

**Minutes**  
**LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION**  
**August 31, 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 D. Scott Dibble  
Senator Steve S. Draskowski  
Senator Mark W. Koran  
Senator Ann H. Rest

**Member Absent:**

Senator Tou Xiong

**Other Legislator Present:**

Senator Jeff Howe

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair, called the Legislative Audit Commission meeting to order at 10:00 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 special review, *Hometown Heroes Assistance Program*.

Chair Hansen welcomed Judy Randall, Legislative Auditor, who briefly described the Hometown Heroes Assistance Program. Ms. Randall said that in late 2022, OLA received a complaint about the Hometown Heroes grant program and, in 2023, initiated a review of the program. Ms. Randall then introduced Katherine Theisen, Special Reviews Director, to present the key findings and recommendations of the report.

Ms. Theisen provided an overview of the report's findings and recommendations and responded to members' questions.

Chair Hansen then welcomed Bob Jacobson, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, to speak. Commissioner Jacobson said that DPS has already taken a number of actions to address the report's findings, and that the agency would use OLA's recommendations as teachable training moments.

Chair Hansen then welcomed George Esbensen, President of the Minnesota Firefighter Initiative (MnFIRE), to speak. Mr. Esbensen said the oversight of the Hometown Heroes program was a challenging experience to oversee but that his team worked to improve compliance and will continue to revise their procedures to ensure their organization can continue to effectively serve Minnesota's firefighters.

Vice Chair Ed Hoffman of the Fire Service Advisory Committee was welcomed to speak next. He said the committee members pride themselves on being transparent and following rules, but there was a lack of clarity on how to handle outside agency grants for the Hometown Heroes grant. He added that the committee has been working with DPS to ensure they are following appropriate processes and rules and that the committee wants to ensure the best use of state dollars.

Chair Hansen closed by saying that the Legislature has approved significant support for firefighters and the Hometown Heroes grant, and he appreciated the clarity of everyone in fixing the program's issues, adding that Minnesotans want clean, good government so the fire safety workers get the dollars they deserve for the real needs they have.

With no further discussion, Chair Hansen adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.