

Minutes
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION
April 17, 2023

Members Present:

Representative Patti Anderson
Representative Emma Greenman
Representative Rick Hansen
Representative Steven Jacob
Representative Fue Lee
Representative Duane Quam
Senator Calvin K. Bahr
Senator Steve S. Drazkowski
Senator Mark W. Koran
Senator Tou Xiong

Members Absent:

Senator D. Scott Dibble
Senator Ann H. Rest

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair, called the Legislative Audit Commission meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Chair Hansen said the purpose of the meeting was to hear the Office of the Legislative Auditor's (OLA's) presentation of the program evaluation, *RentHelpMN*. Chair Hansen added that he would have to leave close to 10:00 a.m. and would turn the meeting over to Senator Koran, Vice Chair, at that time.

Chair Hansen welcomed Judy Randall, Legislative Auditor, and Jodi Munson Rodríguez, Deputy Legislative Auditor for the Program Evaluation Division. Ms. Randall said that the topic selection meeting that had been scheduled for earlier that morning had been cancelled due to conflicts with some members' schedules, but that it would be rescheduled soon. Ms. Munson Rodríguez then presented the key findings and recommendations of the *RentHelpMN* report to members and responded to members' questions. Members discussed how information on fraud could be shared between agencies, how instances of fraud are prosecuted and funds recovered, and how contracting partners that manage eligibility on behalf of an agency monitor for fraud while fulfilling program goals.

Vice Chair Koran then invited Jennifer Ho, Commissioner of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, to speak. Commissioner Ho gave the agency's response to OLA's evaluation, saying that there had previously been no safety net for renters who could not pay their rent and that a statewide process for renters to access emergency assistance had never existed. Commissioner Ho added that when the federal government enacted a stimulus program to help renters and owners in crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota Housing stepped up to build a massive, complex program to provide critical housing assistance at a stressful time. Commissioner Ho added that changing federal guidance and limited administrative spending impacted every aspect of program design and implementation, and that auditing standards were difficult to apply to a new program that had a limited administrative budget and was implemented in extreme urgency. Commissioner Ho added that the agency's work on cases of suspected fraud continues. The commissioner then responded to questions from the members.

With no further discussion, Vice Chair Koran adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair

Maureen Garrahy, Recording Secretary