

Minutes
EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Legislative Audit Commission
March 14, 2014

Members Present:

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
Representative Andrew Falk
Representative Mary Liz Holberg

Senator Mary Kiffmeyer
Senator Warren Limmer
Senator James Metzen

Representative Hansen called the Legislative Audit Commission Evaluation Subcommittee meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to release the evaluation, *Councils on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Black Minnesotans, Chicano/Latino People, and Indian Affairs*.

Representative Hansen introduced Jim Nobles, Legislative Auditor, who gave a brief summary of the evaluation. Mr. Nobles introduced Jo Vos, evaluation manager, to give more details. Ms. Vos explained that between 1963 and 1985, the Legislature created four minority councils to represent the interests of their respective constituencies: 1) Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, 2) Council on Black Minnesotans, 3) Chicano/Latino Affairs Council, and 4) Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. She said there is little evidence that the councils have been effective as advisors to the Governor and Legislature or as liaisons to state government. Ms. Vos said the evaluation sets forth four different options for change: 1) maintain the councils but implement operational improvements, 2) implement changes under Option 1 and move the councils under the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 3) eliminate the councils and create a new Office of Minority Affairs, and 4) eliminate the councils and create advisory councils within select state agencies.

Representative Hansen invited the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans to address the subcommittee. Sia Her, Executive Director, told the subcommittee her background and explained the challenges she has had over the past year since she became the executive director. She said that the council is repositioning itself to fulfill its statutory duties. Ms. Her said the council agrees with many of the key findings of the evaluation, but disagrees with the recommendations for change, specifically options two through four.

Representative Hansen invited the Council on Black Minnesotans to address the subcommittee. Edward McDonald, Executive Director, shared his background with the subcommittee. He said the council does not agree with the evaluation findings and recommendations. Mr. McDonald said the council does have good relationships with legislators and their “strategic doing plan” has proven to be a successful approach in helping their constituencies.

Representative Hansen invited the Chicano/Latino Affairs Council to address the subcommittee. Hector Garcia, Executive Director, said that the evaluation has very valuable recommendations that can lead to improved performance of the council, which will have a positive impact on the disparities affecting the Latino communities they serve. He said that a combination of the four options for change suggested in the evaluation would produce the best results in resolving those disparities; however, option one is most preferable of the four options if an “either/or” decision is made.

Due to another meeting, Representative Hansen turned the gavel over to Representative Falk. Representative Falk invited the Indian Affairs Council to address the subcommittee. Jim Jones, Cultural Resources Director, said the council only agrees with option one of the four options for

change suggested in the evaluation. He said that their council is different than the other minority councils; the Indian tribes are government entities, not just another ethnic minority group.

Dr. Bruce Corrie, Economist, and Jean Lee, Children's Hope International, also addressed the subcommittee.

After noting the next subcommittee meeting would be held on March 21 to release the evaluation *Agricultural Commodity Councils*, Representative Falk adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair

Shelly Watterud, Recording Secretary