

MINUTES

Senior & Disabled Services
Advocacy Committee
Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard St., Eugene

November 18, 2005

Members Present: Kathy Jenness, Chair; Dan Arkin, Tim Baxter, Dianne Burch, Marion Esty, Mary Johnson, Ed Necker, Jim Patterson, and Leslie Relle.

Members Excused: Jane Boren, Andrea Gillispie, and Maureen Wadst.

Guests Present: Laura Weil and Representative Paul Holvey.

Staff Present: Patti Little and Ted Stevens.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The November 18, 2005 meeting of the Advocacy Committee was called to order at 2:30 PM by Kathy Jenness, Committee Chairperson. Persons in attendance introduced themselves.

2. DIALOGUE WITH LEGISLATOR

At the beginning of this portion of the meeting, staff announced that Representative Bruce Hanna had a conflicting event in Roseburg, and that Senator Floyd Prozanski called earlier in the day to inform the Committee that he may not be able to attend due to an unforeseen emergency.

Ed Necker served the moderator for this portion of the meeting. He welcomed Representative Holvey and invited him to describe the key issues that he worked on during the 2005 Session of the State Legislature.

Mr. Holvey shared that he sat on two House Committees, Election & Rules and Business & Labor. After briefly describing the scopes of these committees, he

spoke about the bills upon which he worked that were consistent with LCOG's priorities for the Session. Specifically, he addressed SB 329, the Prescription Drug Assistance bill sponsored by Senator Bill Morrisette, and a health care reform bill that he co-sponsored with Representative Greenlick (D-Portland). Regarding this latter bill, he shared that it failed to muster the support needed for enactment and, as a result, it is now being pushed as a potential ballot initiative. Turning to the budget situation, Representative Holvey commented that he found it a frustrating process. He shared that the process was hamstrung from the outset by the Speaker's decision to prohibit the House's consideration of raising-bills during the session. Given this limitation, Mr. Holvey stated that he worked to prevent the passage of new tax expenditures. In addition, he opined that there is a critical need for tax reform in Oregon, but doubted that reforms will be enacted any time soon, given the public's resistance to considering other raising-revenues methods.

At this point in the conversation, Ted Stevens mentioned that S&DS has a U of O graduate student researching the tax expenditures approved by the State Legislature for the 2005-07 biennium. He offered to provide a copy of the student's final report to Representative Holvey. He also suggested that one or more bills be drafted for the 2007 Session calling for higher levels of scrutiny by the Legislature of tax expenditures, as well as the insertion of sunset dates in all tax expenditures (to insure that they are reviewed periodically by the Legislature and only re-authorized if they continue to satisfy a public need). Representative Holvey seemed open to these ideas.

In response to a question about what S&DS' advocates did well prior to and during the 2005 Session, Representative Holvey stated that we communicated well with him. He shared that he appreciated that there were facts and figures to support our advocacy, suggesting to him that we had done our homework. Concerning the question of what we could do better, he offered the following suggestions:

- That we use the media as much as possible to educate the public and elected officials about our priorities.
- That we help elect better candidates.
- That we resist the urge to use acronyms in our communications (oral and written); he stated that it is a mistake to assume that legislators are familiar with the programs for seniors and people with disabilities.
- That we inform all legislators, especially those not on the Human Services Subcommittee(s) of the Ways and Mean or Budget Committee(s), where the

funding for S&DS' programs resides in the State Budget. He suggested that the following information would be very helpful: bill number, where money for S&DS' programs can be found in the bill, and comments regarding the adequacy of the amount(s) budgeted for S&DS' programs.

Turning to a different topic, Representative Holvey stated that his senior and disabled constituents have expressed to him concerns about prescription drugs and transportation. He indicated that he hopes to address the following matters if re-elected to serve in the 2007 Legislature: health care (the need for progressive legislation), solar energy for new and remodeled public buildings, and a bill to tax carbon emissions. Following his presentation of his desires for the 2007 Session, members urged him to add three items to his list:

- Tax expenditure legislation (see comments above);
- State funds to cover the costs of prescription drug co-pays for low income Oregonians on Medicare Part D; and
- Mechanisms to better utilize existing lift-equipped vehicles (like school buses, church vans, etc.) to meet the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

After approximately 90 minutes of dialogue, Ed Necker concluded this portion of the meeting by thanking Representative Holvey for taking the time to meet with the Committee. At 4:05 PM he turned the gavel back to Kathy Jenness, Committee Chair, to run the balance of the meeting.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2005 MEETING

Marion Esty stated that she had informed S&DS staff in advance of the October Committee meeting that she would be in California on personal business on the day of the October meeting. Therefore, she asked that the Minutes be amended to reflect that her absence was excused.

Motion: Moved by Mary Johnson and seconded by Dan Arkin to approve the Minutes of the October 2005 Advocacy Committee meeting, as amended per Marion Esty's request. Motion passed unanimously.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

a. December 9th Meeting in Florence

Plans were discussed for the December 9, 2005 Advocacy Committee meeting and legislative conservation with coastal legislators. Patti Little agreed to coordinate transportation (carpools) for members from the Valley. Dianne Burch provided details on the plans for lunch prior to the meeting at the Grape Leaf Bistro in Florence. She mentioned that Representative Arnie Roblan may join the group for lunch. Finally, Ed Necker asked for input on the “conversation” portion of the meeting agenda. No one suggested modifications.

b. Tax Expenditures – Proposed Criteria for Review

Ted Stevens distributed and reviewed a revised set of proposed criteria developed by S&DS staff and the University of Oregon intern, Mark Welch. Jim Patterson asked why certain tax expenditures were excluded from consideration for elimination, especially those designed to strengthen major industries. Ted explained the rationale used by staff and the intern. Ted also asked if members of the Committee would like to work with staff and the intern on this project. Jim Patterson and Marion Esty expressed interest in serving on a subcommittee of the Advocacy Committee to work on it. Regarding the question of timing, Patti Little explained that Mark Welch’s experience with S&DS will conclude at the end of Fall Term (i.e., December 2005). Since it is highly unlikely that S&DS staff will have the time to carry on this work after Mark’s departure, Ted Stevens suggested that the Committee empower this ad hoc subcommittee to finalize the criteria for the review and evaluation of tax expenditures.

Motion: Moved by Mary Johnson and seconded by Ed Necker to empower the ad hoc subcommittee comprised of Jim Patterson and Marion Esty to finalize the criteria for the identification of tax expenditures to be considered for possible elimination. Motion passed unanimously.

Following the adoption of this motion, Patti Little agreed to arrange a meeting of the ad hoc subcommittee, the U of O intern, and S&DS staff.

5. OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. A FamiliesUSA email containing information on recent Congressional votes on a budget reconciliation bill with deep cuts to Medicaid and other important social programs was distributed. Members with an interest in this matter were encouraged to communicate their concerns to members of Oregon's Congressional delegation.

b. Dan Arkin reported on two items. First, he shared that LILA hosted a meeting with the City of Eugene's Traffic Engineer, Tom Larsen, regarding his plan to replace the traffic signals at the corner of 10th and Olive in downtown Eugene with 4-way stop signs. Dan reported that members of the disability community were very vocal in their opposition to the remove of these signals. Given the opposition expressed by members of the disability community, it was reported that this replacement project is on hold while Mr. Larsen studies the issue. A follow-up meeting will be held. Second, Dan reported on the Medicare Part D kick-off event at the Lane County Fairgrounds was described. Dan reported that about 700 people attended the event, which was sponsored by a coalition of community agencies and organizations, including Senior & Disabled Services.

8. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING/ADJOURN

Kathy Jenness reminded members that the next meeting of the Advocacy Committee will be held on Friday, December 9, 2005, 1:30 – 3:30 PM, at the Florence Events Center, Florence.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM.