

**LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION**

**February 19, 2026**

**State of Illinois**

Senators: Balkema, Ellman, Rose, Turner, Villanueva and Wilcox

Representatives: Elik, Evans Jr., Manley, Moore and Rita

Executive Director: Jaimee Ray

Meeting began at 9:39 am

**Rita:** Good morning. It's Thursday, February 19, 2026. I'm Representative Rita. I call the Legislative Audit Commission to order. Let me acknowledge the presence of the Audit Commission members. Senator Ellman, Representative Elik, Senator Wilcox. I'm still getting these titles here. What? Is it Representative Balkema.

**Ray:** Senator.

**Rita:** Senator Balkema, Representative Moore, Representative Manley, Senator Villanueva, myself, Representative Evans, and Senator Turner are here. Are there any other members? What's that? Oh, and Senator Rose. All right, so today we're going to vote on which candidate to be recommended to the General assembly for the position of Auditor General. The Audit Commission staff. Do you want me to read all this into the record?

**Ray:** This is what's been done in the past, so it's up to you. You can skip it if you want.

**Rita:** Yeah, we're going to that. So, we'd like to review. You want to go through all these reviews and everything? We've interviewed a number of candidates, starting with a pool of candidates that narrowed down to five. So, there's been multiple interviews going through the various candidates. And so, today we're tasked with picking a recommendation. Again, it's going to be a recommendation. It will be sent to the General Assembly, and the final action will be done on resolution, a joint resolution for both the Senate and the House. So, at this time, the chair will recognize Senator Ellman.

**Ellman:** Thank you, Chair Rita, I move that the Legislative Audit Commission nominate Chris Meister to the General Assembly for the position of Auditor General.

**Rita:** Do we have a second?

**Villanueva:** I second that motion.

**Rita:** All right, so we have a motion and a second. Where are we at on this? Any other recommendations? This ain't something we normally do here. This is done every 10 years, so bear with us. So, there's a motion on the floor and a second. We're going to do a vote. Jaimee, will you please record the vote?

**Ray:** Balkema

**Balkema:** Yes.

**Ray:** Ellman

**Ellman:** Yes.

**Ray:** Rose

**Rose:** Yes.

**Ray:** Turner

**Turner:** Yes.

**Ray:** Villanueva

**Villanueva:** Yes.

**Ray:** Wilcox

**Wilcox:** Yes.

**Ray:** Rita

**Rita:** Yes.

**Ray:** Elik

**Elik:** Yes.

**Ray:** Evans

**Evans:** Yes.

**Ray:** Manley

**Manley:** Yes.

**Ray:** Moore

**Moore:** Yeah.

**Rita:** So, we have 11 voting yes, no one voting no, no one voting present. So, our process will be that Jaimee will write a letter to the four legislative leaders to notify them of the recommendation for the position of Auditor General. So, Jaimee, could you please. So, they could prepare a joint resolution, as I said, to deliver both to the House and Senate. And so, we will, if you could do that. And any further business or anyone ready to recognize, Senator Rose.

**Rose:** Thank you. I think before we conclude today that I want to state for the record that we had an amazing pool of candidates. I think we were largely blessed with a lot of very well qualified people. I do want to recognize one individual and for, I think for my side, my caucus want to point out that we would highly suggest that candidate Courtney Dzierwa be chosen by our new Auditor General if, in fact he is confirmed by the full House and Senate, to become the Chief Deputy.

As many know, we have not had a Chief Deputy in 10 years. It's high time we bring that position back. Courtney has served the people of Illinois with aplomb. She's highly qualified, a woman of great integrity. And I think from our perspective, we could really get to a win, win position for the taxpayers with a great team at the top. And so, I just wanted to put that on the record that that would be our strong suggestion from our caucus that our new Auditor General would make that appointment. Thank you.

**Rita:** Thank you, Representative Elik.

**Elik:** Thank you, Senator. I would concur that our caucus would agree that Courtney Dzierwa would be a fantastic candidate as Deputy Auditor General and would also concur that's a valuable recommendation that we would make to our new Auditor General should he be confirmed and look forward to working with him and his deputy in the future and moving the Audit Commission forward as well as the Auditor General's office. I would also like to thank Frank Martino for his service and that, you know, we'll be back with him, I think next week we have another regular meeting of the Audit Commission. So, appreciate everyone who applied, appreciate the fantastic candidates that we had. I know, you know, it was not an easy choice for any of us and we, I think, should be just maybe commend ourselves for the valuable work that we did over a long period of time as a commission in a bipartisan manner. And I just really appreciate that from everyone. Thank you.

**Rita:** Thank you. Anybody else want to be recognized? No, I'm sure we'll do something for Frank before he goes. A resolution and as we go forward, we have a lot of business. What's that?

**Elik:** You ruined the surprise.

**Rita:** Oh, well, it's Frank.

**Rose:** Yeah. He's gonna know anyway.

**Rita:** Totally Frank. So again, we went through this process. It was a long process. This is the third process. I believe I went. I know we did the renewal of Holland and then Frank, I was on the Audit Commission and then, as you know, I got brought back onto this in the middle of this. So, seeing no further business, the Audit Commission will adjourn until our next meeting. I believe is next Tuesday. Thank you.

**Rose:** It's supposed to be room 114, Tuesday at 9:00am.