

M I N U T E S  
PROCEDURES AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
IOWA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

August 11, 1971

The first meeting of the Procedures and Facilities Committee of the Iowa Legislative Council was called to order by Speaker of the House William H. Harbor at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 11, 1971, in the Speaker's Room, State House, Des Moines. Members present in addition to Speaker Harbor were:

Senator James E. Briles  
Senator Eugene M. Hill  
Senator Clifton C. Lamborn  
Representative Dale M. Cochran  
Representative Nathan F. Sorg  
Representative Andrew P. Varley

Also present were Serge Garrison and Phil Burks of the Legislative Service Bureau staff, and a number of representatives of the news media and other interested persons.

Representative Varley commended Speaker Harbor for his service as chairman of the Legislative Council's Procedures and Facilities Committee during the previous biennium, and nominated Speaker Harbor for committee chairman during the present biennium. The nomination was seconded by Representative Cochran. Representative Sorg moved that the nomination cease and that a unanimous ballot be cast for Speaker Harbor as Committee Chairman, which motion was adopted.

Representative Varley suggested that the Committee recommend to the full Council that copies of the book The Sometimes Government, prepared by the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures and published in paperback form by Bantam books, be obtained for all members of the General Assembly. He added that the copies should be sent to each legislator with a covering letter specifically referring to the ranking of the various state legislatures by the Citizens Conference, the recommendations of the Conference for State Legislatures generally on page 155 of the book, and the specific recommendations pertaining to Iowa's legislature on page 214 of the book. Representative Varley commented that he had found the book excellent. Representative Cochran stated that he has also received a copy of the book, and agreed with Representative Varley's evaluation and supported the suggestion that it be made available to all members of the General Assembly. It was generally agreed that the suggestion by Representative Varley be presented to the full Council as a Committee recommendation.

There was a discussion of possible changes which might be recommended with regard to procedures during legislative sessions. Representative Varley stated he had learned at an interstate legislative meeting which he recently attended that Florida's legislature accomplishes most of its standing committee work during legislative interims, and spends the bulk of its time during actual sessions in floor work. In the course of the discussion which followed, Senator Lamborn observed that while there may be some problems involved in standing committees functioning during legislative interims, such as staffing problems and technical authority of standing committees to act upon bills when the General Assembly is not in session, every step which offers promise of shortening the regular sessions should be explored carefully because shortening sessions is vital if more people are to be encouraged to seek election to the General Assembly.

There was a discussion of pre-session orientation activity for freshman legislators, with particular reference to the desirability of scheduling this activity in advance of the convening of the first session of each new General Assembly. It was generally agreed that any such orientation activities should not become embroiled in any extensive partisan political activity, and to this end Representative Varley suggested that the respective party caucuses for selection of presiding officers and floor leaders be held prior to the pre-session freshman orientation.

There was discussion of the need for and most feasible methods of providing additional legislative staff assistance. Representative Varley and Cochran commented that the individual assistants assigned them from the Legislative Service Bureau staff during the latter part of the 1971 session had been quite helpful, but expressed a desire to have such persons assigned before the beginning of each session in the future if at all possible. In view of the fact that it is not possible to offer employment to an individual as personal assistant to a floor leader on a year-round basis, Senator Lamborn commented that it would probably be advisable to continue drawing such people from the staff of the Legislative Service Bureau, so that these persons may be trained prior to convening of the sessions, and may assist with other activities of the Service Bureau during interims. Senator Lamborn and Representative Varley indicated that they are not primarily concerned with partisanship in seeking persons to act as assistants during sessions, although confidentiality is vital. Representative Cochran commented that the importance of staff for standing committees, as well as for legislative leaders, should not be overlooked.

The Committee next turned its attention to the need for additional physical facilities. Chairman Harbor stated that the Committee should plan to confer with representatives of the Capitol

Planning Commission, to see whether that group is considering any plans for moving some of the executive agencies which presently have offices in the Capitol building elsewhere, so as to leave room for more legislative office space and committee rooms. Representative Varley suggested that members or representatives of the Capitol Planning Commission be asked to meet with the Procedures and Facilities Committee at its next meeting. He also suggested that the Committee promptly look into the possibility of double-decking the main area of the Legislative Fiscal Director's office, which had been suggested late in the 1970 interim but could not be accomplished prior to the convening of the 1971 session.

At the invitation of Chairman Harbor, Chief Clerk of the House William R. Kendrick entered the meeting at 9:50 a.m. He stated that he had conferred with Secretary of the Senate Carroll A. Lane, and that it was their joint suggestion that the Procedures and Facilities Committee consider the possibility of double-decking existing House and Senate Committee Rooms 1 and 22. Mr. Kendrick added that he personally feels that there is a real need for a strictly legislators-only lounge for members of each House, as well as the existing anteroom lounges which are open to lobbyists and other nonlegislators.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the Procedures and Facilities Committee will request the state architect to make a preliminary review of the work necessary to double-deck some or all of the areas which had just been discussed, and that he and members of the Capitol Planning Commission will be invited to meet with the Procedures and Facilities Committee at its September meeting. Mr. Garrison called to the Committee's attention an inquiry by Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds William Gall as to whether the General Assembly still desires to air-condition the legislative chambers, since this would have to be considered in the rewiring of the Capitol building.

Mr. Kendrick stated that he has some rule changes in mind, which he will propose to the Committee at a later date. Mr. Garrison stated that he will want to make some changes in the bill-drafting manual, and would like to have members of the Committee look more closely at the computer bill drafting system which is being developed in Iowa. He noted that he considers the system for all practical purposes the equal of that in use in Minnesota, and observed that the Minnesota system has been far more expensive to develop.

Senator Lamborn urged that serious consideration be given to reducing the size of the General Assembly's standing committees, and also reducing the number of committees on which each member serves to not over two or possibly three at the most. Speaker Harbor agreed that these changes have merit, but commented that in

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practice they are often resisted by individual legislators who feel that it enhances their prestige to be assigned to a relatively large number of committees.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Procedures and Facilities Committee will be held on the afternoon of the day preceding the next meeting of the full Legislative Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Senior Research Analyst

SERGE H. GARRISON  
Director