Government Restructuring and Operations Review Commission
Meeting Minutes No. X

DAY/DATE:	**Tuesday, January 26, 2016**
TIME:	**2:00PM-4:30PM**
LOCATION:	Ethan Allen Room—Vermont Statehouse
ATTENDEES:	John Sayles, Jeff Wilson, Paul Costello, Sue Zeller, Mitzi Johnson, Jane Kitchel, Ian Davis
ABSENT:	
PURPOSE:	Regular Meeting
DISTRIBUTED	Email and post

Item Number	Item Description	Action By
1.0	2:00 PM—Call to Order	John Sayles
2.0	Review agenda—Representative Mitzi Johnson and Senator Jane Kitchel added.	
3.0	MOTION: Approve the minutes from 12/21/2015 as presented. 1st by Jeff, 2nd by Paul; unanimously approved.	
4.0	New Business: Commission discussed dates and times for future meetings. Commission agreed to the following: Wednesday 02/17/2016 Tuesday 03/29/2016 Tuesday 04/26/2016 Tuesday 05/24/2016 Tuesday 06/21/2016 Tuesday 07/26/2016 All meetings are 2:00 PM – 4:30 PM Sue Zeller will post to AoA website.	
5.0	Representative Mitzi Johnson and Senator Jane Kitchel- Mitzi Johnson- • We in the legislature have been trying to figure out how to do things differently in state government; those conversations can be threatening and difficult to have. The Commission was created as a mechanism to look at alternatives, that is, more efficient and effective ways to invest public dollars. • There are several perennial topics that continually crop up: • Veterans Home: should the state be operating a nursing home? What are other options? If we are designing a system to properly serve Vermont's veterans, what would that look like—compared to the current system—and determine how to best bridge the two.	

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- Law Enforcement: Vermont has a police academy that individuals go to, graduate from, spend three months at a Vermont municipality, and then are scooped up by an out-of-state municipality—*and we fund this*.
- Fish Hatchery*:* Should we be in the business of growing our own fish, or should there be other alternatives.
- Aging Correctional Facilities*:* These facilities are in desperate need of capital improvement. Could we develop a state of the art central entity—one that could perhaps generate income, produce cost savings, economies of scale, etc. Example of 248 population that is expensive to house under current system.

Q. Paul Costello—what about the rhythm of the legislature? Have the policy committees looked at these issues, or are they avoiding them?
A. Mitzi Johnson—typically they answer these questions in a silo. There are not many people championing efficiencies in the veteran's home, for example. We feel the pressure in terms of costs; other committees come at the issue from a policy standpoint.

Jane Kitchel-
- How do you put in place the right metrics or indicators on how programs are performing? How do you ensure that that money is serving the right purpose? Most times, advocacy groups are looking to add more, rather than look at performance measures—from a budget perspective.

Q. Paul Costello—the Commission's charge is broad, have you though about broad changes in terms of restructuring?
A. Mitzi Johnson—the language was broad on purpose.
A. Jane Kitchel—we didn't want limit the scope of potential recommendations. The charge is probably a strength and a weakness.

Mitzi Johnson-
- It does raise the question of whether or not some agencies are too large so that they are unable to be nimble. On that same note, are some too small that they don't even warrant being called an agency. What about agencies that have similar MOU's—should they be combine?

Jane Kitchel-
- There is a bill proposing to break up AHS. Have we created an agency that is too large and too difficult to hold someone accountable for performance? AHS has outgrown its original concept.

Q. Jeff Wilson—what about pulling corrections out of AHS?
A. Jane Kitchel—no, that is not on the bill. DOC does so much more than just house criminals. There is no right answer—it is how you get the best utility of the resource. Legacy programs have their problems.
Q. John Sayles—we have been looking from a broader perspective, not necessarily from a program-to-program basis. We

are concerned about cultural problems that are preventing us (i.e. state government) from tackling the big problems. Many of the issues are cultural and not necessarily programmatic. How can be grapple with those?

Q. Paul Costello—are there agencies that could be consolidated? What should the state of Vermont not be doing anymore?

A. Jane Kitchel—the fish hatchery was an example, as was the nursing home.

Q. Paul Costello—we would love to get more practical ideas on agencies.

A. Mitzi Johnson—AG and ANR are a great example—are there places where those overlaps and can be combined? Do DOL and ACCD have overlap? Why is the state in the business of selling booze? There are places where we need serious infrastructure improvements (e.g. warehouses for liquor inventory)—there are other state models for privately operated liquor control, while still maintaining taxing abilities.

Q. Jeff Wilson—are there thoughts on designated agencies? Should it be the status quo?

A. Mitzi Johnson—we could restructure our payment methodology, but we would have a hard time restructuring those agencies that are not ours, though they are funded by us. We could think about partnering with state agencies.

A. Jane Kitchel—again, perhaps much of this made sense 20 years ago, but today that is not the case. We need to look at different models. I think we have a parallel workforce in many places with many commonalities.

Jane Kitchel-
  • Fee for space funding mechanism—costs have inflated because there is a disconnect between what they want and what BGS can provide. What is the best mechanism to finance space for the various departments? Right now, Commissioners are complaining about fee for space. Oftentimes, BGS are just reacting. These space needs will be ongoing.

Q. John Sayles—what would be an optimal outcome for you out of the work that we are doing?

A. Mitzi Johnson—pick some areas that you can dig into, an auditor of sorts. For example, here are some of the current issues, here are some alternatives. Or you could brainstorm and develop a laundry list, similar to what Senator Kitchel and I mentioned. Provide your input given your experience in state government. I think a combination of some tangible places to dig a bit more and identify alternatives or better ways of doing things. Pull people away from the lines drawn in the sand on these issues and get people to start thinking differently.

A. Jane Kitchel—External examination in a thoughtful, deliberative way was the intention of the ambiguity of the charge. You are free of the political pressures. We understand that it is hard to step back and challenge the status quo—everything in government has a constituency. You are free of that. If you can look at specific things

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	to identify (e.g. training programs) that could be of better long-term service to the state, it might be a way of helping the legislature make progress moving forward. Q. Paul Costello—you see overlap everywhere throughout the state, at every level. I think it is great that we have the ability to ignore the politics when addressing these complex issues. Do you see opportunities for regionalization in the state that could better serve Vermonters? A. Jane Kitchel—there may be some opportunity, that is for you to decide.	
6.0	New Business: Ian Davis will begin drafting February Report. Sue Zeller will post future meeting dates to AoA website. Commissioners will contact community members to testify at upcoming meetings.	

This summary of the meeting forms the basis upon which we will proceed. Please respond with changes, corrections or questions to the originator within 5 working days. If no corrections, changes or questions are received within 5 working days, these minutes will become part of the permanent record.

By: Ian Davis
Cc: Committee Members