

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**Seventy-fifth Session  
February 5, 2009**

The Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Cochair Bernice Mathews at 8:06 a.m. on Thursday, February 5, 2009, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Bernice Mathews, Cochair  
Senator Bob Coffin  
Senator Joyce Woodhouse  
Senator William J. Raggio  
Senator Dean A. Rhoads  
Senator Warren B. Hardy II

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Senator Steven A. Horsford, Cochair (Excused)

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brian Burke, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst  
Gary L. Ghiggeri, Senate Fiscal Analyst  
Barbara Richards, Committee Secretary

**COCHAIR MATHEWS:**

I want to thank Senator Raggio for his tolerance and mentoring. Senator Raggio has been in the Legislature for 37 years. We appreciate you, Senator, for the wisdom you have given this State all these years. With the start of the 75th Session, Senator Raggio has served in Legislative Sessions longer than anyone. He has served in 12 Special Sessions and 19 Regular Sessions. He has been the leader in his party for 31 of the 37 years. Senator Raggio is in his 16th Regular Session as a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, an all-time record. He served as Chair for ten Regular Sessions. He has chaired the Interim Finance Committee for ten years. He has authored some important legislation through the years. We are recognizing Senator Raggio for his long service to this Committee and the State of Nevada.

**GARY L. GHIGGERI (Senate Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division):**

Please refer to the proposed Senate Committee on Finance, Committee Standing Rules 2009 Session ([Exhibit C](#)). I have indicated changes from those approved in the 2007 Session. The primary change is the deletion of Rule 8, based on conversations with Mrs. Claire Clift, Secretary of the Senate, who stated minority reports have not been filed. Rules 14 and 15 have been added based on past practice by the Senate Committee on Finance. A copy of the rules as approved by the 2007 Senate Committee on Finance has been included for comparative purposes.

**SENATOR RAGGIO:**

Rule 8 was requested by the minority party, in earlier years, to always have a voice in the Committee.

COCHAIR MATHEWS:

When we reviewed these rules, Mrs. Clift stated Rule 8 has never been used. Both the Assembly and the Senate deleted it.

SENATOR COFFIN:

In the Senate Committee on Taxation, we adopted the 2007 rules verbatim. There was no paragraph like this. It probably is not a good idea to delete Rule 8. This is something we should consider.

SENATOR COFFIN MOVED FOR ADOPTION OF THE RULES, REINSTATING RULE 8 INTO THE COMMITTEE RULES OF THE 2009 SESSION.

SENATOR RAGGIO SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (Cochair Horsford and Senator Hardy were absent for the vote.)

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MR. GHIGGERI:

The next item is Budget Reviews – Full Committee/Subcommittee/Staff, ([Exhibit D](#), original is on file in the Research Library). The only major change from the 2007 Session is the addition of Cultural Affairs, Economic Development and Tourism to the General Government Subcommittee. The referrals to the subcommittee are for further review because of recommendations which are included in the *Executive Budget*. On the sheet showing the budgets being reviewed by the Senate Committee on Finance, staff or subcommittees, we are showing new to staff recommendations. Please review this listing and let me know if any changes are desired.

SENATOR RAGGIO:

Are there changes to the subcommittee assignments?

MR. GHIGGERI:

There are no changes in assignments.

SENATOR RAGGIO:

It is always difficult to decide where bills containing appropriations should be sent. They may go to this Committee or, because of a policy involvement, to some other standing committee. There is no firm procedure for that. There are two problems. The policy, important to some of the committees, is given to this Committee. We are not always aware of the policy considerations. Secondly, the bills are delayed in the other committees which may cause a problem with a serious fiscal impact. I suggest the committees be told where those bills are and a time limit should be set to have more control. I do not like Joint Referrals and we should avoid them. We should pay attention to this kind of issue.

COCHAIR MATHEWS:

We will revisit this issue when Cochair Horsford is present.

SENATOR COFFIN:

The Adjutant General Construction Fund is assigned to staff. I would prefer it be placed under the Capital Improvement Program.

MR. GHIGGERI:

The Adjutant General Construction Fund is basically an account receiving rental income which is used to maintain the armories. It is a small budget. The armory construction projects are included in the Capital Improvement Program.

The next item to be discussed is the 2009 Session Joint Subcommittee Assignments ([Exhibit E](#)). The information provided shows assignments for the Senate Committee on Finance as well as the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means. The next page shows the functional areas each subcommittee is responsible for reviewing in the budget. The Committee members have been advised of their subcommittee assignments.

The next item is information showing the Fiscal Analysis Division Agency Assignments – July 2008 ([Exhibit F](#)). Currently, it shows Mr. Mark Stevens as the Assembly Fiscal Analyst and me as the Senate Fiscal Analyst. Mr. Steve Abba and Mr. Tracy Raxter are Assembly Deputy Fiscal Analysts. Mr. Brian Burke is the Senate Deputy Fiscal Analyst. We divide the Fiscal Analysis Division into teams. Messrs. Mark Krmpotic, Rick Combs, Mike Chapman, Bob Atkinson and Russell Guindon are each responsible for a team. The chart shows the functions of each team and which analyst is in charge. If there are questions concerning specific areas, please address them to either Brian or me. We can either answer the question right away or direct the question to the proper person.

The next item is the Senate Committee on Finance Progress Report as of February 5, 2009, Day 4 of the 2009 Legislative Session ([Exhibit G](#)). This report will be provided to the Committee on the first committee meeting day of each week. It shows the number of budgets the Committee is responsible for reviewing and the progress made in the review. The report includes budgets closed, bills assigned to the Committee and Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) assigned to the Committee.

A copy of the State of Nevada, 2009 Legislative Session, 120-Day Calendar ([Exhibit H](#)) has been provided. There are several important dates. On March 31, the Committee is to start closing budgets. The *State of Nevada Economic Forum* report is due on May 1. On May 4, the Joint Subcommittees begin resolving their budget differences with a target date of May 21. The budget bills are scheduled to be introduced by May 27 for the work of the Legislative Session to be completed by June 1.

COCHAIR MATHEWS:

I want to point out the importance of these dates and emphasize we should attempt to process our bills in a timely manner.

SENATOR RAGGIO:

We have a constitutional requirement prohibiting the presentation of any appropriation bill until we comply with the Education First Initiative. In the next biennium, unless we pass a bill to fund Kindergarten through Grade 12 education, we will be unable to pass any bill that includes appropriations.

I understand there are time limitations in the proposed stimulus package. Appropriations must be made after the Governor receives the funds. The Legislative Counsel Bureau is investigating what appears to be a potential problem. We may have a difficult situation in late March or April when we are on a timeline to fund something that comes through that proposed stimulus package. To comply with the initiative, we will first have to pass an education funding bill. This will be a problem unless the bill is very basic.

SENATOR COFFIN:

This is similar to when we receive an initiative and are required to act within 30 days. We could pass a basic education funding bill to fulfill the requirement and proceed from there.

COCHAIR MATHEWS:

In the last session, we had a discussion regarding this issue. We heard all the other bills, but they were on hold until we did the education bills.

SENATOR RAGGIO:

That is the problem. The bills cannot be on hold if federal law requires disbursements to be made within a 30-day period. We need to keep this in mind.

COCHAIR MATHEWS:

Mr. Ghiggeri has spoken with Mrs. Brenda Erdoes, Legislative Counsel, and she will advise us on this issue.

MR. GHIGGERI:

The Fiscal Division prepares *Senate Committee on Finance Budget Highlights* to assist in reviewing the budgets. These documents are for exclusive use by Committee members. They are not to be reproduced or given to non-committee members. Binders have been provided to the Committee members to file their Highlights. The committee secretaries are not responsible for filing the Highlights. We attempt to deliver these documents the day before the hearing. If a meeting is scheduled on a Monday, we will attempt to have the Highlights done by the previous Friday. If that is not possible, we will attempt to get them to the Committee over the weekend.

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COCHAIR MATHEWS:  
There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting is adjourned at 8:41 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Barbara Richards,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Bernice Mathews, Cochair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_