rep. Kortum asked Mr. Fuller if there was a roadmap for the upcoming school board primary elections to do a parallel test.

09:46:06 Sen. Cuffe asked Mr. Fuller when they first started on this program, when the decision date was and if he was correct in that description. Sen. Cuffe asked Mr. Fuller if they had a backup plan all along, should the system not be ready to go live come the decision date.

09:50:14 Rep. Karjala asked Mr. Fuller if the amount of funding would suffice should they have to work on the software, how far would the grant money go, and could the committee see a copy of the contract.

Transition from MT Votes to elect MT (continued)

10:02:21 Rina Fontana Moore, Cascade County Election Administrator, presented.

10:04:26 Regina Plettenburg, Clerk and Recorder of Ravalli County, presented.

Questions from the committee

10:06:18 Rep. Kortum asked Mr. Fuller if the funding for the MT elect system was valid through 2022 and if there were some sprints that weren’t passed could that be a preview for the upcoming meeting on the 20th.

Public comment

10:10:02 Robert Filipovich, Helena Resident
10:19:25 Nancy Leifer, League of Women Voters of Montana
10:21:33 Rebecca Johnson, Clancy Resident
10:23:03 Mary Catherine Dunhy, Miles City resident
10:28:07 Sharon Patton-Griffin, Great Falls Resident

Discussion and questions from the committee
10:32:07 Sen. Ellis mentioned the “State-by-State” handout. (Exhibit 8)
10:39:58 Chair Ellis asked the SOS’s office what the cost to the state was in developing this program.

RECESS
10:42:42 Recess until 11:30

Rule Review
11:22:56 Ginger Aldrich, Legislative Attorney (LSD), began her overview of the “State Lottery and Sports Wagering Commission” rule review handout. (Exhibit 9)
11:33:40 Director Scott Sales, Montana Lottery Director, presented.
11:38:32 Don Harris, Chief Legal Counsel, presented.

Public comment
11:39:59 John Iverson, Montana Taverns Association

Questions and discussion from the committee
11:42:14 Rep. Karjala asked Mr. Iverson about competitive pricing and what that would be, would it continue to be a commission, and if so, what would the differences be between. Rep. Karjala asked why people are choosing not to participate, who they are the and percentage of those people.
11:45:58 Chair Ellis asked Ms. Aldrich if there was a way to do a compromise.
11:53:38 Vice Chair Bertoglio asked Director Sales if he intended to bring a bill forward next session to clear up confusion.
11:54:49 Rep. McKamey asked Ms. Aldrich what the committee can do to help facilitate the lottery.
11:58:00 The committee discussed the lottery rule review.

Motion
11:59:04 Sen. Cuffe made a motion the committee allow the lottery to make this change.

Questions from the committee
12:00:37 Rep. McKamey asked Ms. Aldrich if the committee accepted this rule review change what would happen moving forward.
12:01:56 Question called.

Vote
12:02:54 The motion to accept the rule review change passed 5-4 on a roll call vote, with Rep. McClafferty excused.
Rule Review (continued)
12:03:20  Ms. Aldrich continued her overview of the “Registration of Employers of Paid Signature Gatherer’s” and the “Maintenance of Active and Inactive Voter Registration Lists for Elections” rule review handouts (Exhibit 10) (Exhibit 11)

Public Comment* on Any Topic under the Committee’s Jurisdiction
12:12:14  None

Meeting Wrap Up
12:09:21  Ms. Power and the committee discussed next meeting discussion topics.

ADJOURNMENT
12:12:14  Chair Ellis adjourned the State Administration & Veterans’ Affairs Interim Committee meeting at 12:03 P.M.