

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON JOINT RULES

Mon., October 10, 2022 * State House Room 11
See [agenda](#)¹ and [livestream](#)²

At 1:00 p.m., the Speaker called the meeting to order.

Members present: Rep. Jill L. Krowinski, Speaker, Chair
Sen. Becca A. Balint, President *Pro Tempore*, Vice Chair
Sen. Randy D. Brock
Sen. Alison Clarkson
Rep. Emily Long
Rep. Mike McCarthy
Rep. Patricia McCoy

Others present: Jennifer Carbee, Director and Chief Counsel, Office of Legislative Counsel
Sarah Clark, Deputy Fiscal Officer, Joint Fiscal Office
Arlene Donovan, Director, Office of Legislative Human Resources
Nigel Hicks-Tibbles, First Assistant Clerk of the House
Mel Ferrant, member of the public
Mike Ferrant, Director, Office of Legislative Operations
Conor Kennedy, Chief of Staff, Office of the Speaker
Janet Miller, Sergeant at Arms
Kevin Moore, Director, Office of Legislative Information Technology
Matthew Romei, Chief, Capitol Police Department [*remote*]
Rebecca Silbernagel, Journal Clerk of the House
Alona Tate, Second Assistant Clerk of the House
Carolyn Wesley, Chief of Staff, Office of President *Pro Tempore*
BetsyAnn Wrask, Clerk of the House, Clerk of the Committee

Legislative Vaccination and Test Policy. The Clerk gave an overview of the Committee's jurisdiction over the current [Legislative Vaccination and Test Policy](#),³ which is limited to members of the public, and which strongly recommends that members of the public provide proof of fully protected COVID-19 vaccination and perform a COVID-19 rapid test provided by the Sergeant at Arms. The policy also requires the Sergeant at Arms to provide members of the public with a COVID-19-related public health questionnaire.

The Sergeant at Arms advised that her office has a low supply of rapid test kits, and that new tests cost \$8–\$9 apiece. The Sergeant has been providing rapid tests upon request to members and staff in the building when needed.

¹ <https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/agenda/2022/5983>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHB3j3K7yfE>

³ <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/Joint%20Rules/Documents%20and%20Testimony/W~BetsyAnn%20Wrask,%20Clerk%20of%20the%20House~Legislative%20Vaccination%20and%20Test%20Policy~10-10-2022.pdf>

The Committee discussed discontinuing the policy as applied to the public, since obtaining tests is cost prohibitive, and since members of the public have generally not been providing proof of COVID-19 vaccination or requesting rapid tests. The Committee requested that the Clerk draft alternative language that strongly recommends that members of the public be vaccinated against COVID-19 and to refrain from entering legislative spaces if they exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

Legislative space issues. The Committee then reviewed the legislative space issues set forth in #s 9–14 on the [spreadsheet](#)⁴ tracking action on the Legislative Advisory Committee on the State House’s recommendations and took testimony from the Sergeant at Arms.

In regard to #9 (pausing use of Card Room by advocates and special interests), on motion of Sen. Clarkson, the Committee unanimously voted to allow the Card Room to be scheduled and used for events on a vote of 7-0-1. (This vote supersedes the Committee’s original 10/8/21 vote to pause the use of the Card Room.)

In regard to #10 (limiting use of cafeteria for “side bars” and receptions), the Committee agreed to make no change.

In regard to #11 (pausing use of Cedar Creek Room for presentations, large press conferences, and receptions), the Committee agreed to make no change. The Committee discussed that this continued pause would likely apply for the upcoming biennium. The Committee also discussed that events with food would be held in the cafeteria.

Numbers 12 (scheduling press conferences) and 13 (large press conferences at 109 State St.) are related to #11, and therefore the Committee discussed that no change would be made.

In regard to #14 (limiting school and group tours), the Committee agreed to make no change.

Legislative Vaccination and Test Policy (cont.). In a continuation of its earlier discussion, the Clerk reviewed with the Committee a potential motion for the Committee in regard to public health signage:

The Office of Sergeant at Arms shall post public health signage near entrances of legislative spaces that strongly recommends that members of the public be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of entry, and that asks members of the public

⁴<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/WorkGroups/Joint%20Rules/Documents%20and%20Testimony/W~BetsyAnn%20Wrask,%20Clerk%20of%20the%20House~JRC%20Record%20of%20Actions%20on%20LACoS%20Recommendations~10-10-2022.pdf>

whether they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and directs them to refrain from entering a legislative space if they exhibit those symptoms.

On motion of Sen. Clarkson, the Committee unanimously voted to discontinue the Legislative Vaccination and Test Policy as applied to members of the public on a vote of 7-0-1.

On motion of Sen. Clarkson, the Committee unanimously voted to order the Sergeant at Arms to post the public health signage described above on a vote of 7-0-1.

Security Cameras in the State House. The Sergeant at Arms provided an update on the Chief of Capitol Police's grant application for the installation of security cameras in the State House. The Chief then provided an overview of his proposed seven phases for this project: 1) cameras on the outside of the State House; 2) legislative IT infrastructure, a.k.a. "back of the house"; 3) hallways and common areas inside the State House; 4) House Chamber; 5) Senate Chamber; 6) House committee rooms; and 7) Senate committee rooms. The Chief then sought approval from the Committee for the first three phases of this project and, along with the Sergeant at Arms, answered questions from the Committee.

On motion of Sen. Brock, the Committee unanimously approved the Chief proceeding with the first three phases of the State House security camera installation project—1) cameras on the outside of the State House; 2) legislative IT infrastructure, a.k.a. "back of the house"; and 3) hallways and common areas inside the State House—described above, on a vote of 7-0-1.

Committee discussion. Upon the Speaker's request for Committee recommendations for future meeting topics, Sen. Clarkson requested that the Committee discuss legislative spaces such as committee rooms, a legislative lounge, and workspaces, and relatedly, the State House restoration and expansion project. Upon request, the Sergeant at Arms advised that an RFP is moving forward regarding schematics for what the expansion project could be.

The Speaker advised that she will attempt to coordinate a future Committee meeting on the same date as a Joint Legislative Management Committee meeting.

The Speaker adjourned the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

BetsyAnn Wrask

BetsyAnn Wrask
Clerk of the House
Clerk of the Committee