

OFFICE OF THE
**LEGISLATIVE
FISCAL
ANALYST**

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MEMORANDUM FOR EXECUTIVE APPROPRIATIONS

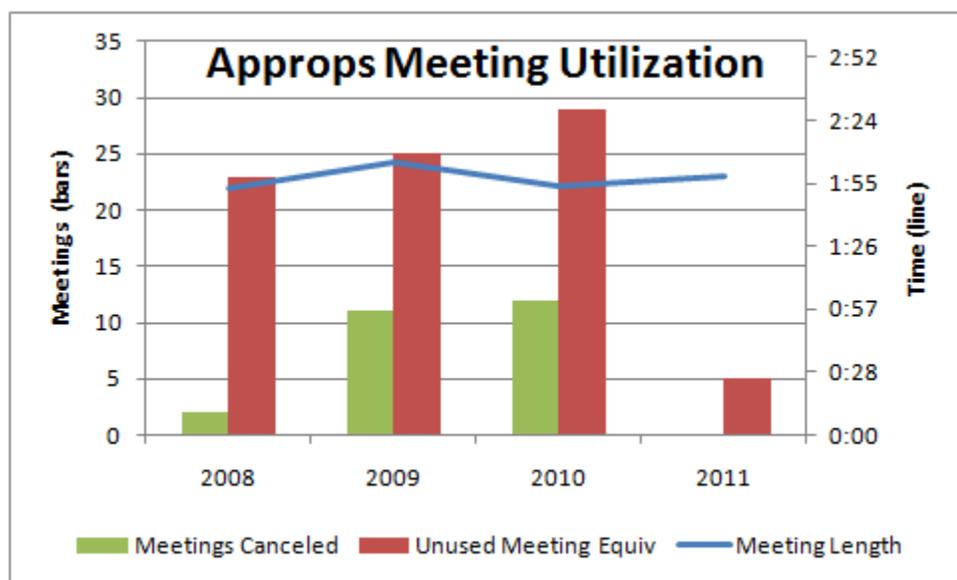
FROM: Jonathan Ball
DATE: June 14, 2011
SUBJECT: Subcommittee Reorganization

Just prior to the 2011 General Session, legislators reorganized appropriations subcommittees, eliminating two subcommittees and increasing membership in all others. They also scheduled appropriations meetings in the mornings and created two alternating blocks of meetings.

The stated goals of this realignment were:

1. better utilize scheduled time;
2. increase membership to facilitate quorums; and
3. make meetings more productive.

As the graph below shows, the reorganization successfully increased utilization of scheduled time. Average meeting length stayed about the same as past years – just under two hours. However, meetings were scheduled for only about two hours, rather than three hours in the past. The number of canceled meetings went from eleven in 2009 and twelve in 2010 to zero in 2011.



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While average meeting length was about the same as in past years, to accommodate the alternating A-B schedule, appropriators had one less scheduled meeting this year than last. The thought was that increased time utilization would make-up for fewer meetings. Indeed, the amount of unused meeting time – time that was scheduled but not utilized due to late starts, early adjournment, or canceled meetings – went from the equivalent of 25 meetings on average in the past three years to the equivalent of five meetings in 2011.

However, at least two subcommittees (Public Education and Executive Offices and Criminal Justice) did not complete their work in the number of meetings allotted. Business, Economic Development, and Labor added one ad hoc meeting to its schedule.

An informal poll of subcommittee co-chairs suggested that one additional meeting would be desirable.

Subcommittee staff reported only one instance in which a vote could not be taken due to lack of a quorum. In that case, a quorum was established within fifteen to twenty minutes, and the vote proceeded. No meetings were canceled due to lack of a quorum.

Regarding meeting productivity, many of the subcommittee co-chairs polled said that morning meetings were more productive because members were present and engaged. However, some co-chairs felt that the absolute meeting end time (floor time started at 10 am on most days) had the effect of cutting debate short.

Subcommittees also held two pre-session meetings in 2011 as they have in each of the prior two years. The above analysis does not include those pre-session meetings in any year. More effective use of those meetings might mitigate the need for an additional meeting during General Session.