

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Executive Board March 18, 2024

AGUILAR: Good afternoon again, and welcome to the meeting of the Executive Board. My name is Senator Ray Aguilar. I represent the 35th Legislative District. I serve as Chair of the Executive Board. We'll start off having the members of the committee introduce themselves once more, starting out on my far right with Senator Clements.

CLEMENTS: Rob Clements, District 2.

BALLARD: Beau Ballard, District 21.

BOSTAR: Eliot Bostar, District 29.

LOWE: John Lowe, District 37.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Trevor Fitzgerald, committee legal counsel.

ARCH: John Arch, District 14.

RIEPE: Merv Riepe, District 12.

JACOBSON: Mike Jacobson, District 42.

AGUILAR: Also assisting the committee is the committee clerk, Sally Schultz. And our committee page today is Mataya Douty, a political science major at UNL. With that, we'll move to the first item on the agenda.

BOSTAR: Oh. Senator Vargas is here.

VARGAS: Yes, I'm here.

BOSTAR: Well, who are you? Where are you from?

VARGAS: My name is Senator Eliot Bostar, and I'm--

[LAUGHTER]

LOWE: Doppelganger.

VARGAS: To-- Tony Vargas, District 7: downtown south Omaha. Thank you.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: The first item on the agenda is the appointment of members of the Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board, commonly referred to just as the Forecasting Board. For members' information, the Forecasting Board is a nine-member board. By statute, five of those members are appointed by the Executive Board and four of those

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members are appointed by the Governor's Office. They, they serve a four-year term, and their terms expire in September. There was a request sent out for any additional nominations last month, and no additional nominations were made. However, all five members appointed last time by the Executive Board have expressed an interest in being reappointed. And those names and their--

LOWE: Some of--

TREVOR FITZGERALD: --home towns are listed.

BOSTAR: Yeah, move to reappointment--

VARGAS: Second.

BOSTAR: --all five members.

AGUILAR: We have a motion to reinstate all five.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Senator Vargas seconded.

AGUILAR: Senator Vargas second. All in favor? Sally?

VARGAS: Aye. Oh, sorry. I thought he said all in favor said aye.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Starting with Senator Riepe.

RIEPE: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Senator Slama absent. Senator Vargas.

VARGAS: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Senator Aguilar.

AGUILAR: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Speaker Arch.

ARCH: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Senator Ballard.

BALLARD: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Senator Bostar.

BOSTAR: Yes.

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SALLY SCHULTZ: Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Senator Lowe.

LOWE: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Motion is carried 8-0-0-1.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Next one, I'll go ahead and give the board an update on the NCSL pay study. As you may recall, the Executive Board approved a contract with the National Conference of State Legislatures to conduct a pay and classification study on behalf of the Legislature. Our office was provided an update last Thursday. The original timeline of the study called for NCSL to share preliminary findings and recommendations in February-- obviously, we are no longer in February-- and a final report to be delivered in April. They did report that they had some delays in acquiring market compensation data from a number of sources, so they're approximately one month behind schedule, as, as they, see it. They hope to submit preliminary recommendations by the end of the month. And they did say that-- so that they can focus on getting those recommendations to us, there may be some allitidal-- additional delay in their work to suggest, suggest revisions to the job descriptions for legislative positions. They, they did share a few notes on kind of what all they're looking at as far as market compensation data. There's currently 72 classifications of legislative employees. They have, as they dub it, over 400 comparable data points to those 72 positions of, of comparable positions in, in both the private sector as well as in, in other public sector areas. They have obtained data from both our executive and judicial branches, private data-- private sector data from-- for both the Omaha and Lincoln markets from multiple sources. They've had-- most of their delays were from a handful of local government employers as well as the university. And our office has been kind of helping them get in touch with the right people in those places where they needed someone to kind of nudge the appropriate entity to share information with NCSL to assist us. They did want to note that the market analysis they are going to be doing is going to be based on a fixed point in time, the point at which they began doing the study. So the, the analysis will include the salary increase that was approved in July 2023, but it will not necessarily include the pending July 2024 increase that this board has already approved because they're looking at that static point in time. The, the, the assumption being that, when they are ready with

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their findings, that, that the board would like a formal presentation from the pay study team as opposed to getting it passed through me. They hope to be able to present their findings to the board sometime in the month of May and are tentatively targeting the week of May 20 to provide that, that briefing. So this is my way of unfortunately saying that you might have to come back in May for a briefing if you'd like to more info on the study. That's [INAUDIBLE] that I have.

AGUILAR: Senator Arch-- Speaker Arch.

ARCH: Ques-- question. So up-- upon receiving their recommendations-- and that would be-- May is preliminary recommendations?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: They-- I think they want to get preliminary recommendations to us by the end of this month. And then--

ARCH: OK.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: --the final report with those recommendations included in, in May.

ARCH: Presentation.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Yes.

ARCH: So we receive recommendations from them in May. What's the process then for acting or not acting on those recommendations? Because obviously we're outside of our budget, right?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: So-- yeah. Tho-- so those, those recommendations, if, if, if adopted by the Executive Board-- I mean, it, it-- one assumes that that would require, you know, revising a number of policies, certainly up-- if we're updating all the job descriptions, we'll have to approve all of those new job descriptions. But I think the goal and intent is that we would have those recommendations, should the board choose to adopt any or all of them, that we would incorporate that in the budget request for the following biennium.

ARCH: So would this Executive Board act on those recommendations or would the next Executive Board--

TREVOR FITZGERALD: So this Executive Board will be the-- will be the board that actually has to approve the, the budget-- the proposed budget for the Legislative Council sometime this fall. So we would presumably want to bake that into that budget request. Like any other agency, the Legislative Council makes a budget request that is, that

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is then forwarded to the Governor's Budget Office. But it al-- it always is a situation where the previous Executive Board recommends the budget for the following biennium, you know, under the purview of a new Executive Board.

AGUILAR: Any other questions? Anything else?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: That's all I have. We'll-- oh, I'm sorry. Senator Vargas.

VARGAS: Different item, not on the agenda, but do you have information on the timeline for the sort of super accountability committee from the LR that we passed on when we'll meet to discuss timeline, number of dates, election of individuals leading it?

ARCH: So, so Senator Aguilar just-- he and I spoke briefly about it this morning. I think that the next step, which we did with that LR29, is you meet to, to ide-- identify a chair and a vice chair, and then, then they go off and work and develop a work plan, and, and then, and then get going with the, with the study itself. And I'm assuming upon adjournment.

VARGAS: OK. Just curious.

AGUILAR: Other questions? I'd entertain a motion.

BALLARD: So moved.

LOWE: Second.

AGUILAR: Motion and a second. Everybody say aye. We are adjourned.