OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
STATE OF MINNESOTA • James Nobles, Legislative Auditor

Date: November 6, 2019

To: Members, Legislative Audit Commission

From: Jim Nobles, Legislative Auditor

Subject: Reappointments

I am deeply grateful for your support and the opportunity I have had to serve as Legislative Auditor. It has allowed me to work with you and other legislators on that most important principle of good government—accountability. It has also allowed me to work with a highly skilled and motivated group of professionals in the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Because I want to continue that work, I have asked you to reappoint me to another term as Legislative Auditor. I have attached a brief statement of my background and accomplishments, as well as a position description for the Legislative Auditor.

While I can bring my skills and experiences to OLA, I cannot be successful without two strong deputies. Therefore, if you reappoint me, I will ask you to confirm my appointment of Judy Randall as Deputy for the Program Evaluation Division and Chris Buse as Deputy for the Financial Audit Division. I have worked closely with both of them; I know them well. They are exceptional professionals and dedicated public servants. We are fortunate to have them leading OLA's two divisions.

Judy Randall's leadership is built on high standards. She is herself an experienced and rigorous researcher, and she carries that experience into her management of the Program Evaluation Division (PED). Judy came to OLA in 1998 with strong academic training, particularly in quantitative methods. I promoted Judy to an evaluation manager in 2005 and appointed her to be the PED deputy in 2015. Judy knows what it takes—from start to finish—to conduct credible, complex evaluations. Therefore, as deputy, she requires evaluators to use all of the appropriate methods needed to gather the facts and complete a thorough, fair, and insightful evaluation. Judy is an excellent writer, editor, and presenter. She is committed to OLA's mission and role, she understands the legislative environment, and she is respectful of those with whom she interacts. Managing PED is a challenging and demanding job. It requires skill, energy, and intellect, and those are the qualities Judy brings to the office every day.

Chris Buse's leadership is built on dedication to public service and a deep knowledge of state government, particularly its financial operations and computer systems. Chris started his career at OLA in 1986, where he established and trained our first IT audit team. In 2006, the executive branch hired Chris to be the state's chief information security officer. After serving in that role

for 11 years, Chris—who is a CPA—returned to OLA in 2017 as Deputy Legislative Auditor for the Financial Audit Division (FAD). Chris is a strategic manager and team builder. Shortly after becoming deputy, he laid out a plan to restructure FAD, and he continues to systematically implement its reforms. His focus is, however, not just on improving the division's internal processes; his ultimate focus is on ensuring that FAD serves legislators with meaningful audit reports.

Judy, Chris, and I work well together. We complement each others skills and experience. We are a good team, dedicated to helping you, other legislators, and executive officials achieve improvements in the operations of state agencies and the performance of state programs.

Thank you for your support and consideration of our reappointments.

Attachments

James R. Nobles

Resume

I have been Legislative Auditor for 36 years. Prior to that I served as Deputy Legislative Auditor for the Program Evaluation Division for four years, and prior to that I was a research analyst at the House of Representatives, Research Department, staffing the Governmental Operations Committee.

I have a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Brigham Young University (1972), and a Master of Arts in Policy Analysis from the University of Minnesota (1974).

Accomplishments

- Provided leadership to the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) for 36 years.
- Articulated OLA's mission and goals to legislators, executive officials, the public, and OLA staff.
- Worked with the Legislative Audit Commission to defend and strengthen OLA's independence.
- Proposed various amendments to the laws that govern OLA, particularly its authority and jurisdiction.
- Presented numerous reports to the Legislative Audit Commission and various legislative committees.
- Presented budgets for OLA operations to House and Senate finance committees.
- Briefed numerous legislators on OLA's findings and recommendations.
- Conducted numerous investigations and special reviews.
- Appointed five deputy legislative auditors, hired OLA's first legal counsel, and established a position to lead OLA's responses to allegations.
- Reviewed, edited, and approved hundreds of evaluation, audit, and special review reports.
- Presented an overview of OLA to numerous university classes and civic organizations.
- Worked with county and federal criminal investigators and prosecutors on alleged fraud in public programs.

Goals

Mission. My primary goal will always be to fulfill the mission the Legislature has established for OLA—to be a professional, nonpartisan instrument of legislative oversight and accountability in state government.

Standards. To fulfill OLA's mission I must ensure that OLA meets high standards. That requires OLA to have well-trained, qualified staff and rigorous systems of quality control. The result must always be audit, evaluation, and special review reports that are accurate, objective, timely, and useful.

Respect. I will always require OLA to be respectful of the people and organizations we audit, evaluate, and investigate. I will also always require OLA to be respectful of legislators and the legislative process. In addition, I will maintain a work environment at OLA that encourages staff to bring forth concerns and suggest improvements.

Support. I will support OLA staff by ensuring that they have the training, tools, and guidance they need to be successful. I will do all that I can to ensure that staff feel proud to be at OLA and gain satisfaction from their work.

Communication. I will work to ensure that I keep members of the Legislative Audit Commission informed about key OLA decisions and challenges, and that all OLA staff communicate with legislators in clear, concise ways that serve legislative needs.

State of Minnesota

EMPLOYEE'S NAME

POSITION DESCRIPTION **A**

AGENCY/DIVISION
Office of the Legislative Auditor

CLASSIFICATION TITLE
Legislative Auditor

_____	_____	_____	_____
EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE (this position description accurately reflects my current job)	DATE	SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE (this position description accurately reflects the employee's current job)	DATE

POSITION PURPOSE

To direct and supervise the Office of the Legislative Auditor, and to communicate its activities to the Legislature, state agencies, and general public.

REPORTABILITY

Reports to:
Legislative Audit Commission

Supervises:
A staff of 60 to 65 professional auditors, evaluators, investigators, information technology specialists, and support staff.

Dimensions

Clientele:
Legislative Audit Commission members and their staff
Members of the Legislature and their staff
State agencies
Legislative Coordinating Commission directors and staff
Various interest groups
General public

POSITION DESCRIPTION B **EMPLOYEE'S NAME** _____

Priority	% of Time	Discretion		
			1.	**Direct work of the Office of the Legislative Auditor.**
A	5	A	*	A. Define and communicate to all staff the objectives of the office; motivate staff through creation of positive professional identification with the office and particularly with its performance standards and expectations.
A	20	A	*	B. Financial Audits 1. Appoint a Deputy Legislative Auditor for the Financial Audit Division (FAD), establish his/her responsibilities, performance objectives and expectations, and periodically (at least annually) assess performance. 2. In consultation with the deputy, establish general policy and direction for FAD for the annual statewide audit, the single audit, and supplementary audits. 3. Monitor audits through consultation with the deputy and audit managers and offer direction, particularly in issues involving relations with agencies and the Legislature. 4. Review and approve audit reports.
A	20	A	*	C. Program Evaluations 1. Appoint a Deputy Legislative Auditor for the Program Evaluation Division (PED), establish his/her responsibilities, performance objectives and expectations, and periodically (at least annually) assess performance. 2. In consultation with the deputy, establish general policy and direction for PED, particularly related to topic selection, project management, agency and legislative relations, and report review and approval. 3. Monitor evaluation projects through consultation with the deputy and project managers and offer direction, particularly in issues involving relations with agencies and the Legislature. 4. Review and approve evaluation reports.
A	20	A	*	D. Investigations 1. Appoint and supervise an investigator to investigate charges of misconduct by state employees or possible misuse of public money. 2. Establish policies, procedures, and direction for investigative function. 3. Approve opening an investigation. 4. Monitor investigations. 5. Review and approve investigative reports.
A	10	A	*	E. Support Services 1. Appoint and supervise confidential secretaries, an IT Specialist 5, a Business Manager 2, and other support services personnel as needed. 2. Establish policies, procedures, and direction for office support services staff and functions.
A	**15**	**A**	*****	**2. Liaison**
				A. Establish and maintain communications with the Legislative Audit Commission, other legislative committees and members, agency officials, interest groups. media representatives, and others interested in the work of the office.
				B. Present office reports to legislative committees and other appropriate forums.

*Essential function

Priority	% of Time	Discretion			
A	**5**	**A**	*****	**3.**	**Supervise budget for the Office of the Legislative Auditor.**

A. Prepare biennial budget and present it to the Legislature.

B. Establish annual spending plan.

C. Review and approve expenditures for office.

Priority	% of Time	Discretion			
A	**5**	**A**	*****	**4.**	**Supervise personnel system for Office of the Legislative Auditor.**

A. Establish staffing pattern for office.

B. Review all performance assessments and evaluate performance of the FAD and PED deputy legislative auditors, IT Specialist 5, Business Manager 2, and confidential secretaries.

C. Approve all office personnel actions.

*Essential function

POSITION DESCRIPTION C **EMPLOYEE'S NAME** _____

Relationships

The Legislative Auditor has overall administrative, managerial, and leadership responsibilities for the work of the office. The Legislative Auditor must have good professional relationships with his deputies and other office personnel. He must also have good relationships with legislators (particularly members of the Legislative Audit Commission), agency officials, other legislative staff, interest groups, media representatives, and others interested in the work of the office. Relationships often involve sensitive, complex, and sometimes confidential information. Honesty and trust are essential.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

1. Ability to supervise a staff of highly skilled professionals from various disciplines doing complex and sensitive work.

2. Knowledge of public finance, governmental accounting and auditing policies and procedures, program evaluation methods, public administration, and the legislative process.

3. Ability to communicate effectively in writing and orally.

4. Ability to work within the legislative process.

5. Strong self-direction.

6. Leadership.

Problem Solving

The Legislative Auditor must deal with a wide range of problems – administrative, legal, financial, political, and technical – which must be solved independently and in consultation with other professionals and the Legislative Audit Commission.

Freedom to Act

As head of the office, the Legislative Auditor has wide discretion to act in daily management and in the establishment of office policies and procedures. The Legislative Auditor is appointed for a six-year term and cannot be removed, except for "cause." He is expected to act independent of any political influence. The Legislative Auditor reports to the Legislative Audit Commission every three to four months.

Education/Training/Licenses/Certifications

While the law sets no specific requirements, the Legislative Auditor is expected to have strong professional qualifications. Formal academic training can be in accounting or in one or more of the various disciplines that contribute to program evaluation (e.g., economics, political science, public affairs, etc.). If the Legislative Auditor's background were financial, at a minimum a BA in accounting would be expected and standing as a CPA would be strongly preferred. If the Legislative Auditor's background were in program evaluation, at least one advanced degree would be expected, plus a demonstrated ability to conduct complex public policy and evaluation research. Regardless of background, the Legislative Auditor would also be expected to have a minimum of three to five years of senior management responsibility in an office with at least 20 to 30 professionals doing financial auditing, management consulting, public policy research, and/or program evaluations.