

M I N U T E S

COMPUTER OUTREACH COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

September 18, 1985

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

Noting that a quorum was not present, Chairman C. W. (Bill) Hutchins called the meeting of the Computer Outreach Committee of the Legislative Council to order at 1:50 p.m., on Wednesday, September 18, 1985 in Committee Room 24 of the State House, Des Moines, Iowa. Chairman Hutchins stated that the meeting would be conducted as a subcommittee meeting to develop recommendations for consideration of the full Committee before the Legislative Council meeting on September 19, 1985. Members present in addition to the Chairman were:

Senator Joseph Welsh
Representative Bob Arnould

Also present were Dennis Prouty, Director, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Joe O'Hern, Chief Clerk, Iowa House of Representatives, Sandy Scharf, Director, Computer Support Bureau, Thane R. Johnson, Senior Research Analyst, Legislative Service Bureau, and other interested persons.

OPTIONS: LEGISLATIVE & NONLEGISLATIVE ACCESS TO LEGISLATIVE COMPUTER

Chairman Hutchins stated that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the various options before the Subcommittee concerning legislative and nonlegislative access to the legislative computer system. Chairman Hutchins suggested that the current emphasis should be on what type of nonlegislative access including, but not limited to, lobbyists, state agencies, and news media, should be allowed access to the legislative computer system. He further commented that procedures must be outlined on the method of determining who should be included in the access, how many, the cost, and the method for selecting applicants if the number desiring access is beyond the capacity of the proposed system.

QUESTIONS ON NONLEGISLATIVE ACCESS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COMPUTER

In reply to a question by Senator Welsh, Mr. Scharf stated that access to the legislative computer system could be by asynchronous or synchronous systems. He stated that an asynchronous access would be through a "black box converter" at a significant cost to the user. He added that the synchronous access would be through compatible personal computers at a substantially lower cost to the user. Mr. Scharf estimated that the total one-time cost to the

state for establishing the synchronous access to the system would be \$11,500. He added that this would allow four telephone access lines to twenty nonlegislative users. In reply to another question by Senator Welsh, Mr. Scharf stated that he does not believe that there will be any interference with the legislative use of its computer with twenty users. He added that Maryland began their access system with eight lines for thirty users without problem and that Illinois has experienced no access or interference problems with their system. Mr. Scharf added that the \$11,500 start-up cost to the state could be repaid by charging the 20 original users a fee of \$572 each for the 1986 Session.

In reply to a question by Chairman Hutchins, Mr. O'Hern stated that the current subscription service for legislative printed materials costs \$502 per session and includes House and Senate journals, clip sheets, bills, and House and Senate calendars. Mr. Scharf noted that the computer subscription service would not include the House or Senate journals.

In reply to another question by Chairman Hutchins, Mr. Scharf stated that in addition to the subscription fee, an outside user would have a one-time cost of \$745 for a compatible stepboard, a \$50 cable fee, and the cost of a telephone line rental. He added that this access to the computer would allow the user a bill history, bill history user list, House and Senate calendars, central library index, document display, subject index, fiscal information, Code retrieval, and Code search capability. He added that the question to be answered is whether or not fiscal information, Code retrieval, and Code search capabilities should be included in the basic fee.

Chairman Hutchins commented that the Code retrieval and the Code search capabilities should be considered an add-on feature at extra cost when the other basic services are operational. He added that these services could be time-consuming and interfere with access time for other users. He also stated that he does not believe that the service should include fiscal information at this time.

In reply to a question by Senator Welsh, Mr. Scharf stated that the cost of a stepboard can be reduced by volume purchase and that, potentially, the initial access fee to the legislative system could be increased to cover the cost of the stepboard purchased at a government discount. On the other hand, he stated, some potential users may already have a compatible stepboard for use and therefore the cost of the stepboard would not be a factor in their subscription service.

In reply to a question by Representative Arnould, Mr. Scharf stated that there will be some training cost involved in the subscription service, but he does not believe that it will be significant. He stated that a \$600 fee would be sufficient to cover the one-time cost to the state plus the training that might be necessary. Mr. O'Hern commented that Ms. Virginia Rowan has

developed a general use guide book which can be used as a training booklet for subscribers.

MOTION-NONLEGISLATIVE SUBSCRIBER SERVICE TO LEGISLATIVE COMPUTER

After further discussion, Senator Welsh moved that the Subcommittee recommend to the full Committee that the Computer Support Bureau establish a nonlegislative subscriber service to the legislative computer system for not more than twenty subscribers using four access telephone lines. The synchronous communication system will cost each user an annual fee of \$600 plus the cost of a compatible stepboard, cable, and telephone line rental. Senator Welsh's motion also states that the nonlegislative subscriber service include the bill history, bill history user list, House and Senate calendars, central library index, document display, and subject index. The motion was adopted.

LEGISLATIVE SURVEY - COMPUTER ACCESS

The Subcommittee also directed Mr. Scharf to survey the members of the General Assembly to determine if there is an interest in individual outside access to the system and to determine when the members will want to begin access, presumably after the 1986 Session.

NONLEGISLATIVE USE - ADDITIONAL FACTORS

Chairman Hutchins commented that the Computer Support Bureau will have the capability of studying the use patterns of the nonlegislative subscribers to determine if a different basis for determining the subscriber fee should be used and that the Computer Support Bureau will have the capability of discontinuing nonlegislative subscriber use if that service interferes with the legislative use of the computer system. Additionally, he stated, access to Code search, Code retrieval, and fiscal information can be studied as additions to the system at an additional cost.

FUTURE MEETING

After further discussion, Chairman Hutchins stated that he will call a meeting of the full Committee at 1:25 p.m., Thursday, September 19, 1985, so that the full Committee can act on the recommendations of the Subcommittee prior to the Legislative Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

THANE R. JOHNSON
Senior Research Analyst