



Fire Suppression Interim Committee

60th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

JOHN COBB
KEN HANSEN
RICK LAIBLE
DAVE LEWIS
GERALD PEASE
CAROL WILLIAMS

HOUSE MEMBERS

STEVE BOLSTAD
JIM KEANE
KRAYTON KERNS
RICK RIPLEY
CHAS VINCENT
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COMMITTEE STAFF

LEANNE HEISEL, Lead Staff
TODD EVERTS, Staff Attorney
DAWN FIELD, Secretary
BARBARA SMITH, Fiscal Analyst

MINUTES

CONTRACTOR SUBCOMMITTEE

March 4, 2008

Room 303, State Capitol
Helena, Montana

Please note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed. Committee tapes are on file in the offices of the Legislative Services Division. **Exhibits for this meeting are available upon request. Legislative Council policy requires a charge of 15 cents a page for copies of the document.**

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SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

SEN. KEN HANSEN
SEN. JOHN COBB
SEN. DAVE LEWIS
REP. JIM KEANE

STAFF PRESENT

TODD EVERTS, Staff Attorney
LEANNE HEISEL, Lead Staff
DAWN FIELD, Secretary
BARBARA SMITH, Fiscal Analyst

AGENDA & VISITORS' LIST

Agenda, Attachment #1.
Visitors' list, Attachment #2.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

- 00:00:01 SEN. HANSEN called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The secretary noted attendance, Subcommittee members SEN. HANSEN and REP. KEANE were present. SEN. LEWIS and SEN. COBB also were present at the meeting (ATTACHMENT #3). Rep. John Ward, House District 84, introduced himself as a state representative and a fire contractor/supplier. SEN. HANSEN asked all meeting attendees to sign in on the visitors' log.
- 00:05:56 SEN. HANSEN said the purpose of the meeting would be to find solutions, and not to provide an arena for "bashing".

OVERVIEW OF FIRE SUPPRESSION CONTRACTING PROCESS

- 00:06:31 **Ted Mead, Chief Fire and Aviation, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)**, gave a PowerPoint presentation which provided a description of interagency contracting (EXHIBIT #1). Mr. Mead said his discussion points were based on his perspective as a long-term fire manager and that the United States Forest Service (USFS) perspective would be presented by Phil Holman and Deb Wesselius. Mr. Mead's discussion also included information obtained from the December 2004 legislative performance audit reports.
- 00:13:47 **Phil Holman, Director of Contracting, Region 1, USFS**, described the requirements of the best value contracting process and how it is administered. He also discussed the 2007 fire season and the implementation of the three-year water handling agreements under the best value contracting process (slide 6, EXHIBIT #1).
- 00:17:12 SEN. HANSEN asked if the best value contract selection process takes into consideration the amount of training the contractor has had. Mr. Holman said yes, that factors taken into consideration are a completed contractor's training course, employee training, experience, equipment and price. He said that training opportunities are provided to contractors.
- 00:18:28 REP. KEANE asked how contracts were awarded prior to best value contracting. Mr. Holman said a rotation system was used. REP. KEANE asked who was involved in creating the best value contracting concept. Mr. Holman said members from the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) were the key members. REP. KEANE asked for the names of contractors who participated in the meetings. Mr. Holman asked Mr. Mead to respond. Mr. Mead said he could not recall exactly which contractors were involved but that a strategic action committee was formed with specific input from contractors. REP. KEANE said Mr. Mead's and Mr. Holman's responses proved his point that contractors were not involved to a great enough extent. He said federal guidelines were used with little input from the private sector. He asked that he be provided with whatever input was taken from contractors during the creation of the best value contracting system.

- 00:22:41 REP. KEANE asked if committee recommendations will be taken into account by the DNRC regarding best values contracts. Mr. Mead said DNRC would consider all committee input.
- 00:23:15 SEN. COBB said he is aware that work on best value contracting is an ongoing process. He asked how often contractors meet with agencies and if they are formal meetings. Mr. Holman said the process is still evolving and that yearly reviews are conducted to determine what changes are needed. He said the reviews are done after the season and coordination for the next fire season begins. SEN. COBB asked if the meetings are open. Mr. Holman said the meetings are an open mike forum and that suggestions are taken.
- 00:25:22 REP. KEANE discussed how contracting was handled in the 1970s, and the impact of high fuel prices that were occurring at that time. He asked if there is anything in the three-year contract to protect contractors from rising fuel costs. Mr. Holman said protections are in place and that the contracting officer tries to anticipate economic impacts.
- 00:28:15 Mr. Mead explained service disabled veteran owned businesses (SDVOB) and distributed copies of the four-year USFS solicitation plan (EXHIBIT #2).
- SEN. COBB asked what percentage of equipment failed inspection (slide 7, EXHIBIT #1). **Deb Wesselius, Contract Specialist, USFS**, estimated that the percentage was small but did not have an exact number.
- 00:36:09 SEN. HANSEN said he is concerned about the level of monitoring regarding memorandums of understanding (MOUs) being signed off on (slide 9, EXHIBIT #1) and said there are cases of abuse occurring. He asked how or if the DNRC is monitoring this situation. Mr. Mead said he knows there are problems and, that to the extent possible, it is being monitored. He said the DNRC is open to suggestions on how to improve the process.
- 00:38:42 Mr. Holman explained the equipment and training inventory system (EaTIS) used by the federal government (slide 10, EXHIBIT #1). He said it will be replaced by the new VIPER system.
- 00:39:35 SEN. COBB asked when the new system will be implemented. Mr. Holman said it is under development and will be rolled out at the end of 2008.
- 00:39:51 REP. KEANE asked who is developing the new system. Mr. Holman said the federal government is developing the system. Ms. Wesselius said it is being developed primarily by the USFS, but is using input from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and national committees with state representation. She said Montana is not directly represented.
- 00:46:43 SEN. COBB asked if the quality of services has improved with best value contracting. Mr. Mead said yes, that not only has the quality of services and performance improved, but that money has been saved also.

- 00:49:11 Mr. Mead discussed 2007 ROSS Roster - engines and water tenders (slides 13 - 16, EXHIBIT #1).
- 00:55:19 REP. KEANE said he has concerns about how resources are dispatched through best value contracting (slide 17, EXHIBIT #1) and said that there have been instances where resources were called in from a long distance away when there were best value resources available much closer. REP. KEANE recommended that one improvement would be to improve training for dispatch centers on more efficient dispatch of resources. Mr. Mead agreed that additional training for dispatch is needed.
- 00:58:40 SEN. LEWIS said he has heard a lot about engines coming in from Alaska and asked how that decision was made, considering that local contractors were available. Mr. Mead explained that an Alaska team was initially managing the Jocko Lakes fire and ordered the additional Alaskan resources, and that the request was not caught by the DNRC oversight officer. SEN. LEWIS said it must have been very expensive and asked for additional information. Mr. Mead said he would provide that information.
- 01:01:10 REP. KEANE asked who has authority over out-of-state management teams on large fires. Mr. Mead explained that NRCG teams are always used first, but that additional teams are called in on busy years like 2007. He said that was how the Alaska team ended up in Montana, and that the team had oversight from three Montana agencies. REP. KEANE commented that an Oregon team at the Jocko Lakes fire should have been fired because it sent home Montana contractors and called in contractors from Oregon. He said that is not the way Montana should do business, and asked that training be provided to address this problem. Mr. Mead agreed that additional training is needed, and said a team on a different fire was removed for similar actions.
- 01:04:39 Mr. Mead discussed maps of fire areas (slides 18 & 19, EXHIBIT #1).
- 01:05:43 Mr. Mead discussed slides 19 - 30, EXHIBIT #1, dealing with specific information on best value contracting from the 2007 fire season.
- 01:12:58 SEN. HANSEN asked, in the search for resources, how state mutual aid is used and to what extent. Mr. Mead said mutual aid is utilized, mostly through local government mutual aid agreements and state-to-state compact agreements. SEN. HANSEN asked if out-of-state resources are used only after in-state resources have been exhausted. Mr. Mead said that is usually the case, but that some exceptions are allowed.
- 01:16:00 REP. KEANE said, in his opinion, that the best value contracting system is not working as efficiently as it should. He said that contractors need to be able to participate more in the development of contracting systems. Mr. Mead said it has been a challenge to communicate with the broad range of contractors involved in fighting fires. He said that consideration of a wildfire contractor's association may be an option, and that he would like input on that possibility.

01:19:26 REP. KEANE said a contracting officer has a significant amount of power. He asked if public meetings are held, prior to setting contracts, to allow for contractor input. Mr. Holman said yes, that outreach to the contracting community has been held to educate them on best value contracting. He agreed that the outreach effort needs to be improved and that the contracting community needs to be more involved.

01:21:12 REP. KEANE recommended, to both the DNRC and USFS and specifically the contracting officers of both agencies, that contractors be included in the end-of-season discussions. He said it would go a long way in dealing with the things that went badly in the 2007 fire season.

01:22:39 SEN. COBB asked if the \$20.5 million paid out was just for Montana or for the region. Mr. Mead said it was for the Northern Rockies region. SEN. COBB asked Mr. Mead if his concerns about contractor involvement are similar to those of Mr. Harrington's. Mr. Mead said yes, and noted that only about 40% of contractors are involved in an organization or association, which is why it is so difficult to communicate with them.

BREAK

01:42:34 **Joseph King, President, Northern Rockies Wildfire Contractors Association (NRWCA)**, asked to have NRWCA board members and NRWCA members stand. Mr. King discussed a PowerPoint presentation (EXHIBIT #3) and distributed copies of the NRWCA position paper (EXHIBIT #4).

01:54:40 REP. KEANE asked for additional discussion of the differences between a firefighter 1, firefighter 2 and engine boss, and the difference in dollar amounts for each type (slide 12, EXHIBIT #3). Mr King said that firefighter 1 is entry level, fire fighter 2 has additional training, and that an engine boss is more experienced and has a significant amount training. REP. KEANE asked how contractors keep employees coming back, especially considering the amount of training that has been provided. Mr. King said that most firefighters have off-season jobs and that it is difficult to retain them. He said that incentives and bonuses are frequently offered but that it is still difficult to hang on to experienced personnel.

02:01:33 SEN. LEWIS said his calculations indicate that by the time a person achieves engine boss status, the private contractor will have invested about \$50,000 in that person. Mr. King said that is correct.

02:05:25 **David Russell, NRWCA Past President**, read a list of NRWCA recommendations (slides 16 - 18, EXHIBIT #3).

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

REP. KEANE said that workers' compensation should be addressed as part of a contract. Mr. King said another issue is that some contractors aren't complying with workers' compensation requirements and suggested that an audit be done to find out who is complying and who isn't. He said his association supports best value contracting but that it needs to be tweaked in certain areas.

- 02:16:48 SEN. HANSEN asked what the requirements are to become an equipment inspector. Mr. King said it is done through an MOU and that it usually takes about 40 hours of training, but that there are instances of people being certified with less than that. He said the NRWCA follows national training standards very closely, but that not all associations do, including the DNRC. SEN. HANSEN asked Mr. Mead to respond. Mr. Mead said he knows this is a concern and that training standards are not always met. He explained how the confusion between training programs can occur and that sometimes the assumption is made that the individual has had certain training, which is not always the case.
- 02:20:45 REP. KEANE asked it would be possible for a local firefighter to have authority over a private contractor. Mr. Mead said it would be unusual, but could happen. REP. KEANE said, in his opinion, this is another area that needs improvements and suggested that more training between agencies, local fire departments, and contractors be done.
- 02:31:56 In response to comments made about the complicated inspection process described by Mr. King and a question from REP. KEANE, Mr. Mead said he personally supports streamlining the inspection process so that costs decrease and efficiency increases. He discussed the 2004 audit results, and said that the "fix" in the audit went too far and that the process needs to be simplified.
- REP. KEANE asked who inspects local fire departments. Mr. Mead said all agencies provide their own inspections. REP. KEANE asked if agency engines have to go through the same inspection process as private equipment. Mr. Mead said no. REP. KEANE said this area could be significantly improved.
- 02:34:48 SEN. COBB asked how long it would take to implement changes in the best value contracting system. Mr. Mead said changes could be implemented before the 2008 fire season, but that the other involved agencies would have to agree to any changes.
- 02:36:54 SEN. LEWIS agreed that more trained people are needed to do inspections because it is important that the equipment be checked before going out on a fire, but cautioned that it may be expensive to do. Mr. Russell added that private contractors are also required to meet Department of Transportation inspection standards, and that responsible contractors keep their equipment in good condition.
- 02:41:14 REP. KEANE asked about the continued use of emergency equipment rental agreements (EERA's) and who sets the price. Mr. King explained that the federal government wasn't being competitive under the old EERA system and that best value system was meant to replace it. The EERA process still in place, however, and is used when all best value resources have been exhausted. The 2007 season provides a good example of all resources being utilized, but a need for more remaining. These additional resources are signed up under EERAs under rates established pre-season. Mr. King said his association has no problem with EERA resources being used, only so long as the best value contracting is exhausted first, and that when a best value resource becomes available, the

EERA resource is pulled off and replaced by the best value resource, and that EERA resources be made to follow same inspection requirements as best value equipment.

02:45:51 Mr. Holman agreed with Mr. King's requests, and said that this is being discussed and that changes will be made. REP. KEANE asked Mr. Mead if he was aware of any instances in which a fire team did not adhere to this process. Mr. Mead said yes, that EERA resources were used at the Jocko Lakes fire when best value resources were available. He said there are certain circumstances that do allow EERA preference over best value, such as with tribal businesses and disabled veteran-owned businesses.

02:49:25 Ms. Wesselius explained that a disabled veteran has to own at least 51% of his company before preference can be given. She explained the process used to call in a disabled veteran's EERA resources.

02:50:44 SEN. LEWIS asked Mr. King if the workers' compensation requirement of having an independent contractor's certificate is being followed. Mr. King said there is a great deal of abuse occurring in this area and that his association is working with State Fund to rectify this problem. REP. KEANE agreed that this issue needs to be addressed.

03:03:58 In response to a question from REP. KEANE regarding the place of private contractors in the fire fighting business, both Mr. Mead and Mr. Holman agreed that private contractors are an integral part of the team. Mr. Mead said that incorporating private entities into a governmental organization, such as the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG), would be difficult and would significantly change the organizational structure, but said he would support having private contractors as ad hoc members of NRCG. REP. KEANE asked if legislation would be necessary to make that happen. Mr. Mead said yes, that from DNRC's standpoint, the agency would have to be directed to include a private entity in public decisions.

03:08:08 SEN. HANSEN recessed the Subcommittee for lunch and suggested that everyone look at the equipment parked around the Capitol Building.

LUNCH BREAK

04:33:24 SEN. HANSEN called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m. He noted that SEN. PEASE was present at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

04:34:07 **Jacki Colombe, Fire Chief, Basin**, said she has had a great deal of experience with many of the different aspects of firefighting. She said her discussion points were in response to comments she heard earlier in the meeting:

- Contractors are still not on a level playing field with agencies, as stated in the meeting by Mr. Holman, but Ms. Colombe said she is working to change that. She said that allowing self-certification of training qualifications is being abused and that contractors are burdened by the double verification of qualification records that is required of them.

- Contractors are still experiencing problems with EERAs.
- There is no way to meld mutual aid on initial attack and utilization of private contractors at this time.
- As a fire chief, Ms. Colombe said she is allowed to qualify individuals for a red card, but doesn't believe that should be the case. because a fire chief has no way to verify what training the person has had.
- Some type of board or a governor's council attached to the DNRC may be useful to contractors.
- Re-establishing an engine academy, as existed in the past, would bring contractors and agencies together.

04:43:35

Troy Kurth, Rocky Mountain Fire Company, Missoula, said he has been in the firefighting business since 1956, first as a USFS employee, then as a consultant for disaster and emergency services, and finally as a contractor. He said he has seen the full spectrum of the process, that the best value contract system is working, and that is the best contract system his company has dealt with. Mr. Kurth said the best value system has resulted in better equipment and more experienced people, and that it allows him, as a business man, to anticipate the risk and bid appropriately, and to invest in his business and equipment. Mr. Kurth agreed that the first year was rough and was a learning experience, but said much has improved since then. Mr. Kurth also said:

- the current certification process is working very well;
- the dispatching service was excellent in the 2007 fire season;
- he agreed with Mr. King's (NRWCA) comments, and said that only two inspections are needed: one on the way in to a fire and one on the way out;
- he would like the process to be modified to allow for bilateral contracting, instead of unilateral contracting;
- that workers' compensation is an issue that has to be dealt with; and
- that he is very proud of the safety record, that Montana firefighters are among the best in the nation and that they have received high performance ratings from other states.

05:02:42

John Bennett, said that he is a retired chief of a volunteer fire department, has been a contract firefighter since 1990, and is a MOU instructor with 350 students. Mr Bennet discussed agency firefighting training standards created by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and the National Firefighter Protection Association. He said that private contractors are highly trained and skilled firefighters. He emphasized that private contractors train to the same competencies, using the same task books, as agency training programs. He said one problem with volunteer firefighting programs is that they don't always follow through with additional training after the initial 14 hours.

05:07:42

James Tandy, said that he has over 40 years of experience in fighting fires. He said he does not agree with best value contracting and said that it has caused tensions between contractors. He said his personal experience with the BLM has been negative and that he had to request that his congressman to intervene in the situation in order to rectify the situation. Mr. Tandy said he has repeatedly requested to be allowed to sit in and comment on post-fire evaluation sessions

but has never been allowed to do so. Mr. Tandy said he does not support any preferences, except for disabled veterans..

- 05:16:44 **Jason Todhunter, Montana Logging Association (MLA)**, said his association trains approximately 1,000 people every year and also has the equipment necessary to fight fires. He said a survey was sent out to MLA members regarding this issue and said his members indicated that the biggest problems are local control and out-of-state contractors.
- 05:19:19 **Janice Grosfield, DS Jr. Trucking, Inc., Drummond**, read testimony into the record (EXHIBIT #5). She said that overall, best value contracting is working well, but that there are some issues that need to be worked out.
- 05:26:54 **Dean Klacken, contract cutting business**, said he contracted with the USFS in the summer of 2007 to keep his employees working in a slow time. He discussed his dissatisfaction with the experience and said the lack of communication is a big problem. He explained his difficulty in working with the USFS while trying to prove that his employees were covered by liability insurance and workers' compensation; and how two of his workers were able to go to work for the USFS with no proof of coverage. Mr. Klacken said the issue of contractor identification was also a problem for him.
- 05:32:01 **Deborah Armstrong, Armstrong Helicopters, Stevensville**, said that she wanted to address an October 18, 2007, Legislative Audit Report (LAD) report (EXHIBIT #6). She said that much of the information in the report was not correct and that she has requested that another audit be done. Ms. Armstrong said that her aviation business is a disabled veteran-owned business and has not seen a benefit or preference from that. She discussed her company's operating history in Montana and said that the DNRC regards private aviation companies as competition, which has caused difficulty for private companies. Ms. Armstrong said that her aircraft is subject to more rigorous inspections and is of very high quality, and that safety is her highest priority. She reported that her business contracts regularly with surrounding states but that she has never been allowed to contract with Montana. Ms. Armstrong discussed the table on page 4 of the LAD report, and discussed specific examples of incorrect information. She said that she is competing against her own tax dollars because of incorrect information.
- 05:39:32 **Dan Terrel, Stevensville**, said he contracts out two private engines, serves as a volunteer firefighter, and works as a disaster assistance employee with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He said the biggest problem he has observed is that agencies do not work well together. Mr. Terrel said each agency has its own specialty, which is how the breakdown in communications usually occurs. He provided several examples and said that the end result is the wasting of resources and money. He agreed that while the best value contracting system is working well, there is room for improvements.
- 05:41:08 REP. KEANE addressed Mr. Todhunter and said that the MLA could provide valuable assistance in dealing with the workers' compensation issue. He asked

that the MLA become involved in order to shed light on the different aspects of the logging industry, as they apply to logging and firefighting. Mr. Todhunter said that one factor is the changes that occurred after the passage of SB 108. He said there are fewer independent contractors now and that workers' compensation is being required more now. He said the independent contractor process is working, but needs to be enforced as well.

- 05:44:40 REP. KEANE asked Mr. Holman and Mr. Mead to respond to the discussion between himself and Mr. Todhunter on workers' compensation. He asked if there is a way that people are being checked for workers' compensation. Mr. Holman said there isn't and that there should be. Mr. Mead said all DNRC contacts should be checked upon hiring. He said that contracts are being checked pre-season, but said that perhaps they should be checked per incident as well.
- 05:46:23 Mr. Russell said he has repeatedly suggested that agencies require a certificate of workers' compensation insurance and that the state should be notified if the coverage is cancelled.
- 05:47:20 Mr. Klacken said that when he signed up for the contract, it took only two telephone calls, so it is easily done. Mr. Klacken said his compensation rate in Montana is 30%, and is only 18% in Idaho, because Idaho requires coverage for everyone.
- 05:48:39 SEN. HANSEN asked Mr. Bennett to explain his position on training standards for volunteer firemen, specifically the 14 to 40 hour training. Mr. Bennett said the DNRC has set the training standards and put the onus on the volunteers to take the additional task book training, but that there is no recourse in place to make them do it. He said that professional firefighters have a financial incentive to continue with extra training, so there is a different mind set.
- 05:51:11 SEN. LEWIS asked Ms. Armstrong to submit her concerns about the LAD audit in writing to SEN. HANSEN, and said he too is concerned about the differences between the DNRC and contract costs. Ms. Armstrong said she would do so and added that Montana has the strongest aviation firefighting industry in the nation. She briefly listed the different types of aviation resources available in Montana and said they are being overlooked. She said she would email the information to SEN. HANSEN.
- 05:53:30 REP. KEANE asked if the aviation people are organized with an association. Ms. Armstrong said no, that it has been a fragmented and competitive group but that it is slowly moving more towards being more organized. REP. KEANE encouraged her to get more involved in that. He asked her if her company has put in a bid to the state to provide aviation services. Ms. Armstrong said she would very much like to do that, but that the DNRC has not let bids out. She said she has federal contracts and has state contracts with Oregon, Washington, and California. REP. KEANE asked if her federal contract has allowed her to fight fires in Montana. Ms. Armstrong said yes, and that her company has been replaced twice by DNRC equipment.

- 05:55:26 REP. KEANE asked Mr. Mead if the state solicits bids for aviation resources for firefighting. Mr. Mead said no, that the DNRC has not been in a position to utilize aviation resources or to administer aviation bids or contracts. He said that is something that needs to be discussed. REP. KEANE asked if the dispatch center calls for other aviation resources and asked how that works. Mr. Mead said that the DNRC can use contracted resources through the federal system.
- 05:57:15 SEN. COBB said one problem is funding for fires ahead of time. Mr. Mead agreed, and said the agency tries to prepare as best it can with existing funds. He said that DNRC has few resources to devote to the private contract arena and that the DNRC recognizes that it needs to do a better job of administering contracts. SEN. COBB asked if the DNRC has more money up front, could it do a better job of preparing. Mr. Mead said if the agency could dedicate resources for an exclusive use for a specific time period, better rates would be available.
- 06:00:16 SEN. HANSEN thanked all those in attendance and said solutions were brought forward. He said he hopes the various departments will communicate with individuals who spoke up, and said that he was pleased by the input received at the meeting.
- 06:00:59 SEN. COBB suggested that the Subcommittee request contractor payment information from Workers' Compensation, to have contractors provide information to the Headwaters Economic group, and an update on the inspection process. He said that information on the business advisors meeting would be available at the March meeting. He said the information that Ms. Armstrong is to provide will also be discussed at the March meeting.
- 06:02:35 REP. KEANE asked Mr. Everts to work with Ms. Heisel and Ms. Smith to summarize the information. He said the lack of contractor involvement remains a major concern and that the overlap between the EERA and the best value contracting systems has to be dealt with. Workers' compensation and lack of communication are also problems. He said he would like to have recommendations for the full FSIC at the March 27 meeting.
- 06:05:22 Mr. Everts said the Subcommittee heard a number of recommendations at today's meeting and that it will finalize its recommendations at the March 27 meeting. He said he would compile the recommendations received at this hearing, and the information requested from the agencies and public, and have the information available for discussion at the March 27 meeting.
- 06:06:27 REP. KEANE thanked the contractors for bringing their equipment to the Capitol and said it gave the Subcommittee members a better idea of the issues involved. He recommended that the DNRC provide better oversight of the hiring of fire crews and that local resources be hired before out-of-state, because the taxes are being paid by Montanans.
- 06:09:06 SEN. COBB said that some issues may be fixed by the agencies and that some issues may be beyond the reach of the Committee. He said it is the job of the Subcommittee to facilitate what work it can and be educated on what is going on.

06:10:17 REP. KEANE said the inspection issue must also be addressed.

06:11:24 SEN. HANSEN said the next meeting will be held on March 27 and 28 in Helena, and that additional meetings are scheduled for Lewistown on May 16, and for Miles City on May 30. REP. KEANE asked if State Fund could be invited to participate. Mr. Everts said he would work on that.

ADJOURN

06:12:47 With no further business before the Subcommittee, SEN. HANSEN adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.

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