

2-13-2017

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Monday, February 13. Today in Committee of the Whole we heard Senate Files, including a bill that funds expenses of the Legislature, a bill that allows municipal and county snow plows to utilize blue flashing lights, a bill further defining military department recordkeeping, and a bill defining how student data could be utilized.

We also finished Third Reading of the budget bill – around 8:30 pm. There were amendments to eliminate cuts to agency personnel, the University of Wyoming, and Community Colleges, but the House agreed with those of us on Appropriations that a .25 percent cut to UW and Community Colleges, along with a slow reduction of 75 positions in state agencies, were acceptable reductions. An amendment was brought to cut state employee salaries by 4 percent, but the Appropriations Committee and members of the House felt that went too far. The cuts the House has put in place will result in \$100 million in savings for the 2019/20 biennial budget, which should come very close to eliminating the State's structural deficit.

The Senate passed a budget with two major outliers: a \$91.5 million cut to K12 education and a 4 percent cut to state employee salaries. The budget is the wrong place for the K12 funding discussion, and a compromise between the House and Senate seems to be a world away. Time will tell. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com

Thank You.