



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Diane Archie

(Inuvik Boot Lake)
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Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge

(Deh Cho)

Ms. Caitlin Cleveland

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Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for Homelessness
Minister responsible for Youth
Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

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Premier
Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat

Hon. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Mr. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Mr. Rylund Johnson

(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Ms. Frieda Martselos

(Thebacha)

Ms. Katrina Nokleby

(Great Slave)

Mr. Steve Norn

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson

(Hay River South)

Hon. R.J. Simpson

(Hay River North)
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Minister of Education, Culture & Employment
Minister of Justice

Hon. Shane Thompson

(Nahendeh)
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

(Yellowknife South)
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Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, February 23, 2021****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CROWN CORPORATION BOARDS OF
DIRECTORS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of Crown and quasi-Crown corporations that utilize board of directors appointed by this government. This House has debated and voiced concern over the need to replace those current boards made up of senior bureaucrats with persons from the private sector or the general public. Mr. Speaker, we cannot expect and should not expect our senior bureaucrats to accept additional obligations and responsibilities that take away from their departmental responsibilities. If this government does not see that, then it is not fulfilling its responsibility to the residents of the Northwest Territories. The reason Crown corporations exist is to achieve a public policy objective set by this government, while being insulated and allowed to operate at arm's length. This can be a daunting task at best, and expecting to achieve it by placing senior bureaucrats to oversee such a corporation is make-believe and a fantasy.

Mr. Speaker, we have the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, a body that provides an essential service to the residents and businesses of the NWT. In 2016, the independent board was replaced based on cost-saving initiatives. The corporation is now in the process of possibly becoming a provider of electrical power to the community of Hay River. The reason that is about to happen is because of a promise by the NWT Power Corporation of cheaper power to Hay River residents and businesses. The cost of power is one

cost that inherently impacts our residents and, if not controlled, can result in our residents choosing between feeding their children and paying their utility bill. It is therefore important that Crown corporations such as the Northwest Territories Power Corporation be provided the tools that will work to lower costs to its consumers. An experienced board of directors is part of the tools required to ensure efficiency while meeting this government's strategic objectives.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, this government identified cost as a deterrent to using independent directors. I see the use of independent boards as an opportunity to provide oversight in operations and efficiency, which will result in cost savings. With respect to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, I would envision a board of directors made up of those with credentials in finance, human resources, engineering, law, green power, private business, Aboriginal knowledge, and other disciplines. Within a corporation, the duties and responsibilities of directors are important to ensuring management is kept in check and services provided are cost effective. It is time to choose the right path when it comes to Crown corporations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EMERGENCY SHELTERS AND WARMING
CENTRES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need emergency shelters in our communities. I mentioned it in this House before, and now I really need to get this sorted out for the communities of the Beaufort-Delta and especially my riding of Nunakput. Some of the larger communities are fortunate enough to have warming shelters and centres and emergency housing. That is a good thing. There are people in the communities who need them, but in this case, the communities of Nunakput, when my constituents are in need of a place to go, they have no place to go but to family.

A few weeks ago, the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

committed to looking into the units that could be made available in the communities. I appreciate her commitment, but I still need to know which units are available in the communities, Mr. Speaker. Literally, it's a matter of life and death. I need to know what units are available. My leadership needs to know which units are available and what options we could provide for emergency shelter for our residents. As you know, it gets very cold in the delta, especially in my riding of Nunakput. People need to be able to access a warm and safe place to stay. If they cannot, the consequences could be literally fatal. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INMATE REHABILITATION

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Members' statement today is about the need for our NWT corrections services to focus on the successful social reintegration and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals. The Department of Justice recently completed a workplace assessment of all correctional facilities in the Northwest Territories. The results of that assessment were obvious as it exposed several long-standing issues pertaining to staff morale, safety, and preparedness, among other things. In a previous Member's statement, I spoke about the importance of offender rehabilitation. Today, however, I will be focusing on some issues that offenders face, along with potential solutions when transitioning from life in corrections back into the community.

Mr. Speaker, the key to any successful crime-reduction strategy must include solutions that address offender crime relapses among formerly incarcerated individuals. One way our government could help offenders with successful reintegration is to expand transition and through-care programs for offenders. This can be done in many ways. However, the ultimate goal is to help offenders successfully transition back into society and to avoid further criminality. Our goal must be to ensure rehabilitation back into the community, and they must be able to address life with purpose.

Mr. Speaker, one idea in relation to corrections programming that I think the Department of Justice should consider is to expand the level of community engagement that offenders have with where they are incarcerated. Offenders should have more opportunities to help serve and work for the community in which they are incarcerated. For example, at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex, both sections of male and female offenders should be able to work in jobs that were previously offered

to offenders in the community. They should be able to do the things like help seniors in and around the community shovel snow, do gardening, clean house, or take courses in the Phoenix program at the high school. Offenders should be able to do this type of work and activities regularly, but that is not the case anymore. I would like to see these programs reinstated for offenders, including the option to take courses at Aurora College. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL PHARMACARE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Tomorrow, years of advocacy, consultation, and study will culminate in a vote in the federal Parliament on creation of a national pharmacare program. Bill C-213 is a rare private Member's bill that actually makes it to the floor. The Canada Pharmacare Act is based on the recommendations of the Hoskins Advisory Council and modelled on the Canada Health Act. Like our national medicare program, the Canada Pharmacare Act specifies the conditions that provincial and territorial prescription drug insurance programs must meet to receive federal funding. This includes tying federal funding to the core principles of public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, and accessibility.

The legislation doesn't prescribe a specific fiscal arrangement but enables the federal government to negotiate with the provinces and territories. The federal Cabinet could reduce or withhold contributions to provinces or territories if they don't respect the conditions of funding. The federal health Minister is also empowered to create an independent drug agency in collaboration with provinces and territories.

Canada is the only country in the world with a public healthcare system that does not include prescription medicine coverage. The Parliamentary Budget Office has estimated that a national pharmacare program would reduce drug costs by about 25 percent annually or \$4 billion. A universal national pharmacare system would cover an estimated 20 percent of Canadians who don't take their prescriptions now because they can't afford the costs. Canadian families will save an average of \$350 per year and businesses will get relief from the increasing costs of employee drug coverage, a \$750 savings per employee per year. A national pharmacare program will save the NWT money, too, and improve health outcomes. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Health and Social Services about whether our government

supports Bill C-213 and what other action is being undertaken to pursue a national pharmacare program. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. February is Black History Month in Canada and throughout the world. Here in the North, we have a thriving Black community that, in June, organized a rally to protest racism against Black people. This rally was organized to coincide with a growing international movement in protest of rising incidents of violent acts against people of colour.

From this, a group was formed called the Black Advocacy Coalition up North, or BACupNorth, with the goal of providing community support to Black Northerners. Its mission is to end racism and dismantle barriers to equity in law enforcement, justice, health, housing, education, research, and media. Whether you are Caribbean, of African descent, you are African-Canadian born here, BACupNorth celebrates that heritage. BACupNorth supports diversity and believes in educating for progress. Part of BACupNorth's work is to analyze materials young people are consuming in schools and push for changes in school curriculum and media for better representation of Black experiences and history. BACupNorth also empowers the Black community by sharing stories and experiences of members in the Black community and educates Northerners about Black culture, heritage, and diversity.

The issues the BACupNorth advocates for are also a reality for a lot of Indigenous people living in the North. Their goal is to work together, using available resources, to show solidarity and support Indigenous organizations to effect positive changes for everyone. The following is a statement provided by BACupNorth founder Ambe Chenemu: The Black community has come a long way. In fact, it has taken over 400 years and we are still working to be treated equally and not be punished for looking and being Black. The Black community has been forced, enslaved, and dehumanized in the worst possible manner. Four hundred years later, Black people across Canada are still working toward equality, equity, social justice, and equal opportunity. Throughout the month of February, we celebrate the resilience and contributions of the Black community to the rich and diverse Canadian heritage.

Just this month, some Black Northerners were among those recognized by Premier Cochrane for

their contributions to the public service and recipients of the Premier's Award for Excellence. Black people are making a difference across our territory, and we call on government to work with and support the efforts of BACupNorth and other local organizations in making the North a better place for us all. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDER ABUSE

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement reflects the abuse suffered by the most vulnerable population of elders in the small communities. Elder abuse is a single action or repeated action or a lack of action that causes harm or distress to an older person. This abuse could be a single incident or several incidents over time. Often, more than one type of abuse is experienced by the victims. This population of elders are older and have serious mobility issues, like being confined to wheelchairs, walkers, or simply cannot walk long distances through stores. They then give out their bank cards and associated details to their caregiver, or it could be another family member. More than likely, it's someone they assume they can trust.

Another form of abuse I have been hearing about is neglect. When a family member is tasked with caring for their elderly parent at their home, they usually leave the elderly parent at a friend's home while they go out of town, sometimes up to several days, with the elder's bank card. Mr. Speaker, this form of abuse of the elderly population is most likely prevalent in many small communities, as it is in my community. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for seniors at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTIONS TREATMENT IN THE NORTH

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi. [Translation] Thank you. [End of translation]

In the Northwest Territories, last year alone, the government raked in an incredible \$24 million from the sale of intoxicants. This revenue source is called "sin tax" because booze and dope are supposedly bad, but the real sin is how this government misuses this cash once it rolls in. When I say "misuses," Mr. Speaker, I refer to the fact that this money, the money earned through this revenue, every single cent of it goes to the general pot, the general revenue that is used for such

things as ministerial travel or the COVID secretariat, et cetera. By rights, a certain percentage should be going toward addictions treatment for the North.

Mr. Speaker, we fuel substance abuse through liquor and cannabis sales, then we take the money and run, abandoning the victims of those with dependency on the substance. There is something very cruel in this self-serving exploitation of human weaknesses. We should put an end to this perversity by channelling a statutory share of our liquor and cannabis revenues to addictions treatment.

Mr. Speaker, it's not good enough to claim we're supporting addictions treatment centres in the South. Places like Edgewood on Vancouver Island, BC, and Renascent in Toronto, Ontario, are inappropriate and ineffective and do not serve our Northerners. We need addictions treatment here in the North, for the Northerners, by the Northerners. A share of that "sin tax" should be earmarked annually for the construction and support of such a facility. I intend to question the Minister responsible regarding this issue at the earliest opportunity, Mr. Speaker. Masi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Finance Minister said in her 2021 budget address, "Creativity, innovation, and collaboration are key to our success." Fort Good Hope has successfully brought these three pillars together through the K'asho Got'ine Housing Society, a non-profit created to fill the rising need for community-based housing providers that deliver innovative social policy parallel to safe housing infrastructure. The society recognizes the long-term value of supporting housing models that address the needs of residents and has successfully combined housing, social policy, and workforce development through its new home construction, integrated home repair, and apprenticeship programs.

During our last week in this House, I spoke about FASD, integrated case management, housing authorities, and family violence to drive home the need for client-focused wraparound services. Too many people are falling through the cracks with the government's current siloed approach, at the cost of residents' mental health, ability to thrive, and the government's bottom line.

The GNWT currently spends over \$700 million annually on social programs through Justice, health, housing, and Education, Culture and

Employment, and each of these departments is responsible for addressing different aspects of a person's challenges. This siloed service delivery increases program duplication and the frequency and duration that an individual cycles through public systems of care, Mr. Speaker. This causes cyclical and costly use of resources and decreases the window of opportunity an individual will permanently or successfully exit the system of crisis services.

Mr. Speaker, the annual cost of care for one incarcerated inmate is more than the average annual salary for one GNWT employee, or equal to the annual operations and maintenance of five public housing units, but how many people could integrated service delivery support outside our correctional facilities and how would supporting housing networks reduce recidivism and improve the quality of life of Northerners?

Integrated service delivery meets Northerners where they are at and brings together the social program departments and their front-line staff to coordinate plans of care and support residents based on their actual individual needs. I want to commend Fort Good Hope for leading the way with creativity, innovation and collaboration, and congratulate them on the significant successes they have achieved. I look forward to discussing the future of integrated service delivery for the GNWT with the Minister of Justice today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT LITERACY AWARDS

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to be able to stand up in this Assembly and celebrate the award of Northwest Territories Literacy Awards to three constituents of Inuvik Boot Lake. Cassidy Lennie-Ipana and Mataya Gillis received the NWT Youth Learner Literacy Award for their outstanding work in starting up Nipaturuq Magazine in 2019. This magazine and the associated social media content raised awareness of the current issues for Inuvialuit youth and celebrate our culture, stories, and our elders. Well done, ladies.

Earning the Ministerial Outstanding Educator Award is Dwayne Drescher. He went above and beyond, making sure learning of the language did not stop because of COVID, by developing learning kits and videos that allow students and their families to learn from home. His next project that I'm really looking forward to using is helping develop the Inuvialuit emojis, GIFs, and abbreviations to further promote

the use of Inuvialuqtun through media and mobile technologies.

I ask you to join me in congratulating my constituents who are doing their part to keeping our language strong. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the MLA for Great Slave in acknowledging those working to further Black History Month, both here and across the globe. Mr. Speaker, our territory is home to hundreds of Black individuals living and contributing to our communities. If current trends are any indication that number will only continue to grow as Yellowknife continues to become a truly diverse capital city. In Canada, we often compare our history to our neighbours in the South, and we think we are not so bad. Anti-Black racism exists, and systemic racism in many forms continues to be part of the history we are currently living.

While we celebrate Black History Month in our schools, the NWT has much work to do in acknowledging its histories. For decades, Black and Indigenous people were pushed out of white spaces, with bars and restaurants segregated well into the 1960's. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories doesn't have a lot of Black history to share, but part of the reason for that is history often has a narrow lens that leaves the stories of minority populations out of it. I hope, going forward, we can frame our territorial history as a place that welcomes everyone.

I'd like to give praise to BACupNorth, the Black advocacy group formed in the wake of global protests and rallies challenging anti-Black racism after Minneapolis police officers killed George Floyd. Every day this month, they have been sharing Canadian Black history and media and regularly amplifying Black Northerners in their endeavours. Thank you for the work they do. They are doing the work to right the history of the NWT. This territory is no stranger to the plague of racism. We must be an ally in this fight, an ally in deconstructing systemic racism in all its forms in celebrating our diversity. Black history month is an opportunity to acknowledge the past, and lift up voices for the future. Thank you to everyone doing this work to make sure our history and our future is both honest and inclusive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR DARIUS ELIAS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to send my condolences to the family of Darius Elias, who served as MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding in the Yukon for 10 years. He started his political career very early, and I was very saddened to hear of his passing. The Beaufort-Delta, as many know, and the Yukon have a very close relationship and very many family connections.

When I was elected, he called me, and he provided me with some advice. I will always remember that. The words that he said to me, "Always stay true to the people who elected you." Prayers and strength to the family at this time to our former MLA of the Vuntut Gwitchin Darius Elias. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Our thoughts and prayers are with the community of Old Crow and the family, and also the Legislative Assembly of the Yukon. Mahsi. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR ALFRED DIAMOND'C

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fred Diamond'C was born on February 14, 1946, in Fort Liard to Edward and Laura Diamond'C. Unfortunately, his mom passed away when he was a young boy. His dad later met Pauline Eton, and they got married on August 18, 1954. Edward and Pauline raised Fred and his siblings in Fort Liard in Bovie Lake. This started Fred's love for going out on the land.

One summer, Fred and his siblings were home from residential school. Fred went for a walk to Hay Lake with his little brother John. John said his legs were sore, so Fred put his little brother in his backpack and packed him home. Upon arriving at home, he told his mom that he shot a bear. His mom told him to put the bag in front of her and open it up. John's head popped out. That was Fred's humour. If you knew Fred, he was always happy, and his sibling said he would never argue with them. In his teen years, he went to residential school in Yellowknife with his brother Enis. He mentioned that all the students that went to residential school were like brothers and sisters.

During his life, Fred had many jobs, but the ones that seemed to make him very happy was when he was a prospector and did surveying. The company gave him a plaque for all his hard work he did. I

was told that he took to the bush and was handy at staking claims or cutting lines or building camps. He could do anything, and he was very reliable. He enjoyed his adventures.

Upon returning back to Yellowknife, he got into building wood cabins and selling them. Fred was a true bush person, loving the land and nature. He later built his forever home on Highway No. 3 at kilometre 296, close to Yellowknife where he lived with his dog, Musky. He lived there for many years. Fred loved his home, his dog, Musky, and all his family and friends. He was preceded by his parents, step-mother, sister, brother, and step-sister. He was survived by his three sisters and two brothers.

Fred passed away on January 21, 2021. Fred is loved and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Frame Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election.

Executive Summary

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to Report on its review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election.

The Elections and Plebiscites Act requires the Chief Electoral Officer to present a report on the administration of the election within six months of the election. The Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election was tabled in this House by the Speaker on May 28, 2020, and was referred to this committee.

During its review, committee has held four public hearings during which they heard from the Chief Electoral Officer, Dr. Aleksander Essex, Dr. Nicole Goodman, MLA Julie Green, David Wasylciw, and OpenNWT. Committee thanks these witnesses for sharing their opinions, experiences and expertise.

This report includes committee's response to the recommendations of the Chief Electoral Officer and

other presenters and makes the following recommendations from committee:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to require regulations be developed governing voting by electronic means, including setting cybersecurity standards, technical specifications, procurement guidelines, and an audit mechanism.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Elections NWT implement and administer an election rebate program as laid out in this report for candidates starting with the 2023 Territorial Election.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that "email address" be included under Section 54(2) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act. Further, that email addresses should only be used to maintain or update the Register of Electors and not be shared with any candidate.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to require a public body at request to provide the personal information held by that body.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 73 of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to state that the list of electors shall be provided to candidates as soon as possible.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 121 and Section 309 of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to include a prohibition on the sale of cannabis during the hours a poll is open on polling day.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to expressly prohibit liquor and cannabis as campaign expenses.

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act

be amended to prohibit photography, videography, or phone calls within the polling station and to authorize the Chief Electoral Officer to issue guidance on the usage of electronics in polling stations.

Recommendation 9

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to prohibit a candidate's polling agent from being able to assist an elector in casting a vote.

Recommendation 10

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer investigate how other provinces or territories allow residents to cast votes from any polling station and report back to the Legislative Assembly within six months on the outcomes of that investigation.

Recommendation 11

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to remove the requirement for electors to act as witnesses. An election officer and one other election official should be required, with candidates permitted one representative each.

Recommendation 12

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to allow for a candidate's financial report to be submitted electronically.

Recommendation 13

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 144(1) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to allow for voting in the office of the returning officer to commence on the 21st day before polling day.

Recommendation 14

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Elections NWT follow the same procurement practices as the Legislative Assembly and publicly disclose all contracts, the procurement process used for each contract, and the amount of each contract in the Elections NWT Annual Report.

Recommendation 15

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer undertake a review of best practices on election reporting and return to the Legislative Assembly within six months with the findings of that review

and any potential amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act.

Recommendation 16

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Elections NWT post all election data that is included in its reports in a machine-readable format on the Elections NWT website.

Recommendation 17

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer undertake a review of the requirements to publicly disclose a candidate's residential address and return to the Legislative Assembly within six months with the findings of that review and any potential amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act.

Recommendation 18

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 24(4) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to specify that the act applies to additional assistant returning officers the same as it does to assistant returning officers, except for the limitations specified in Section 24(4).

Recommendation 19

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to fix references to other clauses and to reflect current electronic management of the list of electors and the polling station account.

MOTION TO HAVE COMMITTEE REPORT 9-19(2)
DEEMED READ AND PRINTED IN HANSARD IN
ITS ENTIRETY,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Committee Report 9-19(2) be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

COMMITTEE REPORT 9-19(2):
REPORT ON THE CHIEF ELECTORAL
OFFICER'S REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION
OF THE 2019 TERRITORIAL GENERAL
ELECTION

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures (committee) is pleased to report on its review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election.

The Elections and Plebiscites Act requires the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to present a report on the administration of the election within six months of the election. The report has any matters the CEO thinks should be brought to the Legislative Assembly's attention. It also includes recommendations on how to improve election administration and any suggested amendments to the act. The report is sent to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to review, hold hearings with the CEO, any witnesses the committee thinks necessary, and the public at large. The committee then reports to the House which recommendations should be adopted and the committee's review of potential amendments. This report has committee's response to the CEO recommendations, to the public submissions received, and to the recommendations of two expert witnesses.

Background

The 2019 territorial election was held on October 1, 2019. Online ballots were available for the first time in any provincial or territorial general election in Canada. The election also saw the highest number of female candidates ever and resulted in a near equal number of female and male Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The CEO issued her report on the administration of the 2019 election in March 2020, which contained 88 recommendations for consideration. The committee held public briefings with the CEO on June 10, 2020, with experts on online voting on June 30, 2020, and September 9, 2020, and a hearing with the public on September 21, 2020, during which committee received presentations from MLA Julie Green, David Wasylciw, and OpenNWT.

Online Voting

Committee heard the most comments on the use of online ballots. This was the first election where online ballots were used, and committee had two expert witnesses present on the advantages and risks of online ballots. Dr. Aleksander Essex is a professor of software engineering at Western

University in London, Ontario. He is an internationally recognized expert in election cybersecurity. He has studied the use of online voting in Canada and around the world. Dr. Nicole Goodman is a professor of political science at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. She has studied the effects of online voting on voters and election administration in general.

The committee thanks both expert witnesses for their presentations and answering questions. They informed committee's discussions and raised numerous points committee found useful when coming up with recommendations.

The CEO recommended creating a new section of the Elections and Plebiscites Act to establish procedures in respect of voting by online ballot. The committee notes that Section 132.1 states "the Chief Electoral Officer may, in accordance with the regulations, establish procedures in respect of voting by absentee ballot by electronic means." There are currently no regulations in place. Dr. Essex, Dr. Goodman, and Mr. Wasylciw all recommended that standards be developed, including technical cybersecurity standards. With online voting being a relatively untested technology, not just in Canada but internationally, the committee agrees that legally binding standards are required.

Dr. Essex and Dr. Goodman co-wrote a paper earlier this year outlining principles to be adopted that the committee found helpful, which are:

1. Secrecy. The association between a voter's identity and vote is secret;
2. Equality. A voter shall not be able to cast more votes than another, nor be prevented from casting a ballot;
3. Accessibility. The election shall be accessible to voters. Each voter must have the means and opportunity to participate;
4. Fairness. Voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently;
5. Dependability. The election shall deliver an outcome in a reliable and timely manner;
6. Accuracy. A cast vote must accurately reflect the voter's intended preference;
7. Correctness. The election outcome must reflect the correct combination of valid cast votes;
8. Confidence. Voters and candidates must be confident in the correctness of the election outcome; and,

9. Transparency. The election is to be conducted in a manner that is transparent and accountable to voters and candidates.

While these principles keep with the spirit and intent of current election law in the Northwest Territories, Dr. Essex's presentation flagged how online voting can compromise secrecy, correctness and accuracy, and transparency. Secrecy may be compromised as, using authentication questions, an elector's identity can be determined. Correctness and accuracy may be compromised, as there is no mechanism in place to allow an elector to verify that their vote was correctly counted. Transparency may be compromised, as there are no paper ballots to recount in the event of a disputed result. All of this can bring confidence in the electoral system into question.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to require regulations be developed governing voting by electronic means, including setting cybersecurity standards, technical specifications, procurement guidelines, and an audit mechanism.

Due to the work that still needs to happen around online voting, the committee does not recommend creating a new section in the act splitting online ballots from absentee ballots at this time.

Election Rebate

MLA Julie Green presented to committee on the recommendations from the Special Committee on Increasing the Representation of Women from the 18th Assembly, which she chaired. One recommendation from the special committee's report was to create an election rebate program. Eight provinces and the federal government all have rebate programs to reimburse candidates for expenses related to running for office.

MLA Green provided the committee with research that had been done for the special committee. She recommended that committee consider a rebate program for candidates of 50 percent of eligible expenses to a maximum of \$3,000. MLA Green argued this would reduce barriers to running for office, especially for women. Only money spent by the candidate is eligible to be counted towards the total amount. Any donations received would reduce this amount. A minimum vote threshold of 5 percent of all votes cast should be met. Based on these criteria, MLA Green projected that the total cost of a rebate program for the 2019 election was \$50,000.

The committee supports a rebate program with the following criteria:

- 50 percent of eligible expenses with a maximum rebate amount of \$3,000 per candidate;
- A candidate must receive a minimum of 5 percent of votes cast in that electoral district;
- A candidate's official agent must file their complete financial paperwork by the deadline;
- Acclaimed candidates would also be eligible for a rebate;
- Only those cash expenses incurred by the candidate and not offset by fundraising are eligible, and the committee recommends that alcohol and cannabis be excluded as eligible expenses; and
- The CEO shall include in the report on the administration of the election details on how much the election rebate cost for that election.

The committee also felt that the limits should be examined after each election, as part of the review of the CEO's report.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Elections NWT implement and administer an election rebate program as laid out in this report for candidates starting with the 2023 Territorial Election.

Register of Electors

The CEO recommended email addresses be included in the Register of Electors. As noted by our predecessor committee, the collection of electors' email addresses is potentially a useful tool in improving the list of electors. However, committee cautions that Internet service and use of email varies considerably from community to community.

The committee heard a concern from Mr. David Wasylciw about the potential use of email addresses and how privacy rules apply. The committee recommends that use of electors' email addresses should be restricted under Section 54(5) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act, ensuring they are not provided to candidates or used to send general information.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that "email address" be included under Section 54(2) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act. Further, that email addresses should only be used to maintain or update the Register of Electors and not be shared with any candidate.

The CEO also recommended that Section 55.1(1.1) be amended to include dates of birth and citizenship in the list of information to be provided to the CEO by the Director of Medical Insurance, the deputy minister responsible for student financial assistance, and the deputy minister of Justice. The CEO also recommends that the deputy minister responsible for the Motor Vehicles Act be included in this list.

The committee agrees that information held by government departments should be accessible for the purposes of keeping the Register of Electors up to date. The committee reviewed clauses from other jurisdictions and noted that several used "public body" instead of listing individual departments. This should provide the CEO with authority to request from any department the information needed to update the Register of Electors.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to require a public body at request to provide the personal information held by that body.

The CEO recommended the act be amended to remove the deadline to provide a list of electors to returning officers at least seven days before polling day. While committee recognizes that the list is managed electronically, there should still be a requirement in the act to provide it as soon as possible, as the returning officer is then responsible for providing the list to the candidates for that riding.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 73 of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to state that the list of electors shall be provided to candidates as soon as possible.

The CEO recommended deleting the requirement to publicly post the list of names of electors who have been struck off this list. The committee reviewed legislation from other jurisdictions and noted that, elsewhere, it is restricted as to who may make the request to delete someone or puts requirements on the returning officer to make all efforts to contact the individual in question. Committee feels that deletions from the Register of Electors should be made public to ensure electors are not wrongly removed.

There are also recommendations around striking names from the voters' list for those who have applied for absentee ballots. While committee understands the list is maintained electronically, there is still a need to keep in legislation the requirement to strike names from the list and a way

for those who have applied for an absentee ballot to revoke that application.

Mr. Wasylciw recommended that an enumeration take place prior to the 2023 election. The committee notes that, while enumeration remains an option available to the CEO, it is an expensive one. Members found the lists in 2019 were improved over 2015. Mr. Wasylciw also recommended that the residency requirement be dropped to four months from the current six months. The committee notes that the residency restriction was dropped to six months following the 2015 election and is now in line with most other jurisdictions.

Indebtedness

The CEO recommended the committee review and consider an amendment to prevent someone from running for office if that person owed a debt to the government. There is a similar restriction in the Local Authorities Elections Act, which governs municipal elections. However, territorial elections fall under Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states: every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of Members of the House of Commons or of a Legislative Assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

The committee sought a legal opinion from the law clerk on whether an amendment as suggested by the CEO would be constitutional. The law clerk believed such an amendment would violate Section 3 of the Charter but noted that the question is whether the violation can be justified. A Charter infringement can be justified where the following test is met:

1. The law creating the infringement must have a pressing and substantial objective;
2. The means chosen to meet that objective must be proportionate, in that:
 - a. They are rationally connected to the law's objective;
 - b. They limit the Charter right in question as little as reasonably possible in order to achieve the law's objective; and
 - c. The law's positive effects are proportionate to its negative effect on the affected Charter right.

It is unclear what such an amendment would do to protect the integrity of the electoral system. The CEO noted that some people had raised concerns with the lack of consistency in the two election acts. This alone would not justify the infringement. Municipal elections are not subject to the Charter

and can have different requirements for eligibility. The committee received no public submissions in support of an amendment, and the committee does not support pursuing an amendment.

MLA Simpson (Hay River South) recused himself from all discussions on this recommendation.

Liquor Sales

Committee had a long discussion about repealing the prohibition on liquor sales while polls are open. Committee discussed the ongoing concerns with alcohol in many communities, including the restrictions put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were no public submissions that addressed the sale of liquor.

Absent a more thorough public review of liquor and legal drugs, the committee believes public support for removing the prohibition would be mixed. The committee instead proposes that the act be amended to also include a prohibition on the sale of cannabis on polling day.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 121 and Section 309 of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to include a prohibition on the sale of cannabis during the hours a poll is open on polling day.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to expressly prohibit liquor and cannabis as campaign expenses.

Multi-District Polls

The CEO has recommended that the sections of the act dealing with multi-district polls be repealed, as they were not well used in 2015 and not used at all in 2019. The committee noted that, in 2011, the previous CEO spoke highly of the multi-district polls held that year.

During committee's discussion, Members noted there was nothing in the act requiring a multi-district poll to be held. It is one option out of many authorized in the act. As such, the committee does not recommend removing this as an option for future elections.

Polling Place

The CEO recommended including "image capturing device" as a prohibited item in a polling station. This is in addition to the already banned use of a cell phone, computer, or other communication device. Mr. Wasyliw recommended that the legislation ban

the taking of photos or videos but not specific devices.

Committee agreed no one should be allowed to photograph or film a polling station. It was then discussed whether texting should be banned. The committee felt that the purpose of this section is to ensure the secrecy of the ballot and to maintain peace and order at a polling station. For example, the rule prevents someone from speaking on the phone and disturbing others. It would also prevent someone reporting back to a campaign when someone has voted within earshot of other voters. However, committee believes someone should not be penalized for handing a phone to a child to keep them occupied while the parent waits to cast a vote. Therefore, committee recommends:

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to prohibit photography, videography, or phone calls within the polling station and to authorize the Chief Electoral Officer to issue guidance on the usage of electronics in polling stations.

The CEO also recommended that a candidate's polling agent be barred from assisting an elector in marking a ballot. Committee agrees this is a reasonable restriction. Polling agents are there to monitor the election, not to assist anyone in voting.

Recommendation 9

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to prohibit a candidate's polling agent from being able to assist an elector in casting a vote.

Mr. Wasyliw raised the possibility of allowing electors to vote for their home electoral district from any polling station in the territory. Mr. Wasyliw argued that in communities with multiple polling districts, an elector who went to the wrong polling station would not likely go to the correct location. The committee is uncertain what impact this could have on vote counting, especially in cases where votes cast in another community would have to be shipped back to their home polling district for counting. This could have an impact on announcing the results on election day. Therefore, committee recommends:

Recommendation 10

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer investigate how other provinces or territories allow residents to cast votes from any polling station and

report back to the Legislative Assembly within six months on the outcomes of that investigation.

Mr. Wasyliw also recommended there should be enhanced election day advertising and signage with polling locations in accessible buildings. The committee encourages Elections NWT to use more signage to indicate where polling stations are located and to ensure polling stations are accessible to all voters.

Election Witnesses

The CEO recommended that the act be changed to no longer require two electors to be present during the counting of ballots if no other witnesses are present. The CEO recommended that a new position, a counting clerk, be created as an election official.

Committee reviewed legislation from across the country, and noted several provinces and Canada still require electors to act as witnesses if no candidates or their representatives are present. However, the committee agreed that finding electors to witness the count can be difficult. The CEO flagged that some candidates' polling agents, who under the act are not entitled to be paid to witness the count, felt they were entitled to be paid as they were taking the place of witnesses. Committee agreed this behaviour is not acceptable.

Committee found the language under Section 119 of British Columbia's Act to be helpful; requiring a voting officer and one other official, with candidates permitted one representative each.

Recommendation 11

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to remove the requirement for electors to act as witnesses. An election officer and one other election official should be required, with candidates permitted one representative each.

Financial Reports

The CEO recommended changing the act to allow for electronic filing of a candidate's financial report. The committee agrees that official agents should be allowed to file paperwork electronically.

Recommendation 12

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to allow for a candidate's financial report to be submitted electronically.

Special Voting Opportunities

Mr. Wasyliw noted that anyone who chose to vote early in the office of the returning officer was

provided with a write-in ballot. This ballot did not have the photos of candidates on it. This raises the possibility that an elector with low literacy skills may not be able to cast their vote independently. Committee noted that the change to allow for voting the day after nominations closed was made following the 2015 election to expand opportunities to vote. While the committee supports expanded voting opportunities, it believes advance voting ballots should match those used on polling day. The committee proposes changing when voting in the office of the returning officer starts, from 24 days before polling day to 21 days. This would allow ballots to be printed with candidates' names and photos, as laid out under Section 110(3) of the act.

Recommendation 13

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 144(1) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to allow for voting in the office of the returning officer to commence on the 21st day before polling day.

The CEO recommended removing the legislated timeframe to apply for an absentee ballot, currently set at 10 days before polling day. The CEO suggests it be changed to a date and time to set by the CEO. Committee notes there are other specific timeframes in the act related to absentee ballots, notably when to apply to cancel that ballot and be reinstated in the Register of Electors as not having voted. Committee also reviewed previous recommendations and noted that in 2011 concerns were raised about leaving the application period open too close to polling day, as mailed absentee ballots may not arrive on time. While this is not a risk with online voting, 10 percent of all absentee ballots were still mailed, predominantly from small communities. Committee chose not to make a recommendation for this reason.

Mr. Wasyliw recommended allowing mail-in ballots to be counted provided they are post-marked by polling day, not just received. While this process is used in other jurisdictions, most notably in some states in the recent American election, it is not a change committee is ready to endorse. The committee does encourage Elections NWT to ensure voters applying for absentee ballots are told of the requirement to have the ballot received by Elections NWT by polling day, not mailed on that day.

Recall Legislation

Both the CEO and Mr. Wasyliw recommended consideration be given to recall legislation. British Columbia is the only Canadian jurisdiction with recall legislation, and since 1995, there has been only one petition with enough signatures to trigger a

recall election. The MLA in question resigned prior to this happening. BC requires 40 percent of eligible voters in the electoral district to sign a recall petition. Alberta indicated it would introduce recall legislation, but it has not done so yet.

The committee notes that the purpose of recall legislation is not to overturn the results of an election because one candidate lost but to address concerns about an elected Member's conduct. The committee points to the new code of conduct, which empowers residents to raise concerns with the Integrity Commissioner if a Member is not seen as doing his or her job, has behaved in a way that does not uphold the integrity of their office, or if the Member is in a conflict of interest. The Integrity Commissioner has the power to investigate and to convene an inquiry under a sole adjudicator if the concern warrants it. A sole adjudicator can recommend that a Member be removed from office.

Due to the broad scope the Integrity Commissioner has to start an investigation, the committee feels this is a more prudent use of public funds to deal with a concern around a Member's conduct than a costly and time-consuming recall election and subsequent by-election.

The committee notes that information pertaining to the code of conduct must be provided to all candidates. While the CEO has recommended that her office should not be required to circulate this information, committee believes the CEO is the best person, as she is responsible for providing other documents to prospective candidates as part of the nomination process.

Open Data

The committee heard a submission from OpenNWT, a non-profit organization dedicated to the principles of open government in the Northwest Territories and making government-held data more accessible.

OpenNWT recommended that Elections NWT should follow the GNWT practice of advertising public procurements and disclose awarded contracts. Committee agrees that, as an agency funded by the Legislative Assembly, Elections NWT should follow the same procurement practices as the Assembly does. Contracts, what process was used to award those contracts, and the amounts for each contract should be disclosed in the Elections NWT annual report.

Recommendation 14

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Elections NWT follow the same procurement practices as the Legislative Assembly and publicly disclose all contracts, the procurement

process used for each contract, and the amount of each contract in the Elections NWT Annual Report.

OpenNWT also noted that the information included in the Elections NWT reports varies from election to election, both in style and content. Committee agrees that a consistent reporting format is required to better allow for analysis of election trends, including around the use of absentee ballots and the rate of return of those ballots. OpenNWT also argued that the act should be changed to require information about each poll and when a poll should be combined with another. Committee feels there needs to be more work done in this area and, therefore, makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 15

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer undertake a review of best practices on election reporting and return to the Legislative Assembly within six months with the findings of that review and any potential amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act.

OpenNWT also recommended that election information be posted in an open, machine-readable format. Committee agrees doing so would be beneficial.

Recommendation 16

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Elections NWT post all election data that is included in its reports in a machine-readable format on the Elections NWT website.

Other Recommendations

Although not addressed in the CEO's report or raised in any submissions, committee discussed the possibility of security concerns surrounding the public disclosure of a Candidates residential address as required by the act. In many smaller communities, the residential address of Candidates may be common knowledge among residents; however, this may not be the case in larger centres. Further, the perceived security risk associated with the disclosure of one's residential address may be a disincentive for some towards putting their name forward for election.

Recommendation 17

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer undertake a review of the requirements to publicly disclose a candidate's residential address and return to the Legislative Assembly within six months with the findings of that review and any potential amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act.

The CEO recommended that a returning officer should not be able to appoint "Additional Assistant Returning Officers" if they are a family member of the returning officer. Committee notes that the act does not define an "Additional Assistant Returning Officer." Under Section 24(2), an assistant returning officer is already excluded from being appointed by a related returning officer. To ensure there is no room for confusion the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 18

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Section 24(4) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to specify that the act applies to additional assistant returning officers the same as it does to assistant returning officers, except for the limitations specified in Section 24(4).

The CEO also recommended excluding any relation of a candidate from serving as an assistant returning officer. While the committee supports ensuring the integrity of the electoral process, it also notes the CEO's admission that finding election workers in small communities is a challenge. Given the close-knit nature of our communities and that this concern appears to be hypothetical, committee does not support limiting the pool of potential election workers at this time.

The CEO recommended that official agents be included under Section 78(b) with the rationale that agents should be bound by the same restrictions as election officials, candidates, MLAs, and other governments. This section releases these people from following the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. As a result, the committee believes the list should not be expanded to include official agents.

As polling station accounts are captured in an electronic format, the CEO recommended that Section 205(e) be deleted. Committee notes that Section 205 does not refer to polling station accounts as paper or physical forms but requires the polling station account to be transmitted to the Chief Electoral Officer in the manner that he or she may direct. After seeking a legal opinion from the Law Clerk, committee is of the view that deleting Section 205(e) would have the effect of removing the requirement to submit the poll station account to the CEO in a return; as such, committee recommends that Section 205(e) should not be deleted.

OpenNWT recommended lowering the campaign spending limit to \$20,000, with a \$10,000 travel amount for those ridings with multiple communities. Committee notes that no campaign in the 2019 election spent the existing \$30,000 limit. Most winning campaigns spent well under \$20,000.

Committee is concerned that in some ridings, travel costs could exceed \$10,000, and feels the existing limit allows for more flexibility for candidates.

OpenNWT also recommended looking into changing the voting system from the current "first past the post" to "ranked voting," where electors would rank the candidates instead of choosing one. Committee feels that such a change would require extensive public consultation and is not prepared to make a recommendation.

Mr. Wasyliw recommended that Elections NWT be mandated to study the impact of expanded voting opportunities on election campaigns and to run sessions for potential candidates or official agents to provide information on the campaign process and the requirements under the act. The committee notes the video materials produced in advance of the last election to inform official agents and candidates of their role and encourages Elections NWT to continue this work. The committee does not wish to place Elections NWT in a position where their independence could be questioned by having Elections NWT responsible for researching impacts on political campaigns or to be responsible for informing political candidates outside of materials already required under the act.

The committee found certain recommendations from the CEO went beyond the administration of the election and touched on political considerations. The committee feels that the independence of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer requires that the office not only act in a non-partisan, apolitical manner, but also be seen as such. If Elections NWT receives political complaints about candidates, committee advises that the appropriate response from that office is to redirect the complainants to the Members of the Legislative Assembly or the Integrity Commissioner, as appropriate.

Housekeeping

The CEO has recommended a few amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act dealing with typos or out-of-date provisions. One was fixed as part of the Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act 2020. During the committee's review of the act, two more errors were found. As such, committee recommends that the act be amended to:

- Amend Section 119(4) to remove a reference to the now deleted provision Section 195(3)(a)
- Amend Section 142(2) to remove requirement of a paper copy of the list of electors for a polling division being placed in the ballot box, it need only be provided to the deputy returning officer.

- Amend Section 195(5) to remove a reference to an envelope containing the polling station account
- Amend Section 309(2) to reference Section 121(b), which deals with the sale of liquor, and not Section 129(b).

Recommendation 19

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to fix references to other clauses and to reflect current electronic management of the list of electors and the polling station account.

The CEO has also recommended that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be repealed and replaced, and if that is not achievable, then it should have a statutory review every seven years.

Committee notes that the act is reviewed as a matter of course after every election and that it has been amended 11 times in the last 10 years, largely in response to recommendations stemming from the CEO reports on election administration and the public hearings from committee's review of that report. It is committee's view that replacing the act or imposing a statutory review is not required.

Mr. Wasylciw recommended that changes to the Elections and Plebiscites Act be subject to the same consultation and public review as other legislation. The committee notes that public input is taken as part of committee's review of the CEO report, and the committee makes its recommendations following that review. This report addresses all the recommendations committee received, along with reasons as to why a recommendation is being made or rejected.

Conclusion

The committee wishes to thank the CEO, Dr. Essex, Dr. Goodman, MLA Green, OpenNWT, and Mr. Wasylciw for making submissions that informed committee's review and the recommendations made in this report. This concludes the committee's review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Frame Lake.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 9-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Committee Report 9-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures

Report on the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election, be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order and is nondebatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 568-19(2):
INMATE REHABILITATION

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Justice recently completed a corrections service workplace assessment. Can the Minister explain how he is going to address the toxic and unhealthy workplace in the corrections system as described in this report, to ensure that our government will help to rehabilitate our incarcerated Indigenous people so that they can take charge and make changes in their lives? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Members are aware from the numerous times that I have addressed this in this House, this is a project that I am keeping a close eye on because it is so vital to the hundreds of staff in the corrections system as well as the inmates and their families and their futures.

One of the things that came out of the assessment was the creation of a working group with senior management from the Department of Justice, the human resources people from Finance, as well as the UNW. A working group at this level has never been assembled before. The union has never had that type of input into these changes before. This is something that is different than the past, and it's something that I think is really going to give some force to the changes that we hope to implement.

Together, that working group is developing an accountability framework, something that they can be held accountable to, that everyone can be held accountable to, and will really guide the work going forward. After the initial report, there was engagement between the staff and senior

managers. There was going to be initial engagement based on what was previously heard so that we could focus on developing solutions. These are solutions that are not just from the top handed down. These are solutions coming from the ground up in collaboration with management.

Another of the changes is that there is going to be a review of operational schedules, including the movement of inmates, which is to address safety concerns that have been brought forward. There is going to be a new software system to coordinate training, recertification, all of those things. That was an issue. There is a renewed focus on retention and retainment. One of the big things is just enhancing the lines of communication, ensuring that management gets on the floor and that they talk to staff. That was one of the big takeaways, and one of the easiest things to remedy, just opening up those lines of communication. I have been following up with my department to ensure that these things are happening because, like I said before, I don't want this to be a report that just sits on a shelf. I want it to result in action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Will the Minister consider reinstating some of the programs that previously helped inmates rehabilitate back into society? Can inmates once again do activities such as cutting grass, shovelling snow, or work regular jobs during their stay, or attend Aurora College to advance their education?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Immediately following the beginning of the pandemic, all of those types of programs stopped. However, in July of 2020, they were reinitiated. That work has been going on in certain places. However, I note the Member is concerned that the work isn't happening in her community. Some of the things that need to be considered are basically public safety. There are always assessments of offenders. It depends on who is at the facility at that time. This is something that I am following up with further with my department because I know that it has been raised a number of times. I am looking into this specifically, but on the whole, those activities can occur.

MS. MARTSELOS: The workplace assessment report validated all of the concerns of staff within NWT corrections. Until this is corrected in a professional, orderly way, would the Minister agree that no rehabilitation of our incarcerated people will properly take place?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I have to disagree with that. I think that, despite the concerns raised by staff, they still have the ability to perform their jobs and help inmates with rehabilitation. I understand that a healthy workplace where people want to be is

always conducive to a better job, and so we are working to make that happen.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Lastly, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister ensure that all of the concerns our Indigenous staff brought forward in the workplace assessment are addressed and that our Indigenous staff are heard? Positive solutions must address these staff issues to ensure rehabilitation of our incarcerated people will properly take place. Does the Minister agree with that statement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: It is my goal to ensure that the concerns brought forward by staff will be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 569-19(2):
ADDICTIONS TREATMENT PROGRAM

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I made my Member's statement regarding addictions. Now the government is making money from alcohol, and all that money goes to the GNWT. I am asking these questions today because I will not be here tomorrow. [Translation ends]

My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission. Mr. Speaker, how can this government reconcile benefitting financially from the substance abuse it is enabling through the \$57 million in annual liquor and cannabis sales in this territory? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The consolidated revenue fund is the entirety of the budget of the Northwest Territories. That is the money that is spent to do all of the things that the Government of the Northwest Territories does, including funding Health and Social Services, including funding addictions services, including funding housing. It's not misuse. That is really the money that we all, then, come together and decide what we want to do and where we want to allocate it through the budgeting process.

Mr. Speaker, to the extent that there are concerns about the budgeting process as we do the reviews for, in this case, particularly Health and Social Services that has primary responsibility for addictions, perhaps the Department of Justice with respect to the rehabilitation of those who may have

run in contravention of the law, then that's the opportunity that we all have as Members to evaluate and review where we want to spend our money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LAFFERTY: [Translation] If we take a look at the money that is coming in, it's in the millions every year. The money goes to the government. We need to take a closer look at contributing some money towards addictions. [Translation ends]

Mr. Speaker, my next question to the Minister is: why doesn't this government link its addictions treatment spending directly to the millions it rakes in from the retail sales of these intoxicants? Has the Minister considered allocating a certain percentage, possibly 1 or 2 percent, of the revenues earned on an annual basis towards addiction programming or after-care programming?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I certainly do appreciate the attempt to solve what is obviously a huge problem for the Northwest Territories. As far as earmarking, though, and taking a specific amount that is within the Department of Finance, under the Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission and the sale of liquor, the challenge with earmarking what would otherwise be going into the consolidated revenue fund is that it actually reduces the ability to be flexible that we all have about how we spend all of the money to achieve all of the priorities and the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

That said, Mr. Speaker, what is happening right now are two things. There is a review that is about to begin with respect to the liquor act. There is also, happening right now, work to develop an alcohol strategy within the Department of Health and Social Services, and the two departments are working together.

To the extent that the Department of Finance does alcohol prevention and misuse prevention activities, that does fall within our mandate. Mr. Speaker, I will look at the amount that we spend on that. I can commit to doing that, and I can commit to coming back and seeing if there are further activities that we can undertake there and, aside from that, continuing to do work with the Department of Health and Social Services.

MR. LAFFERTY: I'm glad the Minister is recognizing the huge challenges that we are faced with addictions here in the Northwest Territories. It's a real issue. We need to be dedicating our resources, allocating funds towards that, meaning that we should be taking a certain percentage out of the revenue generated on an annual basis. We need to think outside of the box. We have always said this government is doing things differently.

Well, show it. Show the territory that we can do that.

Mr. Speaker, what has the Minister learned from those more enlightened jurisdictions? Other jurisdictions are allocating a certain percentage, a dedicated statutory share of liquor and cannabis profits, to addictions treatment. Why couldn't we follow this practice that is already in place in other jurisdictions?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: We are on track to deliver on a pressing review about the structure of the pricing of alcohol in the Northwest Territories. As I say, it's on track. It's coming back in March. As soon as I have the information put together, that will demonstrate what, in fact, is happening in other jurisdictions, what best practices there are available, and at that point, we can make a decision based on that information as to whether or not there are best practices that we aren't following and go forward from there.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, if we were to earmark a certain percentage, my concern, of course, is: are we giving the right amount to Health and Social Services to do their work in terms of alcohol prevention? Are we giving them enough, and are we giving it to them at the right time when they are ready to utilize it effectively? Should it be going somewhere else, like to Indigenous governments? Should it be going to the communities? Having it part of the budgeting process that we are here for right now is the best way for us to all have that conversation and have that debate about where and how much to spend.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Right now, all of these issues are under the Minister of Finance, how the money and where the money is going. She is the person who makes these major decisions. This is the reason why I'm asking the Minister of Finance. Right now, under Canada, with alcohol, money that we are getting, all that funding we do get, I would like to see the percentage in each department, how far and how much can we get for each department regarding the addiction money that we will get from finance. [Translation ends]

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: If I have understood correctly, there is a request to ensure that we are properly reporting back on how much has come in in terms of any revenue, any actual profits, revenue from sales, and then to determine where that goes. If I understand correctly, that is very difficult. I mean, that goes into the consolidated revenue fund, and it is distributed to every department. As for which percentage goes for

addictions treatment, again, we would involve the Department of Health and Social Services, which is certainly the lead on addictions services, with some supports to housing and some supports from Justice.

I will go away and look back at Hansard and see what I can come back with. If there is information I can collect, I certainly will, but to the extent that it is the money of the consolidated revenue fund, then it's the money that is spent by all the departments on addictions, which is in the main estimates which we are reviewing right now. Again, we will do our best to put some information together, Mr. Speaker. Really, that is what this purpose is to me with main estimates review, is to look at where we spend all of the money of the Government of the Northwest Territories and make sure it's meeting the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 570-19(2):
CROWN CORPORATION BOARDS OF
DIRECTORS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and the questions are just a formality because I am sure that she is going to agree with me. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Minister and her department, can the Minister explain how the NWT Power Corporation is expected to be arm's length and provide oversight when we are using senior bureaucrats as a board of directors to oversee management and strategic direction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Governance and accountability for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation has been a long-standing issue for the GNWT, and several reviews have been done, completed over the last 10 to 12 years. The use of senior bureaucrats as a board was an interim measure while looking at a comprehensive review and also building on all the past reviews that have been undertaken. I admit this work is not proceeding as fast as we would like it to. I currently have a request in with Standing Committee on Government Operations to discuss some potential NTPC governance structures. Mr. Speaker, we need to get this right. We need to figure out how to make any NTPC board structure accountable to me as Minister and to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister confirm, during the number of reviews, as to the effectiveness of the board that is made up of bureaucrats versus independent directors, and if so, what were the criteria used?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: I think that was two questions, but I will try to get it in one answer. There has been no formal assessment done as to the effectiveness of the current board structure versus the previous board structure. That was his first question. There are advantages and disadvantages of either structure. The important thing, Mr. Speaker, is to come up with a structure that is accountable to ratepayers, the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and the Legislative Assembly without costing an arm and a leg and not having power rates go up to pay for all this.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Since I tried to sneak in that extra question, I will just ask one more. The NWT Power Corporation has a series of aging infrastructure along with potential major projects on the books. I would ask for a commitment from the Minister to initiate the process for replacing the current board of directors with persons who have the interests, experience, and time to ensure we properly position NTPC to take advantage of new technology and cost-saving measures as we move forward.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: I have stated that there is a review underway, and I am hoping to meet with Standing Committee on Government Operations this session to be able to discuss some options. I do agree with the Member that, whatever board structure we land on, there is a need for independent engineering advice for decision-makers to be able to understand the consequences of any decisions that they have to make. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 571-19(2):
NATIONAL PHARMACARE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. First, let's establish the position of this government. Does this Cabinet support a national pharmacare program? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, yes.

MR. O'REILLY: While I am on a roll, does this government support the creation of a national

program as envisaged on the federal Bill C-213, the Canada Pharmacare Act, and has that position been communicated to our Member of Parliament?

HON. JULIE GREEN: This legislation, if it does, in fact, pass through the House of Commons this week, represents a real game-changer toward prescription medications for people in the NWT. Only about 50 percent of our population has pharmacy and medication coverage, so this would take in a lot of people who are currently left out. However, there is a lot of fine print that needs to be negotiated between the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments. Obviously, pharmacare would be a national initiative but implemented by provinces and territories, so there is a lot of detail that needs to be worked out. Of course, we would not want a boiler-plate system; we would want a system that suits our particular needs here in the Northwest Territories. We would also, of course, want funding that was secure and long-term, that would ensure that, once we start to offer a pharmacare program, we would be able to continue offering it. We are interested in seeing this happen, but we are not at the stage yet of negotiating these details.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I am not asking the Minister for negotiating the details right now. Does this Cabinet support Bill C-213, and have they communicated their position to our Member of Parliament? He has to vote on this bill tomorrow. Does this Cabinet support Bill C-213, yes or no, and can you communicate that with our MP?

HON. JULIE GREEN: As I mentioned before, the Cabinet does support a national pharmacare program represented in this case by Bill C-213. I am not aware about what conversations have happened with the MP about this bill. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. If I could respectfully suggest, then, that the Premier pick up the phone and call our MP and say, "Get on this. We support it. Please vote in favour"? However, I want to ask what else our government is actually doing to try to promote a national pharmacare program, so can the Minister answer that question for me? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: This area has not received the attention it deserves, primarily because it has coincided with the pandemic, and federal and territorial resources have been focused on that. However, the Member may recall that, in October 2020, the federal Speech from the Throne invited provinces and territories to participate in federal,

provincial, and territorial discussions on a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases, and in fact, the NWT has been participating in that dialogue. There is a public engagement going on now on high-cost drugs for rare diseases, and it continues until March 26th.

A second FPT forum that we've been involved with has to do with increasing our participation in the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance. This is an alliance that negotiates with pharmaceutical companies on volume purchases of drugs in order to reduce the costs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 572-19(2):
ELDER ABUSE

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The issue of what we term as "elder abuse" has been going on for years. It seems that there is no end in sight. That is, if we can actually do something about the situation the elders are facing regarding elder abuse, whether it be financial or caregiving. My question to the Minister responsible is: can she provide the resources required to stop this elder abuse, and I term it as a pandemic? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Seniors.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Elder abuse is a real and frightening problem in our territory. We are very concerned about it; all of us are concerned about it. What to do about it is not as easy as putting money into a program. It is a set of attitudes that people have towards elders, in which they are neglected and exploited, as the Member said in his statement. We have been having discussions about whether we could strengthen our regulatory environment around elder abuse so there are real consequences for failing to protect elders and for taking advantage of them. At the moment, what we're doing is all of the run-up steps of a jurisdictional scan and whether we need regulation change or legislation change. In this work, we're working with the NWT Seniors' Society, who are the lead organization on the Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults. We are working with them on the potential to provide regulation and/or legislative change which would provide for real consequences for people who are engaged in elder abuse. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: I thank the Minister for that and the steps that the NWT Seniors' Society is taking, but that society, I rarely hear of them in my community. I was speaking with an elder in my community. They were stating that there was a meeting last fall in Fort Providence, an elder abuse

awareness session, but there were no elders in attendance, especially the ones being abused financially and mentally. No one even went out of their way to gather them up or, at the very least, have sessions with them one-on-one at the senior's home or another location. Can the Minister responsible for Seniors provide resources to ensure that every elder is interviewed in total confidence regarding elder abuse?

HON. JULIE GREEN: As I mentioned, the NWT Seniors' Society is the lead on the Network to Prevent the Abuse of Older Adults, and they offer a number of workshops called Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults throughout the NWT. The community of Fort Providence invited the NWT Seniors' Society to present this workshop in September of 2020. The workshop was attended by five elders, I'm told; a home support worker; a justice worker; and the elder coordinator. Both the chief and the RCMP also attended part of the workshop. What they tried to do in these workshops is emerge with a plan for how they are going to address the specific elder abuse that exists in their community, and it's my understanding that that plan is now in development and that it will be taken back for the elders to review to ensure that it is meeting their needs. That's the plan for Fort Providence.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you for that. I know I keep hearing the NWT Seniors' Society. I believe the government puts money towards their organization. Like I mentioned, I don't know how much involvement they have with many of our seniors in the small communities. We never see representatives in those communities. There are serious problems here. I have been talking to people in my community this past week, and there are people who work on the ground with them. They have serious reservations about what anybody is actually doing to help the seniors because they are facing them almost on a daily basis, and they don't know where to go or who to turn to to help them address these issues of elder abuse, especially the finances and everything because everything is getting more complex, now. People are starting to set up e-transfers and stuff like this and those kinds of mechanisms and withdrawing. That's the stuff I'm starting to hear, and it's almost like we need someone. I'm just wondering if the Minister can provide an advocate or an official position in the communities to assist elders to combat this elder abuse syndrome.

HON. JULIE GREEN: As I say, the department has been funding the NWT Seniors' Society to provide these workshops, and those are ongoing. I have to tell you that elder abuse is like intimate partner violence in that the victims are often shamed, not willing to come forward to say that they have been taken advantage of. It can be difficult to have victims of violence come forward and say that they

are, in fact, victims of violence, let alone to then reach out for help. One of the things that we've been doing with our health staff is to train them to look for signs of elder abuse and to support seniors and elders to access all those same services that we provide in the case of intimate partner violence. That would include family violence shelters, court orders, emergency protection orders, social worker assistance, restorative justice, and counselling. All of those things are available to elders to cope with their situation.

The bottom line here, as it is with intimate partner violence, is that we need to change attitudes, that we value our elders. We're not just talking about it, but we are walking that talk in saying that we value our elders and that we won't put up with exploitation and neglect.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's replies that the NWT Seniors' Society is looking to address the situation and that it's not an easy fix. That's why I ask if we can get someone to go out and actually interview the elders with a translator or one of the caregivers because I understand that social services has been approached in my community and they refused to assist in this regard because they are dealing mostly with child and family services, that is, taking children away from families, but they refused to help in any regard. We've got two positions like that in my community, and we've got nobody there to advocate for the seniors in the small communities. This is a serious issue, and I would like to have some resources into our communities to assist in interviewing the elders. Let's make a positive step forward in trying to address this issue. I would really appreciate that. Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am shocked that social workers have refused to provide service to elders who are experiencing different forms of abuse. That's certainly something that I want to follow up. There are services available now. For example, the Office of the Public Guardian is a place that elders can go to get services to protect them and their decision-making ability. That exists only in Yellowknife, but it is possible to make a call to the Office of the Public Guardian and ask them for help. We have, in Yellowknife and somewhere in the Deh Cho, adult social workers. Social workers perform a variety of functions not only limited to children. There are a couple of things that I am going to follow up to assist the Member in understanding what available help there is in his community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 573-19(2):
ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to take advantage of the Minister being responsible for both ECE and Justice and, as well, make him answer a few questions that his colleague, the Minister of Finance, may have input on. My first question is: what is the Minister doing to work with local organizations, such as BACupNorth, in addressing systemic racism, not only in the public service, but also in the criminal justice system across our territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a meeting scheduled with BACupNorth. It has been on the books for some time. There were some issues, I think, finding a time that worked for everyone. That is happening on March 15th. We have our community justice committees, which support communities to develop alternatives to the criminal justice system, such as diversion programs. We also have, what I set as the Minister, annual policing priorities. I just recently sent out letters to the Indigenous governments to find out what their priorities are so that we can incorporate those. Those are some of the things that we do to work with communities and organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Growing up in western Canada, I never knew anything about Black history or the history of African-Canadians in our country until, as an adult, I went to Halifax and first heard of Africville. It has come to my attention that literature around Black history is all but absent in our school curriculums and systems. What is the Minister doing to change this in our educational institutions in the North?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I had a similar experience as the Member. We didn't really learn Black history in school here in the territory. Right now, the NWT grade 5 social studies curriculum introduces students to the experiences of the Black population in Nova Scotia, both historically and today. Students are given opportunities to examine and question social reality through critiques of media, public policy decisions, foreign policy choices, newspapers, historical accounts, and school life itself.

ECE agrees that more representation and acknowledgement of Black history and present day are needed through NWT schools and is currently working with partners to ensure that appropriate resources are identified and made accessible to

NWT schools. This need was highlighted and arguably heightened with the recent Black Lives Matter international protests, which compelled ECE to reach out to local NWT advocacy groups.

ECE met with representatives from BACupNorth in December to discuss their thoughts and recommendations on the inclusion of resources in NWT schools. Discussions identified the importance of students understanding and learning about the history of Black Canadians but also the positive history. We do have a negative history in Canada, but there are also numerous positive contributions, as well. We want to make sure that we are giving a full picture.

There is a follow-up meeting with BACupNorth in early March, and ECE is currently reviewing a list of recommended reading materials that have been identified for NWT schools to help ensure that students of colour see themselves in the books that they read. ECE will ensure that copies of these recommended books are distributed to all NWT schools by the beginning of the upcoming school year.

MS. NOKLEBY: I am really glad to hear that, particularly the idea of critiquing things that have happened in the past and looking at things through a new lens. My next question is a little bit redundant like the first, but I would like to know what the GNWT is doing. We have seen a lot of evidence of police brutality, derogatory treatment, and incarceration of Black and Indigenous people across the country and here in the North. What is the GNWT doing itself, or internally, to address anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in law enforcement and in the criminal justice system?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I recently met with the commanding officer of the RCMP, and he had also met with BACupNorth. He was very open to working with them, continuing to work with them, and providing them support in any way that he could. I know that the RCMP also, here in the territory, undertakes cultural training and community integration, but I don't think they do elsewhere in Canada. In that sense, they are ahead of other jurisdictions.

In terms of what we do to address some of the issues surrounding Indigenous people in the justice system, there is the integration of Indigenous culture with input from elders. We have traditional liaison officers. I know, in the South Slave, in SMCC, there are some amazing programs. Those are going to be rolling out to other correctional facilities in the future. As we transition to the new Corrections Act, I think that we are going to see a lot more of that acknowledgement that we need to really work with the people in the system.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question just has to do with the upcoming cultural sensitivity and training that we will be doing. Does the GNWT make available to all GNWT employees cultural sensitivity training that has the purpose of raising awareness on how to interact with Black or people of colour in the workplace and other departments? I do recognize that I am kind of asking a lot of the same questions. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: We're breaking down silos here, and my colleague from the Department of Finance helped put this answer together. I'm just going to read it verbatim so that I don't mess it up. No shooting from the hip this time.

The Department of Finance is launching an anti-racism campaign through the months of March and April. The campaign will include printed and video resources that encourage public servants to explore anti-racism and to take action against all forms of racism, along with virtual training and workshops.

This month, the department is also rolling out training for all employees on Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity. This training will be launched this month and includes content on anti-racism, unconscious bias, white privilege, and how those topics impact all members of our communities. This training will be available to all members of the public.

Additionally, the GNWT has an advisory committee on diversity and inclusion. This committee provides assistance on improving access for designated employment equity groups in the public service by promoting awareness, working with departments to find ways to remove and prevent barriers faced by these groups, and promote support and increase diversity within the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 574-19(2):
EMERGENCY SHELTERS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need emergency shelters in my riding. Two weeks ago, I asked the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to get me the locations of the units in the communities of Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, and Paulatuk. I haven't received anything yet, but I am hoping that we could get this done this week so that I could pass on to my leadership what units are available, either COVID-19 shelters or emergency shelters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, now, in Paulatuk, we don't have any units available. All of them are occupied. For the communities of Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, and Sachs Harbour, those communities I will provide the Member with the numbers. I do have them here, but it will probably take me 20 minutes to name them all. I will follow up with the Member with the list. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: I thank the Minister for that. I just want to ask the Minister: would the units be available to have as a warming shelter in the community? A lot of times, when people are unable to go home, if it's too cold to get to Reindeer Point, which is seven kilometres away, they have nowhere to go, other than staying with family. They don't want to put the burden on family. Are they able to go and utilize these shelters, and who would they contact to utilize the shelters in the community?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I would like to follow up with the Member and just specifically look at the communities that are in their ask for which communities need the warming shelter or the homelessness shelter initiative. Specifically for Tuktoyaktuk, I would like to follow up with the Member, as well, and identify what we possibly can have that is not allocated public housing units in the community of Tuktoyaktuk. Also, a majority of our homelessness initiatives are partnerships, so if the Member and the community leadership are interested in looking at homelessness initiatives, I would like to follow up with the leadership and with the Member, as well.

MR. JACOBSON: I thank the Minister for that. Would the Minister commit to working with me and the communities in Nunakput for a warming shelter or emergency shelter, whatever they want to call it? They just need a shelter, a warm place for these people to go and have a place to go. Would she commit to that?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: This would be a collaborative approach, and I would have to speak with my colleague for the department of health, as well, and really strategize and identify the needs for the specific community that the Member is referencing and the need specifically in his riding, as well. I will follow up with the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 575-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES-YUKON BORDER
RESTRICTIONS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. On February 18, the Chief Public Health Officer recently announced a travel exemption for those arriving from Nunavut, and I'm sure the Minister knows what I'm going to ask next: can the Minister confirm that there are discussions with the Yukon for an NWT-Yukon bubble, as this was on the table before Yukon opened to BC in July 2020? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say I'm surprised by that question. I knew, as soon as that news release came out, the Delta crowd would want to know about getting to the Yukon. What I can say is that those discussions are not happening at my level. I am aware that the people in the Delta would like to be able to travel to and from the Yukon without the two-week isolation, and I am also aware that the situation is different now because Yukon has its own isolation protocol. It doesn't have the open border that it had before Christmas. What I can commit is that I will raise it with the CPHO at my regular weekly meeting with her. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Since November 20, Yukon has halted its bubble with BC and has put in place a designated corridor for Alaskan residents travelling to the rest of the USA. Those were the thing that were of concern when we discussed it in June, so I will ask again: will the Minister continue to have this discussion sooner than later with the CPHO?

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am very happy to have this conversation with the CPHO. My next meeting with her is this week on Wednesday, and I certainly will raise it with her at that point and find out the status of the discussions that are going on around this. I just want to highlight that what we have with Nunavut is not a bubble. If people from the NWT go to Nunavut, they have to isolate. If people come to the NWT from Nunavut, they don't have to isolate, except in very specific circumstances, so it's not a two-way, open process. What I think the people in the Delta want is a bubble, where there is free movement across the border without isolation in either jurisdiction, so that's what I need to ask the Chief Public Health Officer about when I meet her this week.

MS. SEMMLER: Again, the Dempster Highway is a vital lifeline for the Beaufort-Delta and access to essential services, services they cannot get in the NWT by road, and it's too expensive by flight for most families. Will the Minister consider exemptions for members travelling to Yukon as there have been exemptions for NWT people travelling into Yukon? Pointing to what the Minister responded to last,

we're looking for exemptions; we're looking for anything.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I am looking forward to the Member inviting me to drive down the Dempster to Whitehorse. I've never had the pleasure of doing that. The thing about travel restrictions is that we can only control our own border. The Yukon can put whatever conditions in place they feel they need. We put our conditions in place to meet our own circumstances. It's not as easy as just throwing the border open and saying, "Look, it's all going to be good." The Yukon needs to decide that it is good for them. I recognize the Member's passion for this, that she would like this corridor to open as soon as possible. I would like to tell her that it will open, but there is a process here that we have to follow.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the large community uptake of the Moderna vaccine in the Beaufort-Delta, we've heard from most of the communities that we've had high uptakes of the vaccine, first and second in most. Can the Minister tell us if this will assist or increase the possibility of any decisions on a Yukon-NWT bubble? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: It's my understanding that having a fully vaccinated population, or an almost fully vaccinated population, on both sides of the border would be very helpful in this situation. I am aware that Yukon has a similar number of doses available as we do with the same kind of timing and goals for vaccination, so I think that that will be useful in making the case to make free travel available between the two jurisdictions. This is a live issue. We hope to have all of our vaccine rolled out by the end of March, so I'm hoping to be able to ask the CPHO, as I mentioned, this week and have the good news prepared for the end of March. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 576-19(2):
INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice. It's no secret, I think, at this point that I am definitely a supporter of integrated service delivery, and I know that we've heard it mentioned time and again in this House. I want to better understand what the goal is of this Cabinet, during this Assembly, for integrated service delivery and what timelines we can expect to see. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The idea of having a full-government approach to integrated service delivery and rolling this out across the GNWT is a big aspiration, and it takes a lot of work. It's an entire culture shift. It's not something that can be done overnight, although I wish I could snap my fingers and have it done. I share the Member's passion on this, so perhaps I can talk a bit about what's been done and some potential timelines.

In January, the territorial director for integrated service delivery engaged with over 100 GNWT staff to provide information on the fundamentals of integrated service delivery to start getting information out there. As well, the Territorial Senior Management Committee, which is comprised of senior managers from the various departments, are advocates for integrated service delivery within their departments. Most recently, a visioning exercise was completed with the management committee on February 2nd and 3rd to focus on change management and readiness and resulted in a solid understanding by all members of the committee of what the conceptual framework could look like for integrated service delivery. By April of this year, the department will have the conceptual framework finalized, and this work is critical to developing a real work plan, where we can actually start rolling things out. Working groups will be formalized based on the framework, and they are going to be likely linked to specific actions, to carry out specific actions. These working groups will develop the key milestones and timelines related to each of the actions.

Some of the actions could include things like privacy and information sharing. Right now, that's a bit of a barrier, and the Member knows all about it. Our legislation requires us to really create agreements between departments so that we can focus on the individual instead of focusing on the barriers that stop us from helping the individual. The actions could include internal and external stakeholder engagement, and that has to happen. We have to talk to communities. We have to know what services are needed and what services communities can help us with. There could be demonstration sites. What I mean by that is sites where perhaps we could pilot some things that we are not a hundred percent sure will work yet but we figure it's worth a shot.

One example is integrated case management. There are other places in the territory where they are doing some interesting things to integrate service delivery, for example in the Tlicho region, so perhaps there could be a demonstration site there, as an example. We have not had those

discussions yet, but I am just throwing that out there. It's also the development of standards of practice and training. There is a lot of work that needs to happen, but I can assure the Member that I am fully committed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: I appreciate that it's a big aspiration and will require an entire culture shift, but I think that there are some pieces that we can start working on right now. I appreciate the Minister laying out some of the ones that they are working on. The City of Yellowknife drafted a homelessness plan, and it indicated a need for coordinated access to front-line services, so I am wondering: how is the Department of Justice creating government-wide coordinated access through common intake and access points to better serve NWT residents? That is so that people are not running from department to department to department to put together the pieces that they need, not only to survive but thrive.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: As to the city's initiative, the territorial director of integrated service delivery has committed to joining any of those discussions and participating and contributing and learning. What we are looking at is seeing how we can perhaps co-locate services and collaborate in other ways immediately instead of waiting for this giant shift to take place, so that work is happening right now. There are some examples. There are things like the child- and youth-care counsellors; obviously, integrated case management; family preservation workers; the territorial-based support teams in ECE. There are a bunch of things that are happening, but we are not waiting for the final plan. We are trying to do what we can now, understanding that there is a need.

MS. CLEVELAND: I am really happy to hear that because I know it's a huge undertaking, but I think it's a really important undertaking for us to make as many steps forward as we can on. I am wondering if the GNWT departments will be signing an integrated service delivery MoU between social envelope departments and relevant stakeholders and if that is part of the plan of the working group and the framework that they are putting together in April.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: The departments have already signed an MoU. All of the social envelope departments, the deputy ministers have signed an MoU committed to carrying this forward, and partnerships with communities and community organizations are essential. Going forward, I am not sure how they are going to formalize those or what is needed, but they are essential. We will be working with them, MoU or not.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister touched on my next question a little bit, and that is in regard to privacy. I appreciate that this next question might be a little bit difficult to answer right now, but I am wondering if the GNWT intends to create an integrated information management system to better support NWT residents and prevent re-collection of relevant personal information, support networks, and support history. One of the things that I think could be really positive of that is people might be falling through the cracks at the same point a lot of times as they work through their crisis with GNWT systems. Without being able to kind of track the care that somebody is receiving, we might not be seeing important kind of consistencies in care and consistencies of where people end up falling through the cracks. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: It would be great to have "one system to rule them all" and not have to worry about trying to mesh different systems together, but the fact is that it's difficult. We know that from systems that we currently have that do not talk to each other, and so we really need to know a lot more about what we are going to do. We really need a solid plan before we invest in something like that. At this point, there is not a plan to create this system, but we really do need to put in the work to make sure that we do not just spend a whole bunch of money for nothing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 577-19(2):
LIQUOR PRICING REVIEW

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance regarding the liquor pricing review that is currently being undertaken. My question is: as part of that review, will the Minister increase the small brewery discount, thus lowering the cost of beer taxed that is produced in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The pricing review is not done yet. It is on track and on time, and it should be back by March. Once we have the information back, available to us, we will be able to make some decisions. Right now, beer manufacturing, of which there is exactly one individual, is receiving a fairly significant discount in terms of the typical markup that would normally be seen. Where they are at right now is worked on fairly significantly between that producer and the department, so I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that,

when that review information comes back, we will again work with our local producers or local producer and figure out an appropriate way forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: The Minister's answer gets to my next point directly. I believe we are presently where the Yukon was about 20 years ago, where they had one brewery, and now they have multiple in multiple communities. They have opened a distillery. There is an industry growing with people working, northern labour. There are jobs existing. I hope one day I can stand in this House and another MLA can ask questions about local manufacturing of wine, beer, and spirits in this territory. My question for the Minister is: is there work being done to assess the barriers for expanding the manufacturing in this industry? I know right now that both the federal Excise Act applies as well as a number of different departments across the GNWT, and there is an extremely high capital barrier to anyone wishing to produce locally made alcohol in the territory. Has the department conducted a review of the barriers that people face in wanting to get into this industry?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: This is one time when I want to give a simple answer and say no, but that is not a simple answer. I think it's really more as the Minister of ITI, in some ways, that I think I would be answering this question, which is really around barriers that small businesses, small- and medium-sized businesses, might have in order to open their businesses, become entrepreneurs, or innovate existing businesses. That is the kind of work that gets done regularly.

A couple of examples I would give right now: firstly, with respect to liquor specifically and the Liquor Act, to the extent that there may be some barriers within that, if there are, if that is the perspective of the industry, that review is about the get underway very shortly, looking at ways of streamlining and modernizing that act. The second one, Mr. Speaker, is the red tape review. There is a red tape review undergoing work right now, and I would strongly urge anyone who says that there is a barrier to this industry to respond in to that effort so that they are well aware of, in fact, what barriers there are so we can reduce them.

MR. JOHNSON: The reality is that anyone who is looking to brew beer in the NWT is never going to do it with local northern labour and get to a price point anything comparable to the large producers in the South. There are simply too many input costs to be competitive. When we look at the generous discount, as the Minister frames it, the price per litre that we are taxing beer at that is locally produced in the Northwest Territories is still not comparable to Ontario's microbrewery rate, for example. We are taxing them at a higher rate so that that beer will never be competitive with the Molson Canadians of

the world, an example, who I might point out are currently locking out their union.

I think one of the ways to fix this would be to allow locally produced beer to directly sell to restaurants. Right now, if you produce beer, you have to sell it to the liquor commission and then buy it back with those taxes. If you want to sell beer in a tasting room, you have to sell it first and then buy it back more expensively, at a price per litre that just is not competitive and really never will be, given the cost of labour and doing work in the North. My question to the Minister is: as part of this pricing review, can we allow locally produced beer to directly sell to restaurants without going to the liquor commission to be sold first?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I think, actually, that is a regulatory question, and that then falls back to the Liquor Act review that is underway. The good news is that there is much work happening and many opportunities to affect change that will make things hopefully better. It has to be done in a methodical way and in a process-oriented way. One thing I have discovered in this role is that liquor brings out a myriad of different opinions about whether it should be controlled or whether it should be more open and whether there should be more production or whether there should be less production. It has to be methodical. We have to go out to the community. The Liquor Act review is going to do that, and it's going to ask some of those questions. Do we need to change the way people can buy liquor, sell liquor? Those are exactly some of the questions we will be asking in the course of that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Item 10, written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 314-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
497-19(2): CORRECTIONS WORKPLACE
ASSESSMENT

TABLED DOCUMENT 315-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
528-19(2): INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 497-19(2) Corrections Workplace Assessment;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral

Question 528-19(2) Integrated Case Management." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 316-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
531-19(2): ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION
AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 532-19(2) Environmental Remediation and Economic Recovery." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020; Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund; Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2), Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; and Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022.

Colleagues, by the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee, Mr. Norn?

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to deal with Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021 for the Department of

Municipal and Community Affairs and, if time permits, the Department of Lands.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister have any opening remarks?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do. I am here to present the 2021-2022 main estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Overall, the department estimates proposed an increase of \$4.9 million, 4.3 percent over the main estimates 2021. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs while continuing to meet the Government of the Northwest Territories fiscal objectives to prioritize responsibilities and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include initiative funding increase of \$3.3 million to increase the municipal funding for community governments. This funding will support both the capital and operations and maintenance funding needs of the community governments.

Forced growth increase of \$1.4 million for grant-in-lieu, property taxes programs to support new government infrastructure in the communities of Fort Smith, Hay River, and Inuvik. Forced growth increase of \$199,000 to support continued implementation of the Deline Got'ine self-government financing agreement. These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Taking action to reduce the municipal funding gap with the investment in this budget, our government has made strong advancement towards the goals of reducing the municipal funding gap by \$5 million within the lifetime of this government.

Supporting the goals of Indigenous governments who have achieved self-government agreements by meeting our commitment under the Deline Got'ine Government financing agreement. Providing communities new opportunities to raise additional revenues by advancing a process for the transfer of lands within the municipal boundaries or to those

communities who wish to take greater control of land management.

The department's main estimates reflect progress on MACA's key mandate objectives. I look forward to the discussion during the detailed review. That concludes my opening remarks. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, do you have witnesses to bring into the House?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today, I have deputy minister Eleanor Young and Gary Schauerte. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Welcome. Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with community governance starting on page 330 with information items on page 333. Questions? Are there any questions under community governance? Seeing no questions under community governance, please turn to page 331. Municipal and Community Affairs, community governance, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$2,118,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now move to community operations beginning on page 334 with information items on page 337. Questions? Seeing that there are no questions, please turn to page 335. Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$2,277,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now turn to the directorate beginning on page 338 with information items on 341. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I see under the policy and planning line that the dollar figure between 2019 and 2020 actuals and the main estimates for this year, that the

financials have actually come down. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to why the policy and planning division dollars have come down and what that division intends to accomplish this year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have the discussion of our legislation amendments under review right now. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young comment and reply to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Sorry, Madam Chair. I don't have the detail on the breakdown from the 2019-2020 actuals for that specific line. We will have to come back with that one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Young. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm wondering if the Minister would be able to expand on what legislative priorities the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has for this coming year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have three legislation priorities that are coming forward. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young just reply on to where we are actually sitting at that with those amendments coming forward for review. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the coming year, the focus will be on three specific pieces of legislation. First of all, under the property assessment and taxation act, we are breaking that work into two components, with the first component being administrative changes that we can bring forward early in the life of this Assembly, and then there will be a phase 2 of that legislation brought later in the Assembly on some of the more difficult or complicated areas of that legislation that require more consultation with our stakeholders.

We are also beginning the engagement with stakeholders on part 2 of our Fire Prevention Act legislative review, which focuses primarily on the plan review and inspection component of the act. We are also picking some work back up on the

seniors and disabled property tax legislation and planning to bring that work forward.

Those are the pieces of legislation. There are two other minor things that I will mention. On the policy side, we had committed to doing work on all of our funding policies over the life of this government, and for this coming year, that focus will be on our water and sewer services funding policy and updating that policy. Then, although not under our legislation, per se, we are working with the Department of Justice on the implementation of the ATIP Act. That involves working with our stakeholders for an implementation component of the community government aspect of that act. In total, there are five different areas that will be focused for legislation in the coming year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Young. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. There is some really exciting legislative work being done in MACA with a lot of potential for this year, from rolling out ATIP to funding policies, which is definitely top-of-mind for communities, as well as the much-anticipated Fire Prevention Act. I am just wondering if the Minister feels that this is an accurate budget to be able to get that work done. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Member, for your question. With all of the planning that we had put forward and looking at the capacity that we do have within Municipal and Community Affairs to looking at our policy and planning, I do feel confident that we do have the resources to see those legislations and policies coming forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if there are timelines associated with each of the first three acts that the deputy minister referred to, that being the property assessment act, the Fire Prevention Act, and the seniors and disabled property tax act, if there are deadlines that the department is working towards in order to have those through to this side of the House. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hate to go back to COVID-19, but it did have a significant delay in our legislation coming forward. I

will just have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on that a little bit because we did end up with some delays, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there are timelines worked out for each piece of legislation. I don't know how much detail you would like me to go into here today, but for example, with the Property Assessment and Taxation Act, we are working towards a legislative proposal by February of 2022. That's our timeline to do the initial work on phase 1 of that act. Under the Fire Prevention Act, the revised legislative proposal on that one has the same timeline, February of 2022. We can provide more detail on the steps to get to those timelines if committee would like. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister Young. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is around the assessment or legislation to do with the property tax for seniors. I have had several constituents reach out to me about what the department is going to do to help them should the municipality assess their properties at a higher value than they have in the past, whether or not there is going to be some help there or some control. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at the specifics of the changes of this act and that we will be working with the town specifically, not looking at the communities right now. We are looking at all municipalities throughout the territory, but just recognizing that the municipalities do have their own bylaws and how to administer looking at the mill rate. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will actually engage organizations, such as the Seniors' Society, as we do part of this work. One of the real focuses of this work is to get fairness and equity across this act and across different types of communities. As it currently stands, there are some significant differences in the way that the act is applied in different types of communities. That is one of the big things we want to do is make sure that the act is both fair and transparent but also equitable across the types of communities. We will be working with community governments, seniors organizations, et cetera, to finish this work so that

we can strive to that kind of support for our seniors population. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there a move to be implementing income testing for seniors across all MACA programs or a variety of MACA programs in the upcoming year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not too sure if we are going to be looking at income testing, but I am looking at the mill rate. I have been concentrating on that, but I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte just elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. As we continue our work on researching options for the seniors and disabled property tax relief act, it would be our objective to try to be as consistent as possible with how seniors programs are being looking at across the spectrum within the Government of the NWT. There is considerable interest in supporting elders to age in place within their own homes. We are live to the issue that we want seniors to stay in their homes for longer periods of time. Ultimately, at the end of the day, any discussion about means testing for the tax benefit on this would be done within a comprehensive review, consistent with other seniors programs within the government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Would the department or the Minister characterize that the trend is going, across all those programs, towards income testing, or what is their feel about what is going to happen?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. If the Member could clarify "all programs," is that just for the property taxation for seniors? If she could just clarify? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member, can you clarify?

MS. NOKLEBY: Yes. Let me rephrase. I'm sorry I don't have your position right, but the departmental staff indicated that it would be consistent with all of

the other seniors programming across the Northwest Territories government. Is the trend across all of the Northwest Territories government towards income testing for seniors, and is that something that the Minister is looking at for her department specifically? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Within the lifetime of this government, we are looking for consistency throughout the programming that we do offer. I also want to say that, looking at the other portfolio I carry for the Housing Corporation and looking at the priority to have seniors age in place, I am going to have Mr. Gary Schauerte elaborate on the response. For income testing, for all programs, that would contribute to our changes within our property taxation for seniors and people with disabilities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think our department objective would try to be as consistent as possible with seniors programming. I think the seniors want that from government. They want predictability in terms of how they are going to be treated with respect to different programming. As we go forward with the review of this legislation, we are also going to talk to seniors and seniors organizations, and I am sure that they are going to have opinions on whether means testing should be part of a legislative proposal.

We are not at that stage yet with our legislative proposal or our research. I wouldn't want to say definitively whether or not that is something that is going to be part of our legislative work going forward, but we are going to talk to people. We are going to listen to them and hear from them and inform our legislative proposal accordingly. At the end of the day, the bill would be before the House for their consideration on those kinds of matters. I wouldn't want to suggest that that is going to be part of the bill at this stage, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: I don't have another question, but I am just going to take a moment to plug for the seniors. I don't think that we should do the income testing because I think they contribute in so many other ways, and we do want them to stay. As one pointed out to me, we get \$37,000 a year for them, so I will just leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I am just looking at the directorate on page 338 and some of the activity descriptions on this. We have the municipal funding gap we have to deal with, and it just feels like we are constantly finding ways to pivot and to find some solutions to close that gap and find ways to get funds out to our 33 communities. Aside from doing things on this side of the House, what has the department been doing in terms of finding ways to streamline and to get more funds out to the communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I prepared for this briefing. I am thinking I have read everything that I have and everything is in the top of my head, but we did get some additional funding this year. It did go towards sports and recreation and operations with the contribution, as well, of \$2.5 million towards the municipal funding gap. However, I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on that because we did do a distribution out to the communities this year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I am understanding the question correctly, you are looking at, beyond the mandate money, what else are we doing to get money out to communities. Am I understanding the question correctly?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Yes, Madam Chair. That is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I could talk about this quite a bit because there are quite a number of areas, but I will try to highlight a few areas that we have really focused on. For operating expenses within communities, we have put a lot of effort in the last couple of years in an asset-management strategy and trying to support communities to put policies and procedures in place to extend the life of their assets as long as possible and try to turn focus from emergency repairs and emergency maintenance into investing in and extending the lifespan of their assets as long as possible. That helps reduce operating costs, but it also helps extend the lifespan of the assets and reduce the amount of capital investment as quickly. That is one area as an example.

Another area that we have spent a lot of time in is trying to help community governments access federal infrastructure funding, and we have been very successful at that over a number of years. We are currently operating roughly five different federal infrastructure programs to communities and supporting them in every way possible to achieve the cost-share, write proposals, and get to as much federal support as possible so that they can take their CPI investment from the GNWT and stretch it as far as possible. Those would be two examples. However, when it comes to operations, we have tried wherever possible to look at what are the cost drivers for community governments and what can we do to support them to mitigate those cost drivers, extend the lifespan of their assets, reduce their operating costs, or access additional funding. I would say it covers all of those areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the response. It gives me a little bit more. It gives me a better idea where I need to go with this next question. We have 33 communities, and a lot of the communities are not like our larger centres where you could just consult with the mayors and whatnot. I know we have a lot of smaller communities, First Nations, for example, that the chiefs usually are the heads in that capacity. Has there been a lot of consultation stuff? I am thinking in terms of the business plans for MACA or the long-term business plans. Has there been a lot of consultation with the chiefs in our small communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there has been a lot of consultation. We do meet with the chiefs and mayors. Since COVID-19, that communication has increased, looking at what the significant need would be at the community level. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a quick comment: hopefully, we could just get ahead, this being one of our mandate items, to keep picking away and keep persevering. Like I said, our goal should be to try to leave the state of our house in a better state than it was in before, so hopefully we can make lots of headway on this. Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will take that as a comment. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get a timeline on when the department started work on the Fire Prevention Act? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do not know a specific date. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond as to when the work had started. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Work on the Fire Prevention Act actually began in the 17th Assembly, where a legislative proposal was developed in the 17th Assembly. During a period of time in the 18th Assembly, legislative priorities changed for a number of reasons, including the introduction of the 911 program, the Western Canada Lottery Act, amendments to the Emergency Management Act. All of those pulled away from the Fire Prevention Act priority. Over the last year, maybe two years, there has been considerable pressure on the area around regulatory enforcement related to code compliance, and this is taking the legislative work in a bit of a different direction in that we do want to look at how code compliance may be looked at by this government as a go-forward. The work that originated in the 17th Assembly was really around community fire protection services work and those kind of things. The department still continues to seek to want to make amendments to the act related to the community fire component. The regulatory component is the work that has been new over the last year, year and a half that has taken the department in a different direction, so that is why we are returning to that work in the 19th Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I get that there are a lot of directions you can go with the Fire Prevention Act and that this started in the 17th Assembly, but I heard the Minister say that we are looking for an LP in February of 2022. I just cannot help but think that there is a systemic problem in the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in getting legislation done. Even if it's piece-mealing it and doing it in a phased approach, I am concerned that we yet might go another Assembly, three in a row, without seeing the Fire Prevention Act. I hear the LP is scheduled for February 2022. When can we expect to see introduction of the Fire Prevention Act? How much after the LP are you

expecting to introduce the act? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to express to the Member that this Fire Prevention Act will be brought forward to committee as well to have the significant changes done and passed. I make that a priority within the portfolio and within the department. I don't want to be the Minister known that it's now the 20th Assembly and nothing has been completed with the Fire Prevention Act, so I will be making this a priority. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte comment on that because, after the February 2022, no, 2021, what is the next phase of approach for the Fire Prevention Act so we continue traction on the proposal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have proposed to bring forward the legislative proposal in spring of 2022. It really will depend on how long committee wants to take with the legislative proposal before they give their agreement or concurrence that the proposal is what they are supportive of. After that, we would have to draft the bill, so I suspect it's going to be later in 2022 or early 2023 before the department would be introducing the bill for the consideration by the House. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I caution the department. Early 2023 means there are a couple of sittings and then an election. It's very hard to get legislation passed early 2023. I think with this one, specifically, getting an LP in 2022, if it's not going in the right direction, we are at risk of not passing this once again. One of those directions, as has been repeatedly asked by the NWT Association of Communities, is that this actually be a building standards act, that we look at the work of developing a northern building code; we look at how the GNWT Good Building Practices apply to the Northwest Territories; we look at accessibility standards, how disability legislation applies. I can't emphasize the amount of work that is. I believe that the Department of Infrastructure's GNWT Good Building Practices is over 400 pages of architects, engineers, builders, every community involved in building it. I don't see that capacity in the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I question whether the department should even have the Fire Prevention Act in the first place, given the scope of work. My first question is: is the Fire

Prevention Act LP that we are expecting to see going to be a building standards act? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to be very clear on the Fire Prevention Act because, since I have had the portfolio as Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, we have had a lot of situations that have occurred where the Fire Prevention Act would need those significant changes. I am looking at the differences within that act, as well, but then I want to be very clear on what the proposal is like coming forward.

I know that the building codes really puts the Northwest Territories in a different state. It could become very complicated. I am going to have Mr. Gary Schauerte just elaborate on that a little bit more. I don't want to confuse the Members, as well, and I do not want to see this piece of legislation carry over into the next Assembly. I want to make sure that we are very clear and that we are going to see this pass. I would also like to see it before January of 2023. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. It is a complicated piece of legislation. There is a wide variety of stake holders who will have interest in this work. Part of the reason why we want to make sure that we take the requisite time before we bring forward an LP or a bill for this House is because we do need to take the time to talk to our key stakeholders, like the architects association, the engineers association, and certainly the Infrastructure departments within the Government of the NWT that build infrastructure pursuant to the code. With that in mind, there are a lot of viewpoints that we need to make sure that we document in order to bring forward a fulsome LP that is representative of the interests of all of the stakeholders. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I look at the seniors and disabilities property discount act, the Fire Prevention Act, and the Property Assessment and Taxation Act all scheduled for later in this Assembly, MACA is not introducing any legislation in the next year, I don't understand why the department doesn't grab some low-hanging fruit and bring forward a piece of legislation.

There have been requests for the Fire Prevention Act for years. There are simple little changes that you could carve off. I believe the appeals

mechanism is not working. It should probably have a Ministerial appeal mechanism as one. There are numerous clauses that the municipalities have expressed with the Property Assessment and Taxation Act. I am concerned. I just want to see confidence that MACA can bring forward a piece of legislation, even a small little change to one of these acts, not to mention the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, the Hamlets Act, and all of the other legislation that I would love this department to catch up on. I don't care which one it is; I don't care if it is a phased approach or how you do it. Is the Minister willing to bring forward a piece of legislation in the next year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Member, for your comment. I will bring that back to my department and look at what it is that we could possibly pass just a portion of this legislation, but I would have to bring that back to my department and make sure that we are making these changes effective and right. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe one last thing. I don't want to wait until February 2022 before I have any input into the Fire Prevention Act, so if I could get the Minister to provide just a summary of what is being planned. In that, I would like the question answered whether this is going to be beyond fire prevention and be a building standards act, whether we are going to look at the entire national building code and the northern building code, whether we are going to look at accessibility legislation, whether that is part of the scope of work that we are doing right now, and I would like some answers on what is expected in regulations.

To me, if we are going to adopt a northern building code, that is probably done in regulations, which means we don't bring this piece of legislation in for another six years or something because the amount of work to develop the regulations would also be massive. A commitment of the Minister that she can give something to, in this case, the Standing Committee on Government Operations of what is being done with the Fire Prevention Act. Before I see an LP in February 2022, I would like to have a sense of where we are going. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister, the Member is looking for a commitment before 2022.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to say yes to the Member and just provide a summary of where we are at right now and what we are looking at going forward. The phased approach is what we are forecasting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions under the Municipal and Community Affairs directorate? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Could I get an update as to where we are with ATIP implementation with municipal governments? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to hand this question over to the deputy minister. I will just get her to respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee may recall, I believe, last year when we were speaking, we were just about to meet with our working group comprised of representatives from the Association of Communities. Although COVID hit, we did manage to have the first meeting with stakeholders in, I believe it was, April or May of 2020. Since that time, there had been a number of staff changes within the Justice team working on this working group with us, so we have been regrouping with them and preparing a discussion document to bring back to the working group that proposes a work plan and timeline. We are now just trying to set up the follow-up meeting with the working group for that next meeting.

We had indicated 18 months from the time that we got the working group together until we would have an implementation plan, and although we were delayed at the beginning of this, I believe we still can accomplish the implementation plan conversation. What we are trying to do is do some of that research as part of our own work to bring forward ideas to the working group instead of starting from scratch with them so that it should facilitate the conversation a little bit easier. That is where we are at right now, just trying to get the working group back together to talk about the next steps. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Am I right, then, that there has only been one meeting of the

working group? There hasn't even been a second one. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just more than a little bit worried about the pace of this. I was in the last Assembly. We passed the changes in August of 2019. That's more than a year and a half ago now. I know COVID has obviously slowed things down. Has the department identified any resource needs, financial needs, for community governments to implement this legislation, and if so, is it found in this budget? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just currently, I just know about the working group and the communication with the association of communities. I am not clear if there is a set budget or else if there was any commitment financially within this budget. I will just have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. There has been a discussion with the stakeholders about resource impacts, but the actual resource needs are subject to the implementation plan. Whether software is required, for example, whether additional staff are required, those are questions to be answered as part of the implementation plan. There has been a general conversation, but the specifics around what the resource requirements would be have not been identified. If those are identified, then the department would obviously bring those forward as part of the process before we implement the legislation with communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I look forward to a supplementary appropriation by the department to make sure that community governments can actually have their costs covered. I do not think it's fair that this responsibility is downloaded onto them without resources. Is this something that the Minister wants to try to accomplish before the end of this Assembly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is something I will work towards, but with the capacity that we have at the smaller community level and looking at what is required, the consultation, the meetings with NWTAC, I feel that we would be working towards that. I don't feel that it would be completed within the lifetime of this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess if I ask the question, I have got to live with the answer. I don't find that an acceptable response, though. That it would take more than four years to actually implement this. That is just totally unacceptable, so I just leave that on the record. One of the other pieces of legislation that the department is apparently working on is the Property Assessment and Taxation Act. I served on Yellowknife city council from 1996 to 2007, and we were talking about the necessary changes to that legislation when I was on council. That is at least 13 years ago, maybe 14 years ago if I try to do my math properly. Why is that piece of legislation taking so long to fix? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte comment. That is historical information, as well, but also, I am looking at the priorities of each Assembly that has looked at these acts going forward. I will have him elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Already referenced earlier was work that we did on other legislation in the 18th Assembly, which in part contributed to why we were not working on PATA during the 18th Assembly. As the Member has pointed out, community governments have spoken out about this legislation on a number of occasions, and there are currently probably six outstanding resolutions from the NWT Association of Communities related to this legislation. That really was the starting point for the department of where we started to identify issues that needed to be addressed through this legislative review. As we have continued to conduct our research, we have identified plenty of other things that could be improved in the legislation, as well, beyond those that have been raised or put into writing by community governments.

The reason why we are taking our time again with this legislation is that, when we open it up for purposes of amendments, we want to make sure that we bring it up to date and change as many things as possible. Issues that have been raised by community governments have been part of answering that question. We have also been conducting comprehensive research right across the country in terms of how the business of assessment is being completed in all jurisdictions in order to help modernize the act. In part, we are pulling all of that work together to help inform the LP. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. This is going to be the last comment for me. I am hoping that the Premier is listening because I do not know what the problem is with departments bringing forward legislation. Yes, 14 years to develop changes to the Property Assessment and Taxation Act, four-plus years for bringing the amendments to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to cover municipal governments, even start with the city, towns and villages, this is just totally unacceptable. I just do not understand why we as a government cannot move forward with legislation more quickly. I got elected here to make change, but that change relies on the other side of the House actually bringing forward legislation. Fourteen years is just totally unacceptable; four-plus years for the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, unacceptable. I just do not know what else I can say. Premier, you have got to go out and find the resources to get the departments moving on this legislation moving forward. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of MACA, did you have any comments?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hear my colleagues on the other side. We need to see these legislations come forward and the significant changes to be made. I will be providing a summary and an update and looking at the phased-in approach that we have planned within the department, and I will look at the presentation to committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do we have any other questions from Members for Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate? Seeing none, please turn to page 339. Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$3,942,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now go to public safety, beginning on page 342, with information items on page 345. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at the 911 program funding on page 345. I note that it sits at \$1.24 million, the revised estimates from last year, where this was the same. There is no increase to the funding for 911, despite conversation back in October session. I look at the actuals for 2019-2020, and there is already a \$1.7-million line item there, so already within the estimates we know we are under, \$500,000 underfunded. Then when I look back at revenues for 911, there is a significant discrepancy between the \$397,000 collected in 2019-2020 on page 328 versus the \$1.027 million estimated for the upcoming year. Could the department please explain discrepancies in these numbers? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. There was a review that was done and a report, I believe, that was submitted and completed in November. I will just have Ms. Eleanor Young reply. [Microphone turned off]

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry. I think I have just confused the Minister when I was looking over. We did submit our annual report in the fall, which is a requirement under the act. When we presented earlier to committee, we spoke about doing an evaluation this year to inform future changes, so although the Member is correct, you are noting that we have spent more than what the budget is there. We have been dealing with staff shortfalls through variance at this point in time, until we can complete the evaluation and determine exactly what the staff requirements are to be able to go forward. The plan is to complete an evaluation and come back with the results of that evaluation to inform what the appropriate level of funding to ongoing staffing for the 911 would be. At the current time, the department is managing this through variance, and that's what you're seeing in the main estimates versus the actual expenditures. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that explanation. I think that the hiring of relief staff, I'm not really sure how much you need to analyze the fact that you need relief staff and you need to have other

management requirements that are not currently being met, so I'm not really sure that another study on what is lacking, it's my understanding the department actually has quite a good understanding of what's missing in this department, from a staffing requirement. Has the department looked at potentially moving Med Response out of 911, since there seems to be a lack of communication or working together there, over to 811 to start the implementation of a public safety department and, instead, transferring the \$1 million that Med Response gets to 911 to properly fund it? Is that something that the department has looked at? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Deputy Minister Eleanor Young respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, Med Response is a department of health-funded portion, so that isn't part of my budget and something that I would have the conversation about. Obviously, as part of the evaluation, the operating model will be part of what we'll be looking at and whether that is working, moving forward. I know that we've described the differences between what is currently in 811 versus what 911 does, and 811, whether that continues past the COVID arrangement, again, is a conversation. I think we all need to understand what the go-forward is for 911/811 to be able to make a fully informed decision.

The Member is correct. We have a lot of good information about what we need, but we also need to be able to put all of this into a well-thought-out paper about what ongoing needs are. We've had relief staff, but some of those have been related to COVID and other pressure points that may not be there in a normal year. We do have to be able to understand what the driving costs are to be able to inform the Members of the Assembly on what the cost requirements are. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that, and I do appreciate the department is working on this. I'm not trying to say that's not the case. When I look at the budgets and we're asked to approve three times the amount of money for 811, which is only expected to go for the next eight months of the year, and that is looking to decline, to me, I would rather see us approving \$1 million for 811, knowing

it's the one that is going to phase out, versus us underfunding 911 right now and saying we're going to give all this extra money to 811, which might free up and then become available. Then again, it goes back to the general revenues and essentially is not guaranteed to go back to 911. I'm going to have a really hard time voting to approve a \$3-million budget for 811 when you are only approving, what is the final number, \$1.2 million for 911 when you already know it's \$500,000 underfunded. As well, I think you've grossly overestimated the revenues, and I really kind of wonder at how that number ends up here at one point something million when you've only collected \$400,000 before. More of a comment. They can respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of MACA, did you have any comments? No? Thank you. Did you have any further questions? Are there any other questions from Members? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. On page 344, there is ground ambulance and highway rescue. The budgeting numbers are the same every year, and the description on that is: "To enhance capacity in the areas of ground ambulance and highway rescue." In different conversations through different committees that we've been able to have with different community groups, ground rescue is something that has come up frequently as a concern for communities, especially ones based on busy highway systems. We've got Behchoko that's on a busy highway system; we've got Hay River, as well, that ends up supplying people for different highway rescues. We often hear, also, of different things that happen in the Beaufort-Delta and sometimes people having to be loaded into the back of a pickup truck in order to get to much-needed medical services. I'm wondering, given that this number hasn't changed, is it going to be able to expand or enhance the ground ambulance and highway rescue capabilities of our remote northern communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the numbers that are here, there are not any changes there, but it does have a different approach. We're looking at the community of Inuvik and also the community of Hay River, as well, and looking at Behchoko, and it does entail a different approach. I'll have Ms. Eleanor Young just elaborate on that. It's different throughout the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the Minister is correct. In some communities, the ambulance system is provided by health. In other communities, it's provided by the community government, so we are dealing with different needs in different communities. The budget that the Member is referring to is an application-based program which is a support program. It doesn't fully cover the costs. It's a program for training and small equipment needs that the department has had for a number of years, and the department is very close to coming back forward with a more fulsome conversation on ground ambulance and highway rescue. It has been also tied to the conversation about Ingraham Trail and what emergency services are provided outside community boundaries, the cost of those, and how to pull all of that together into a department-supported initiative more fully. We are hopeful to be back in front of you with a more detailed approach on how we're going to move forward with this in the near future. What's here in the budget is just the current grant program until we have that broader conversation about where we go more comprehensively with ground ambulance, highway rescue, and emergency services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No, I look forward to that review and to a report or a proposal coming forward. Just looking at the \$185,000, that divided by 33 communities, which I know is probably not divided evenly. Even so, that's just over \$5,000 per community, and so it won't go very far and probably doesn't go even as far as communities would like it to go. I definitely welcome that, and I would like to request that, as part of that report, if possible, it include cell service on our highways. That's something that we discuss quite a bit. I know that is a Department of Finance item, but I think that that also plays a huge role in public safety for people to be able to access things like 911. We can't control what portion of the highway, unfortunately, we have devastating accidents on, and so people being able to access life-saving support is crucial. If cell service can be included in that, it would be much appreciated. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your comment. I'm looking at the extension of cell services among the highways that we do have. I also think about the winter roads that we do have throughout the territory, but looking at spot devices and OnStar satellite phones, we look at those land lines and cellular connections. It's limited throughout the territory. The department

does work with residents to try to find an alternative solution, but it's not something that we really -- we don't fund those approaches, but then we try to educate and work with residents on finding alternative solutions in the time being. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No, I appreciate that there are different systems out there. I think what I'm asking for the Minister to do is to lobby her colleague at the Department of Finance to put in some added cell towers and make cell service accessible on all of our highways. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have that conversation with my colleague. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. As is my favourite question: can I have an update from the Minister on the status of fire services for the Ingraham Trail? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the famous question that I've been getting a lot of comments on, looking at the approach that we're going to be taking with the Ingraham Trail. I will have Mr. Schauerte respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are very close on finalizing an engagement approach for residents on the Ingraham Trail and line up our communication materials on this. We also know that this is not just about Ingraham Trail, that emergency services outside municipal boundaries is something of interest in many communities in the Northwest Territories. Our communication, our engagement approach, I anticipate that it will include opportunities for all residents to be in on this issue.

Our intention is, in the month of March as we sort of put the finalizing T's on our engagement documents, is to go out and use a variety of tactics to talk to residents in the month of March. We are recognizing that large, in-person gatherings or

focus groups or those kind of things may be certainly challenging in the current environment, so we're looking for IT solutions and those kind of things as well as opportunities for residents to contact us directly on this issue.

Following that, we expect to be putting together some type of summary document. I would expect that to happen in the late spring after we've completed our engagement. Essentially, what we want to do is go out there and talk to the residents about the type of options that may be available for emergency services. I would preface this by saying that emergency services on the Ingraham Trail appear to be a very costly option, so there are no easy solutions with this topic. We're not quite sure what we're going to hear from the residents on this. Suffice to say, we will take their feedback and come forward with a recommend approach of how we ought to be approaching this kind of service in that area.

Again, we're mindful that any approaches that we identify through this exercise, we would strive to at least try to see that these are replicatable in other areas of the NWT, so we're mindful of that, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to read from Hansard where the Minister has repeatedly said, "I am confident that we will reach something by that deadline," that deadline being April 1st. I recognize there are needs outside of all of the territories. I fully support us finding those agreements with every single municipality that has to provide services outside of a boundary. In this case, people's insurance is either going to either expire or go up on April 1st. I have repeatedly said that the only possible solution now, given we have about five weeks, and I don't even know if it is possible given that the city's timelines and how their services work would be in agreement with the City of Yellowknife. Are we going to have an agreement with the City of Yellowknife to continue fire services on an interim basis by April 1st? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a conversation that is happening currently, but I don't want to put anybody to commitment. The conversations are happening. We are very cautious of April 1st and looking at the fire services that the city no longer wants to provide to Ingraham Trail. We're looking also at the financial implications that this may have for residents within the Ingraham Trail and maybe, possibly, residents outside, and

how are we going to pay for the service? Looking at the numbers, we're going to have to be combining and putting that together, but also recognizing, this is outside of the municipal boundary, and looking at the training and the equipment and all that needs to be entailed with the fire services. There was also the conversation of having fire services provided out of Dettah for Ingraham Trail, as well, but we also looked at the timing of a fire rescue, the time that it would take to get out there, the training, the commitment, the equipment. We're working with Ingraham Trail, and like Mr. Schauerte had said is that we're looking at the consultation to happen with the people that are at Ingraham Trail right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to quote again, the Minister's answer. "There was consultation that was just recently completed. I should be able to provide an update to the Member by the end of February." We're in the last week of February here, and I'm hearing that an engagement plan is just going to be started and then we will consult. Can I get the Minister to correct the record? Was there actually any consultation with residents of the Ingraham Trail? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is a correction. There was no engagement that had been done yet, and I will have Gary just elaborate on where we are for that current status. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is our intention to go out and publicly engage with residents during the month of March with some idea of where we want to go in April with a recommended approach. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Listen, I fully support the engagement work. I fully support working with Dettah to bring their fire services online. I support working with every other community. I think there's a big question of how taxes work on the Ingraham Trail and where that money goes, whether there should be a fire levy for services. In the past, the city used to charge, if you called a fire truck, you actually paid the City of Yellowknife a few thousand dollars. There are options. Those options and that work is not going to

be completed in the next few weeks, and there is no way that this continues without agreement from the City of Yellowknife. My question is: has the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs made an offer to compensate the City of Yellowknife to continue fire services on an interim basis pending all of that other work? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. As of today, the City of Yellowknife continues to support and offer fire services to Ingraham Trail, but as of April 1st, like the Member had said, that date is coming up very closely. He stated within five weeks. Looking at those fire services, also looking at the options, we are going to be looking at the consultation to be done, and my department will have something to propose to the residents of Ingraham Trail. I also want to really elaborate, as well, the implications that we are going to be looking at for the fire services to be offered. I really want to emphasize on the education and training. I just also want to look at the fire department here in Yellowknife, and also looking at the fire department in the smaller communities.

We need to find people that are committed to offering these fire services and that are committed to be educated and trained and also looking at the certifications that they do follow and equipment as well. It's really not a decision that could be just made overnight, and I know that I've made the commitment that we will find a solution by April 1st. I'm confident that my department has been working diligently with Ingraham Trail, and I'm confident for them to get out there and get their consultation done and really have those options available to the residents. I really want to speak about the financial implications as well, whether the people at Ingraham Trail would be in favour with those additional taxes and the additional financial requirements that are going to be needed from the residents at Ingraham Trail to be paying a certain amount to the city. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to waste every single Member of the Legislative Assembly's time on this, but I've asked this repeatedly, and I've repeatedly been told that by April 1st, we'll have a solution. I am not hearing anything that leads me to believe that that is now true. What I'm actually looking for is the conversations that have had with the City of Yellowknife. Has the City of Yellowknife said, "Yes, we'll do this for \$100,000," and we decided that was too high? Has the City of Yellowknife said, "No,

there's a risk assessment," and there's no way we'll offer this? Have we not even made an offer to the City of Yellowknife? I'm not worried about the larger consultation that has to happen. Just in the next five weeks, I want to understand what has happened with the City of Yellowknife and what will happen with the City of Yellowknife? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a conversation that we've been having with the city. I will provide an update to the Member to let the Member know where we currently are sitting at with those conversations and what the city has actually committed to, and that information will be provided to the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at ground ambulance and highway rescue, can the Minister tell me: are they two separate things? Ground ambulance, is that one category and highway rescue something different? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond to the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's one program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. This issue, it's been ongoing and especially for Hay River. Hay River, we have Highways No. 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 in close vicinity, so we have got a good length of the highways to look after. In the Northwest Territories, you have got 2,200 kilometres of all-season and 1,400 kilometres of winter roads. I look at the \$185,000, that is \$84 per kilometre for the all-season. If you take them all, it's \$51 per kilometre, which is really not a lot of money, so I am just wondering: we have been talking about it, and I listen to the questions from the MLA from Yellowknife North. We do not seem to be getting any further ahead in addressing the issue of ground ambulance and highway rescue, so I would ask the Minister: are we making any headway, or are we expecting to make any

headway with addressing ground ambulance and highway rescue throughout the Northwest Territories? It seems like we spin our wheels, and it's not just this Assembly. It's past Assemblies, as well, so it's not like it's a new issue. That is the question: are we making any headway with this? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Throughout the Northwest Territories, depending on which jurisdiction and the highways, as well, where they exist, it becomes quite complicated. I am going to have Mr. Gary Schauerte elaborate on the current statuses throughout the Northwest Territories and how we administer the highways within Hay River, Inuvik, and Fort Smith, and looking at what MACA is responsible for and looking at the partnerships we have with the communities and with department of health. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Madam Chair, the department began review of the ground ambulance program approximately two years or so back, where we hired an exterior consultant to support engagement with all of the different municipalities that deliver this service. Through that work, a number of different facets of the program were reviewed, including governance, charge-backs, areas of the road that different municipalities would be responsible for. There was at one point a plan to identify all of the highways across the NWT and which communities would respond on that, although there was never final agreement by all communities on that.

The Minister is correct. A community like Hay River does have highways going in a number of different directions. It does not mean that they are rolling hundreds of kilometres down the road in five different directions, which is part of what that strategy was intended to look at, was a fair approach to how highways would be covered. Much of that work was, we were getting near ready to bring that back for discussion with Members as the deputy referred to in her earlier answer, and this work has been somewhat sidetracked by the discussion around Ingraham Trail. We did not anticipate that the municipality would make a decision regarding their level of service. Nonetheless, that challenge was given to the department to try to address. Emergency services, fire protection services outside the municipal boundary had many of the same issues and concerns as ground ambulance outside municipal boundaries had, so there was certainly a parallel to

the issues. It made sense that we continued to look at these in conjunction with each other.

As the Minister referenced and as the deputy said earlier, we have situations where the department of health is delivering ambulatory services. We also have situations where the municipality is delivering ambulatory services, so all of those issues had to be factored into this discussion. Again, as I referenced, we were nearing to bring back a presentation to standing committee on our review of the ground ambulance program and some of the thoughts we had related to all of the different elements of this program. That presentation is still something that we want to do with committee, but the priority around Ingraham Trail and the timeline around addressing Ingraham Trail has somewhat taken that direction of that work on a bit of a tangent for a short period of time until we can get that done. At the end of the day, the work that we are putting into addressing how we are going to deal with fire prevention services on the Ingraham Trail will help to inform the larger discussion around emergency services outside municipal boundaries. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is all fine and dandy, but at the end of the day, the reality is that we have been waiting and waiting and waiting. We do not seem to be making a lot of headway. In Hay River, again, like I say, there is no way that the Town of Hay River is going to say, "No, we are not going to go out on an emergency call." You just do it because it's the right thing. It does not matter what the cost. Until you have actually had somebody that required, on the highway, that service, and I have for one of my children. It's so valuable, but we seem to fight or we seem to look at the cost. There is a reason for that, but at the same time, we have to make some decisions because we have to deal with it. On Highways No. 1 and 3, we have I don't know how many trucks rolling down that highway between the end of March or middle of March or January to March, like 10,000. There is the potential for accidents and that, so it's very important. I am hoping that, when we come back next time, we actually hear something positive, that some agreements are in place, no more of this, "Well, we are looking at it; we are engaging; we are reviewing." If we took some of that money and put it into this, maybe we would have these agreements in place by now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. If you have no further questions, then I will move on to the Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to the ambulance services on the Tuktoyaktuk Inuvik Highway, that we do not have any, something should be really looked at. Ambulance services that we do have in the riding, in Nunakput, it's all in the back of an RCMP truck, in the back of an F-150 Ford, and that is unacceptable. I am thinking that, if you could even send us your old ambulances from down here and buy yourselves new ones, it would be good. That is how bad we need it in the community. What we should be doing is really working with the hamlet and the SAO, senior administrative officer, to try to get ambulance services into the Nunakput communities and for the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway. That service is needed really badly. It's more of a comment because I am picking up where Mr. Simpson is speaking to, but I think it should be done quicker rather than later and invest a little bit of money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the comments coming forward, and looking at the ambulance services, it's kind of a really foggy approach, I want to say, that we do not have the commitments to be looking at this type of service to be offered. I want to put into comparison that we provide the firefighter initiative in the smaller communities and looking at the education and training that comes with that and also looking at the liability for offering ambulance services and the urgency to have trained, qualified people to be running these trucks and being able to be first on hand when there is a need for the ambulance services on the highways. I also want to say that, other than the budget that we do have, 83 percent of our budget goes out into the smaller communities, and MACA does provide that extra, that support for the communities on future planning, capital planning, and what is it that they are wanting to intend in the next few years. I am going to bring this back to my department, and I want to bring this to standing committee, as well, so I could really provide a clearer understanding of where MACA sits with this. Looking at the \$185,000 that we do have in this budget, that is mainly for equipment and training for the communities, to support them that way. I would like to just bring that back and provide a clearer understanding to the Members. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: No. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just need ambulances. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions under Municipal and Community

Affairs, public safety? Members, we are going to take a short, five-minute break, and then we will get back to the same activity.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will call committee back to order, and we will carry on with the Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I have some questions about the 911 program. I know that, when the legislation was passed in the last Assembly, there was a cap placed on the fees that were going to be charged to phone lines. I think it's \$1.70 and it's in place for three years. The fees clearly are not covering the cost of the program. Where is the rest of the money coming from? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one quick thing I want to reference on the fees because, when we look at the actuals from the prior year, it is a little bit confusing or misleading because, when we had done our budget exercise, we had thought we'd be starting to collect fees in the June/July time frame, and by the time we were actually up and operating collecting fees, it was November/December. Just to clarify, the revenue from the prior year, that is part of the reason why you see the difference in the revenue. In essence, the expenditures for 911 are recorded under the department's main estimates. The revenue goes into the general revenue for the government, so if we are short on revenue collections, it is impacting the general revenue for the GNWT and then impacting our overall budget. It is not a separate fund, per se, within MACA, just to clarify that. It does get reported in our annual report, though; I should say that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay, and I'm looking at the annual report. I can see that there is a revenue shortfall for 2019-2020 of about \$425,000, roughly. That money, is it coming out of the consolidated revenue fund, essentially? Is that the source of the money? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Ms. Eleanor Young just elaborate on the \$425,000 and where that funding is coming from. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, my understanding of finance, that is how it's recorded. It comes out of consolidated revenue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. What work are we doing to prepare for this time, November 1, 2022, where the cap can be taken off the fees? Are we looking at potentially increasing those fees? What work has the department started to do? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would expect, at the conclusion of this fiscal year, April 1st or March 31st, we'll be initiating the evaluation of the 911 program. Part of the evaluation will look at the system itself and whether or not it's credited as a fully accredited 911 system based on service standards and those kinds of things. It's also going to delve into our governance and funding models around the program, in terms of issues that have been raised, for example, whether or not we have the same number or the appropriate number of staff to deliver the service. I would expect it's also going to look at revenues and the concept of the break-even model, which was presented when the system was originally approved.

The other point I would make, in addition to those raised by the deputy with reference to revenues, is: at the time of the budgeting for the 911 program, we ultimately as a government had to project the number of phones that existed in the Northwest Territories, which is what the call levy is; it's tied to the number of phones. That information typically is proprietary information that is owned by the telcos, so they didn't provide that information to us when we were budgeting for this program and designing it. Now that we have the benefit of that information, because the telcos are bound by the legislation, we do now have an accurate number of the number of

telephones that are within the system, so that's a factor that contributes to how much money we can raise. The call levy times the number of phones will generate the amount of revenue. It's that kind of information that we have now that will help to inform that discussion about whether or not \$1.70 is an appropriate number or not.

Ultimately, at the end of the day, that's contained in the legislation. It does have a sunset clause, I believe, in the legislation, as the Minister pointed out, but any discussion about the levy going forward would be informed by the evaluation and by those kinds of factors. I would suspect it would come to the floor of the House for discussion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes. That's good to know. Is there money in the budget for the actual evaluation? Is the money in the 2021-2022 Main Estimates for this evaluation of the 911 program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not too sure how the evaluation would be identified in the main estimates. I'll ask Gary Schauerte to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would expect that, in the contract budget in public safety, there is \$308,000 identified for contracts. That's where we would complete that evaluation work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I have a question for the Minister, if I could. I want to get a commitment out of the Minister that she is going to give the committee an opportunity to look at the evaluation framework and a draft of the report before it is finalized or Cabinet starts to make decisions about it so that Regular MLAs will have some input into the ongoing 911 program. Can the Minister make a commitment to share the terms of reference for the evaluation and then the evaluation report itself before Cabinet makes decisions around it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will make that commitment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. No further questions? Do any other Members have questions under public safety? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 343. Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$2,839,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now turn to regional operations, beginning on page 346, with information items to page 350. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just listening to a lot of the comments that were made so far today with these estimates. A lot of consultants were used, a lot of reviews, a lot of reports. I just wonder how anything could get done if we are always waiting for a report, a consultant's deadline. A consultant who probably doesn't even understand any of us here in the North. How could anything really get done, Madam Chair, when common sense is not being used in making sure that deadlines are met? Just observing everything today was mind-boggling. My first question, Madam Chair, is: we spend a lot of money on consultants, reports, and lack of deadlines and not enough on common sense, making sure that we do have a decision, and meeting deadlines. I want to know how the department deals with that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond, as I would like to know, with the reports and evaluations that are done, if they are done in-house or by a consultant. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will speak to the 911 evaluation, which is the most recent one that I just referenced. When we develop an evaluation framework, we do that in conjunction with the Department of Finance through their Management Board Secretariat and the evaluation folks who they have in their department. These are people who are specially trained in evaluation who could help guide the design and the development of the evaluation framework. They are also mindful that, when we do an evaluation, we want to do it properly within government.

One of the cautions that I have heard is when departments go and do evaluations on their own without working through a coordinated approach, we end up with 15, 20, 30 different types of evaluators out there evaluating things, and it just leads to more confusion. It's been a practice of the department to work through the evaluation unit within the Management Board Secretariat to complete our evaluations for a number of years now. In addition to designing the evaluation framework, the Department of Finance has already pre-reviewed evaluators who have the competency and the ability to evaluate for government purposes. There are pre-approved evaluators who the department can use to implement this work.

A good chunk of this work is done, again, to underline the consistency so that we are looking at programs the same across all of government. That's a big part of the reason why we are conducting the 911 evaluation the way that we are. We are also very early in the years of that program. We are one year in, and there are a lot of questions about how the program has been set up and how it has been resourced. I think that Members of this House and our government are interested in completing this evaluation so that we can inform answers to those questions. That's the larger reason why we are working within that system and why we are using exterior evaluators to help inform that question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: That was a big explanation on something I never asked about, really. I wasn't worried about the other section. I was just making a general comment. Anyways, first of all, the travel on page 347, last year, actuals were \$250,000, and now we are up to \$566,000. Is that just to cushion the budget, or what is that? I just want to know exactly what that is. I want my answers to be very precise and short because we used up over half of my time just with that one question, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make sure that my responses are right to the point. I want to say that, the \$566,000, there had to be a COVID impact of our department getting into the smaller communities. I will just have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate quickly. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. The number you see there is 2019-2020. In part, it is

COVID, but this is regional office travel into communities. It is determined primarily by engagement with communities and working with them to schedule visits in. Wherever possible, we also look for other sources of funding to pay. If we have a good year with federal money, then we pay for some of our capital planning travel, for example, out of federal infrastructure money instead of using our internal budget. Travel budgets do vary up and down depending on needs and staff, I think, is the fairest way to put that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. I think the Member was looking for why it has doubled since 2019-2020. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Community government funding remained the same all the way through. Is that done by per capita with 33 communities, Madam Chair? Sorry, \$49,853,000 on page 348.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The operation and maintenance funding, the \$49,853,000, is distributed according to the municipal funding formula. The municipal funding formula, and I will be brief, takes into consideration the total value of the municipal assets in the community and what it would cost to operate those on an annual basis. It really comes down to the assets on the ground in the community and the operational costs for those, which is all standardized right across all of the communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: For clarity, I asked a question. I wanted to know if it was, for all 33 communities, per capita.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Like Mr. Gary Schauerte had mentioned, this is based on infrastructure that we do have for the smaller communities. This is for all 33 communities, based on the infrastructure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Further to that question, then: if you are going per capita and according to communities and it's all 33 communities, including the capital, that doesn't leave very much for small communities and regions. I would like to know the breakdown of the regional centres, the capital, and then the small communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for the Member to clarify, this is funding available to smaller communities, and you want to have a list of how much MACA provides each community annually? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. For clarity, there are 33 communities. That includes the capital. I want to know how much the capital gets, how much the regional centres get, the three regional centres or whatever, and the rest for the small communities, as totals. There is a big disparity within the regions and small communities. I would like to see the disparity in numbers.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have to follow up with the Member. We do have additional funding that is provided besides what is offered territorially to all communities throughout the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I think I am making myself very clear of what I want with that line. I am not talking about any other line. I'm just talking about that one line. It's, all the way through, the same. I made it very clear, and I would like to know how much it is, broken down. I am not asking for 50,000 different figures. I am asking for a figure because we go per capita in assets for the capital, what we give to the regional centres and what's left for the communities. That is all I'm asking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister, do you have the breakdown here, or would you provide it?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I will get back to the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions?

MS. MARTSELOS: I could ask one more question that has to do with the grant-in-lieu of taxes. That is for all of the taxable communities, or does that also include the grants-in-lieu with Stanton, or does Stanton come out of Health and Social Services, just a clarity? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte to explain the grant-in-lieu. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The grant-in-lieu program provides grants to six municipal taxation authority communities in lieu of taxes. The six communities are the regional centres, including Yellowknife and the five other regional centres. The amount of money in here includes all government assets in those communities that are eligible for payment according to the policy. Within that envelope of funding includes an increase this year of \$1.4 million, and those are for facilities located in Fort Smith, Hay River, and Inuvik, are the additional assets that came onboard this year, which we are paying for now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to get a bit more information on page 348, the water and sewer services funding. Could the department explain: is that for operations and maintenance of water and sewer services, or are there any new projects or any capital that ends up out of this budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department had upgraded a majority of the water treatment plants. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte elaborate on the water and sewer funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. This funding goes to community governments to help support the delivery of water and sewer services, including water treatment plants and sewage lagoons. More recently, we are looking at expanding this envelope of funding to also include solid-waste facilities. That would be part of that. The funding that is provided to community

governments goes into a restricted water and sewer fund, so the money can only be used for the purposes of delivering those services. Municipalities will also collect rates off of residents to help offset the cost of delivery of that service, so in effect, the money that the government is providing helps to reduce the cost of the rate on the ratepayer or on the residents. This does not include capital. Capital is included in the community public infrastructure budget, and that is where that funding would come for the replacement cost of any of those facilities, be it a water treatment plant, a sewage lagoon, or a solid-waste facility. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I am really glad to hear that. Good luck with getting the solid-waste facilities in there. I think it's a good move. I look at the numbers for this item, and it is a constant number so far in the last couple of years. Does the department anticipate having to increase any of this funding in the next while? Is there an aging infrastructure issue at all with the water and sewer services that would sort of fall under this line item? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young answer the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. As Mr. Schauerte has represented, this is operating and maintenance funding. As Members may remember, on the community funding gap, there is a gap in all three of our funding areas, so there is a gap currently in the water-sewer funding envelope. As we work on closing the gap, we do expect that there would be an increase to this program as part of those efforts. When you see the community mandate funding up in the line up above, there is funding planned for 2021-2022 for an increase to the water-sewer budget as part of the upcoming year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does this fund apply to all of the 33 communities, or does it have a tax base, regional-centre-type distribution? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This, the funding is for all 33. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just sort of back to my question one before, I know that there has been a lot of replacement of the water treatment plants over the last while. I know there has been an issue with training workers and at times communities have stayed on boil-water advisories, not so much that the water is actually bad; it's more that the testing in order to prove that the water is good does not get done. I know maybe a little bit out of this, but is there a need to increase, maybe, this budget line item in order to do more training or to increase or to deal with any aging infrastructure? I cannot imagine all of them got switched out. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young answer the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. This budget is the operating cost for communities, and they may choose to use it for training if they wish, but the department also provides training through the School of Community Government as well as what we call a circuit-rider program where we do hands-on training in the community appropriate to the type of plant that the community operates. We try to keep the burden of the training costs as minimal as possible on the community and do that through other means. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just looking at the line item, just to follow up, just to continue on with the Member for Great Slave, for water and sewer services. I know water is such an important issue. A lot of First Nations communities across the country and stuff and I know in my hometown, in Deninu Kue, that was an issue for quite some time, and they finally started to come around and get their water filtration and using UV to get the water where it's drinkable and to get rid of some of the bad stuff, like to prevent E. coli, that sort of stuff. It was passed on to me by some of the staff, that, yes, they got all that stuff in. In terms of O and M, there are still some issues there with coating pipes and whatnot, so I am just wondering. My question for the Minister is: in communities like Deninu Kue, how are we doing for the O and M side

of things? Are we going to be continuing? Once you get that capital in there, it can continue on with helping to maintain the equipment regularly, to make sure it's up to standard. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hear the Member's comments. MACA does support the training for the operation and maintenance of the water facilities, but also, I just want to make the Member aware that we do not build the facilities and have the communities plan, submit this ask through their capital plan. We support them for the operation and the maintenance and making sure that the training is current and up to date. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Even for sewer services and stuff, that's all done through the community. Places like small communities, like Deninu Kue, we do not have a lot of mains, water mains, like waste water like we do in a lot of the larger centres. A lot of this stuff is all trucked in. Even in places like Ndilo, water is trucked in. I am not sure how that is going to go, but I think it's important to know that that is how our communities work. We need to understand that it's not like here in Yellowknife where you can just turn on a tap. You have to worry about your water; you have to worry about your sewer. It gets even worse in colder weather. That's more of a comment. I just thought I'd say that. I also want to change my questions here for the senior citizens and disabled person's property tax relief. This is an issue here I deal with quite a bit in Deninu Kue, as well. I wanted to get an update from the Minister where this program is and which direction it's going, and give us a brief update, and I do have a couple of questions about that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the program we were referencing a little earlier. We were talking about our legislation work. This is the funding that's used to reimburse seniors and disabled in both tax-based and non-tax-based communities, and we are in the work, as Mr. Schauerte mentioned, of engaging with stakeholders, including seniors, to talk about

changes to the program to make it more fair and equitable and consistent across all of our communities because we have heard concerns that it's not delivered the same way in all of our communities, and it causes a lot of confusion and frustration. That's part of the work that we're doing currently on changing that legislation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: My one question I did have on this is: this seniors and disabled person's property tax relief, what age would I be eligible to qualify for a program such as this? Is it 60, 65? Sorry. I'm looking at her. She's pointing at herself. It made me laugh. That question's for the Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sixty-five. You have a long way to go, Member.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Did you have any further questions, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh?

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, Madam Premier, I tried. Can you just give me, also, an example, of what the parameters are for a disabled person, what are the parameters for that to qualify for that program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on the details of the qualifications for persons with disabilities, tax relief. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is actually one of the big frustrations with the program is, currently, you have to provide some documentation through something like a doctor on an annual basis in order to be eligible for the program, so that is one of the areas where we are seeking to get something so it's not requiring an annual application process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that response. I couldn't imagine if I had to deal with something like that and have to constantly go through the whole red tape. I want to go back again about the senior citizens. I do have a couple of

constituents that constantly have to deal with property taxes. I think that, if you are running a business or if you're paying taxes all your life, once you hit a certain age, I think you've paid the house, for lack of a better word, throughout your life. I think they've earned it. They've earned that right to get some of these tax breaks, and it goes to that mandate item. I think someone mentioned about aging in place, dignity for our senior citizens and our elders, our knowledge keepers. I just thought I'd make a comment, and I have no further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Do we have any further questions or comments under regional operations? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for the recreation funding, I guess it's all in the children's, youth, regional sport, youth coordination programs. What are we doing in regards to doing something? Since COVID-19 started, are we doing anything different to give communities funding for recreation sport or sewing programs? I know that the federal government's really stepped up. Where did we step up into these categories for the communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. I think we have a whole, 349, yes. Okay. Minister for MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We did receive a contribution from the federal government for sport and recreation that was distributed to the sports organizations. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on what we've been doing internally within our department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, in addition to the budget that you see in the main estimates here, in total, we also distributed just over \$1.8 million in additional federal funding to support sport and recreation in the COVID environment, but in terms of what we've done differently, we have worked with communities to look at what kinds of programs can be offered safely in a COVID environment. We've also assisted communities in applying to have their facilities opened, reopened after COVID, so what they needed to put in place to properly put their safe restart program in place for their specific facilities, as well as working with the NWTAC, Association of Communities to share ideas about unique ways to do things in the COVID environment. Many folks will remember last spring, with jamborees, folks were sharing information on what could be done safely, how to use some of this

money to operate jamborees or community events but do it in a COVID compliant way. That's where a lot of our staff's efforts had been focused to help communities to ensure that programs can continue to operate but be operated in a COVID safe manor. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to our youth contribution programs, basically the same line of questioning in regards to: what are we doing and what are we offering in the communities, and is that for the Inuvialuit? Us being in Nunakput, does it go through, do you deal with the community per se, or do you understand deal with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in that with the funds? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've had a Beaufort-Delta sports distribution of federal funding that went out. I'm not too sure how the money was distributed throughout the communities. I'll have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I spoke to the COVID money, particularly, it was distributed to the regional and territorial sport organizations as well as to community governments. For our youth funding and other funding that you see there as part of our main estimates, the eligibility is slightly different. In a number of those programs, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, for example, are eligible to apply to run programs, as well. It's not just community governments that can access our funding, so we do support other organizations to access funding and run events, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to when we give all this funding out, do they have a contribution agreement, timelines in regards to reporting back for the funds that they receive? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The money that was distributed is the federal funding. I'm not too sure of the criteria that is expected, but because this was a COVID

distribution, I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the COVID support money we received from Sport Canada, the reporting requirements are very minimal. It's something the department can do just on who we gave the money to and what kinds of events they were going to operate. For our own departmental programs, we do have financial reporting requirements that we ask organizations to complete, and we do support them in completing those reports. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a comment in regards to all the funds that the federal government and the territorial government have been giving. I see a lot of it in my communities. It's all positive, all of the different little programs that they are doing, with the sewing programs, with the youth initiative programs that they do have. I just thank them for that. Just making sure that my riding of Nunakput is getting its fair share, too. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I can assure the Member that Nunakput is receiving adequate funding for youth and recreation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Any further questions under regional operations? Seeing no further questions under regional operations, please turn to page 347. Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$101,516,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Committee, we will now turn to the School of Community Government beginning on page 351, with information items up to 354. Questions? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, for the School of Community Government, I agree with the concept, but I think we are going towards the concept of the polytechnic university. I think that some of these funds should be geared to a program at the new polytechnic university. This type of funding should be going to the polytechnic university and not in community governments.

I know SAOs are very hard to come by, even at a regional level, even at a First Nations level, and I think that, if we combined our forces with the business management courses and everything else that is offered at a polytechnic, we are kind of duplicating what we are doing here. If we are going with the other concept of a polytechnic university, I think that's where all of this funding should be going towards, making sure that every community has the proper SAOs.

There have been a lot of problems within the North. Forensics were going on in different communities. There are all kinds of things that have happened. Sometimes expectations are not there, and we spend a lot of time trying to correct those expectations. It is time that we evolved to the more formal training at the polytechnic university and stop duplicating programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Did you have any comments?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I support the School of Community Government, obviously, because we do have a different expectation within the department in working with our smaller communities. I will bring this back to my department and have the conversation with my colleague, the Minister of education. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at the actuals for 2019-2020 for compensation and benefits at \$847,000. It has gone back to its original estimate of \$1,096,000. I am just curious to know: there are no changes to positions within this area of the department, so I am just wondering why there was that drop over the last year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have the detail in front of me, but what I would expect is this is probably a situation where we had a vacancy for part of a year or something along those lines. I can check that detail and get back to the Members just to confirm why the difference exists. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that. It's more just me trying to learn, sometimes, what the budgets are and how the GNWT operates. More of a comment. I just want to say that I think it's actually great to see increased budget to A Brilliant North, and I do also support the School of Community Government. I hear what my colleague is saying, but this, to me, seems like internal training, almost, for community members, a way to train community members on the operations of the government. Maybe I could ask if that's a correct assumption to make in this area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's a correct assumption. It's designed as an executive learning program. You may take, for example, an accounting degree at school, but then you come and you learn about municipal accounting at the School of Community Government so the municipal application of it. That said, we are obviously very closely having conversations with the polytech about where the polytech evolves to and what that does to the school when it is opened. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that, Madam Chair. My next question is: does this organization or this area of the department support SAO development and retention? I have become aware, in my time in the North, of how difficult it is for SAOs to be retained in small remote communities at times, often being at the whim of mayor and council. I'm just curious to know: is this an area where the funding would be to support those types of employees and their roles? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have funding that does support communities in the transition of SAOs. I don't think it's in this section. I will just have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there is training for SAOs under the School of Community Government, an occupational certification, if they so choose to go there. The Brilliant North funding you see there is really targeted to governance training and SAO training, primarily, right now. Through a collaborative effort, NWTAC and LGANT, the Association of Communities and the administrators' association, help us determine where to target that Brilliant North funding. Currently, it is targeted to SAOs and governance, so council training. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just more of a comment, again, I want to reiterate that I think that that is a key area and very important to be providing those supports to SAOs because I do think that high turnover rate of SAOs seems to be affecting the North. Like the conversation we have had with the teachers, it is way better to retain people we already have with northern knowledge than trying to retrain and bring up people all the time from the South. More of a comment than anything. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members, we will stop here and take a recess before we return and finish up this key activity. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call Committee of the Whole back to order. We will continue on. We are under Municipal and Community Affairs, School of Community Government. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I look at the School of Community Government, I've heard tangentially from a few communities that it's good, but it's \$3 million of the budget that I don't really know much about. My question to the Minister is: I know it doesn't necessarily operate as a school, per se, but is there an annual report or some sort of document where I can find out more information about the School of Community Government? I've looked on the website, and it seems that it's kind of sparse in the reporting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is currently not an annual report, but we could put some information together. Essentially, we offer training in about 10 or 15 different occupations that are related to community governments, everything from senior administrative officers down to works and recreation staff, as well as council training for council, and we work with CIRNAC to deliver First Nations governance training, as well. The gamut of what would be within a community government's area of responsibility, there are different training courses tied to. We can put more detailed information together, but to answer the question, no, no annual report produced. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Perhaps, since there isn't an annual report, a review is perhaps what I'm looking for. When I look at something like this, we did the Aurora College foundational review, and we looked at how many people take the courses. We got a figure out of that of the cost, what it is actually costing to run these courses per person. Do we have any figures of, in a fiscal year, how many people take courses in the School of Community Government? I'm just trying to get a sense of the scope of this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is no report that is distributed, but it is measured by the need of the programs. I am trying to think of an example; I'm going to say sports and recreation. We did offer that program. We did offer the land administration program, and then we did end up looking at I don't want to say re-evaluating. I want to be very careful in the choice of words that I have, but looking at the success of the programs is how I would put it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get, if the Minister doesn't have it now, a commitment to come back with how many people take and have taken School of Community Government courses, essentially? I know there are lots of courses in different areas, but I want to know how much it is utilized. The number of students, I guess they would be called. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will provide that information to the Member. I just want to say that the other thing, too, is that, for the School of Community Government, it is designed to support the municipalities at the local level. I just also want to kind of explain that we do have a number of employees who work at the community level who are hired by the chief, the council, and there is a limited amount of education that is acquired, I want to say, at the community level. There is a lot of work experience, and that's where the School of Community Government accommodates and recognizes those years of service, as well, at the community level. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think perhaps, once the Minister has compiled some information, the appropriate committee could request a briefing on this. Also, what I'm looking to get from the Minister is, I know this was spoken to previously, but how the School of Community Government fits in with Aurora College. If Aurora College plans to teach Indigenous governments as one of its core courses, to me, it doesn't make sense to have the School of Community Government using the CIRNAC funding to have a competing course. Can the Minister speak to the plans of any changes or the role of the School of Community Government with Aurora College or at least provide that information in writing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I could provide that information, but I also just want to emphasize that, with the School of Community Government and the courses that are being offered, it is recognized as work experience where, if we were to apply at Aurora College, you would have to have a certain certification and courses to get into certain programming. For the School of Community Government, it's recognized for on-the-job training. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is the Minister willing to do some sort of evaluation or, if there has been one, share it? I'm just a little confused about what we're doing. I have no sense of whether the School of Community Government is worth \$3 million; whether the 37 staff here are

giving training to 100 people a year, 400 people a year; or whether this should be consumed by the college. I just want to try to get a sense of whether this is good value for money, so if there has been an evaluation of the school and all of its work that could be shared or if there are plans to do one. Thank you, Madam Chair. No more questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to offer a briefing to the committee, as well, to look at the School of Community Government, but I really want to bring the Member back to living in a smaller community and looking at the elects of the chief and the council and the responsibility and the support that MACA provides for education and training at that level. Also, to recognize that we do have a limited amount of education that is acquired at the community level, and through this way, they are able to acquire certification that is recognizable for jobs for themselves. It's also about building capacity, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: No. No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell me, the text here describing the activity talks about how this is, "Local governance capacity building through partnerships with government departments, Indigenous governments and territorial organizations, professional associations, and educational institutes," but it doesn't really clearly say: are the courses that are offered here open to Indigenous government employees? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The programs are offered to residents of the Northwest Territories, but specifically for the municipalities within the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't think that answered my question. Are the courses open to employees of Indigenous governments, like First Nation councils? Say, a finance director for a First Nation, or I don't know, I'll just pick a community, Lutselk'e or Nahanni Butte, who looks after the

power plant or some community government infrastructure. Are these courses open to those sorts of individuals? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, they are. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Are these courses open to NGOs, non-governmental organizations, and their staff? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, they are.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Are these courses offered like an individual has to pay a fee, or they are sponsored, or MACA picks up all the costs? How does that work? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The courses are applied to and there is a fee that is required, as well. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young elaborate on further details. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just very quickly, there are fees for most courses, but they are very nominal, \$50 a day up to a maximum of \$300 per course. Some courses run five to ten days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I, too, would be interested in getting a briefing. I will leave it at that. Nothing further. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Any further questions under School of Community Government? Seeing none, please turn to page 352. Municipal and Community Affairs, School of Community Government, operations expenditure summary,

2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$2,933,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will go to sports, recreation, and youth beginning on page 355, with information items on page 359 until the end, which is page 363. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I was just looking at the sport and recreation funding line, which seems to have jumped around a little bit over the last few years. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to that a little bit. I am guessing that last year there was an influx of cash from the federal government for COVID-related expenses, and I am wondering if the Minister can elaborate. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte elaborate on the influx of funding.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The change in the revised estimates from the Main Estimates 2020-2021 reflects the COVID money that we received from Canada, \$1.8 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just to echo the messaging from the Member for Nunakput in regards to getting our kids in communities active and making sure that kids have stuff to do, I believe that that is a huge portion of mental health. Mental health is not just having phone numbers for kids to call. Mental health is keeping kids active and making sure that they have things to do in all of our 33 communities. I am a little bit concerned when I look at, for example, the travel line item down below. That's substantially higher than our sport and recreation number up above. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to what exactly this sport and recreation line pays for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond to the travel of \$456,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Part of our travel budget related to sport and recreation also appears under regional ops. We do have employees in all regional offices that support community-based recreation programming. We have staff travelling into communities on a regular basis. This travel money will also support other programs, like the Youth Ambassador Program. That's a program where we bring youth together for a targeted volunteer experience where they may travel to a special event. Typically, we would take youth from our communities who may not be part of a multisport games team or their background might not be athletics, but they still want to go to these major events. The Youth Ambassador Program has opened the door for a number of kids from communities to be able to travel outside of other program dollars.

This also supports our effort to manage things like multisport games that are held in locations outside of our community. They could be southern-based, or they could be international-based. Every time we take 300 kids to a major event, there are a number of staff that need to go to something like that to provide the oversight and ensure that our athletes are safe when they travel to those events. The travel dollars in this program area support the implementation of the programming and, in some cases, the participants who are in those programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I fully support that travel line, then, and I am very happy that Mr. Schauerte was able to identify that that was support for kids to be able to travel. I am fully in support of that one. I would like to have additional information on what is included in the sport and recreation line, and if there is intent, especially over the next few years while we're in a pandemic state where people are definitely staying home, to increase that line item? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to have Mr. Gary Schauerte answer the question because we did get a contribution from the federal government, as well, for sport and recreation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The sport and recreation line item, as the Member

points out, does change by about \$1.6 million. The federal money is not the whole answer within that line item. I would suggest that we could come back for detail to committee on that item. Certainly, I would just highlight that, again, the COVID money did go to not only community governments but to support sport organizations, as well. We could come back to the detail on that for the Member and committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate that and look forward to further detail on that one. The other line item that I am looking for more information on and how it relates is the youth line item. What, in addition, is included in that line item? I'm assuming that Youth Corps is included in there, and I am wondering if the Minister can provide additional information on that one.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have my department provide the additional information to the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I look forward to additional information on that one. The other piece that I am wondering is: how does this Youth Corps piece relate to work being done by career advisors with ECE, and is there crossover between ECE and MACA in relation to this youth leadership programming? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister for MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, there is no crossover with Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My knowledge of this program is limited. If I go off script a little bit, please let me know where I do. My understanding is that this is a Youth Ambassador Program where it brings together students from across all 33 of our communities who are interested in leadership and gives youth an opportunity to get to know one another and also to work on leadership projects together. This seems like a really key area for us to be able to find out from youth more information about the state of

education, how to support people in communities through education, and it seems like a great place to have some crossover between growing opportunities for students in small communities as well as creating opportunities for post-secondary. I am wondering if the Minister will commit to having a meeting with her colleague from Education, Culture and Employment to see how that program can both be expanded and also leveraged a little bit more. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will have the conversation with my colleague in Education, Culture and Employment and explore the youth opportunities that he may have. Specifically, this would be for sport and recreation. I'm not too sure what Education, Culture and Employment would have for educating youth and providing opportunity. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My understanding of that program is that it is more of a leadership program. There is a lot of community participation that goes on. Kids are tasked with picking an organization to volunteer in. There is an element in there of personal development that really goes hand-in-hand with finding out what kids want to do, finding out what their colleagues want to do. These are kids who go back to their home community; they are discussing what happened and what they learned when they were with all of these students from different communities. I think it's a great opportunity to make sure that we are, in fact, sending home mini ambassadors who are going to help lead the way for their colleagues. I think it's a great opportunity beyond sport and recreation to work with Education, Culture and Employment and make sure that we are looking at this with an unsiloed perspective. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will be working with my colleague for the Department of ECE. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just going to piggyback a bit on what my colleague has said and again more of a comment. I feel like this is an area where I would be supportive of any sorts of increase of funding. I like what my colleague was saying about the idea of using youth

and sports to act as almost sort of a mental-health-and-wellness-counsellor-type situations and the crossover that could be happening between almost all of those types of departments. When I look at the positions, there are seven across the entire territory, which makes this really quite small. It's probably one of the smallest compensation and benefits lines that we can see, so to me, like I had said to the Minister of ECE when he was up, this seems like a great way to increase employment in small communities, which is the priority of our Assembly. It seems like a way to ensure that P1s are hired, because they are the people who would be in the community; they can be leading on-the-land programs.

All of this comes back to being healthy, having healthy bodies and minds; more of a comment, Madam Chair. I just wanted to reiterate that I think that increases to the funding of any of these programs would be great, and I do also encourage the Minister to collaborate with her colleagues in order to see about crossovers of staff so it's not just somebody focused on sports, but it's a youth-care worker who is focused on sports. They provide that role anyway, so we might as well start cross-training and looking at that less siloed approach; more of a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Great Slave. You have no other questions? Okay. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My first question is: I believe the NGO stabilization fund used to be in EIA, and then it was moved to MACA. Previously, there was reporting every year on who receives that money. If we take any other fund like this in the NWT, there is actually usually a press release, the recipients of the poverty fund, and then we list them, or I believe GNWT does a grants and contributions report every year that shows all the SEED winners. Can I get a commitment from the Minister that we will start reporting on who gets the NGO stabilization fund money and that all of the previous years where we have not published that, I think going back to 2015, will be made public? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a list of organizations, NGOs, that have received the NGO stabilization funding. I will provide that list to the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. It's not so much that I want it. I just believe I would like it to be publicly reported, so can I get a commitment that it will be made public? I can go look who won in 2015, where the money went, but then it just kind of fell off the map when MACA got hold of it. I am looking for public reporting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not too sure about the reporting because I am just thinking about the privacy and whatever, but I will complete a recognition of the recipients that have received the NGO stabilization fund. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will follow up with the Minister about getting this money reported. My other question is, and this is one of the siloed issues, is that I am not really sure when I look at -- I cannot see who has received this money, but when I look at the application criteria, this fund, it seems to more be just another general place NGOs can go get money, similar to the millions of dollars we hand out across multiple departments to NGOs. I know EIA has a special executive policy where they can sometimes give money to NGOs. I really do not think that it makes sense for this government to have all these different pools that are kind of doing the same thing, and I think there is great possibility to probably roll them into one place and give all of our NGOs a little bit more stability of here is some year-to-year funding and not rely so heavily on these grant applications. I imagine, if I looked at this fund year over year, the same NGOs are getting it. That is part of the reason I want it to be publicly reported. My question is: will the Minister somehow have a conversation with Finance or EIA about how we fund NGOs and whether this is actually doing anything different from all of the various other NGO funding pools? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will commit to providing that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just get confirmation that this section also includes all the information items for MACA? Thank you, Madam Chair. I am seeing you nodding. Can I have

an update on the New Building Canada Plan, Small Community Fund? My understanding is that this fund is about 10 years old now. It was instituted by the Harper government. I see that it's about \$20 million a year of municipal infrastructure funding. When will that money end? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify, we have jumped out of sport and recreation, youth, into our work performed on behalf of others?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): [Microphone turned off]

MS. YOUNG: Okay. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): [Microphone turned off]

MS. YOUNG: [Microphone turned off] ...so each of the programs you see listed -- thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry about that. Each agreement with Canada is slightly different. The New Building Canada Plan for communities was called the Small Communities Fund. That program, construction of projects must be complete by December of 2022, and all of our reporting into Canada must be done by March of 2024. There are a number of projects in each community that were funded through this program. As I say, each one is slightly different in terms of how it was done, but that one was done through an allocation for each community. They chose the project they wanted to pursue. We had it approved by Canada, and then they received their funding to proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank, Madam Chair. My question is: are all communities on track to actually spend all of the money in the fund by 2022? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. As far as I know right now, yes, they are all on track. In cases

where we have had issues in the past, we have been able to work with Canada to either find an alternate project or an extension to the project so that the communities do not lose the money, wherever possible, or find an alternate program for them to apply to so that we make sure the communities can finish their projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an understanding, perhaps first a clarification? I believe these numbers might be slightly misleading in that there is a \$19-million budget of last year and \$18 million this year, but is that actually what was spent? Will that be the actuals, or can I just get a sense of this number? Is that what we are budgeting that then, if approved, we would hand out, become an actual, or have we actually been spending \$20 million last year and expecting to next year? Sorry. I am trying to rephrase that properly. Are we going to spend \$18 million this year on this fund? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get a sense of how this affects the municipal funding formula? If there is essentially \$18 million in our budget that is granted, that we are passing through from the federal government and then that expires in 2022, does that mean our funding formula will decrease by \$18 million? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Deputy Minister Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. All of the programs that are listed in this section of the budget, this is strictly federal funding. It is separate from the capital budget approved through the Assembly for what we call community public infrastructure funding. Most of these programs, with the exception of the gas tax program, require a 75-25 cost share, so they use the CPI funding they get

from the GNWT as the leveraging dollars for the federal component. The exception is gas tax, where they can use 100 percent federal funding to fund the project. With the exception of gas tax, each of the projects has to be approved by Canada before the funding can proceed, so these are all based on a federal cash flow of approved projects. That's how this is laid out in the budget. We have a total amount that we distribute over 10 years and lay out the budget that way, but this is just the federal component of that. It doesn't reflect the GNWT component, if that's clear as mud. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that, in our capital budget, there is a relatively fixed amount that goes to the communities every year and that's based on the funding formula, but from what I'm hearing, then, if \$18 million disappears over a budget, it doesn't actually affect the funding formula, given that it's federal money. Can I just get a clarification if that's correct? Essentially, with the exception of the gas tax, federal infrastructure money does not then feed into the need assessment that we make for municipal infrastructure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to confuse my colleague. Yes, that is correct. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Any further questions? Last quick question, Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. As part of the work of reviewing the funding formula, are there any plans to factor in how federal government money works? To me, if the federal government decides to spend a bunch of money on giving communities infrastructure, that should affect the funding formula. Or if Yellowknife gets a bunch of money to build a new pool, that should probably adjust the funding formula. I get there is a bit of a debate of whether you adjust a needs-based formula on one-off projects, but is there any work intended to adjust the formula based on the role of the federal funding I see here, which is \$42 million a year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Deputy Minister Young reply. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we are trying to figure out how to best calculate that and accommodate it in, for many of the reasons the Member mentions, when we do our capital policy review in about two years' time, a year and a half's time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm looking at page 357, the multisport games. In 2020-2021, there was \$650,000, and I presume that that was for Arctic Winter Games, which was cancelled. Does that money carry over, or what happens to it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. With that \$650,000 that was set aside, if that was for the Arctic Winter Games, I cannot find it on here very quickly, but then we did have to dismantle the games. We did have to send employees over there to take part in taking the games down and also returning people back to their home communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Why would we expend the \$650,000 in 2019-2020, which probably was the year, then, that Arctic Winter Games were held? Can someone explain to me why these figures are flat when, last year, the one in Whitehorse was cancelled? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department received \$1.3 million over two fiscal years, so the \$650,000 is half of that, that was contributed in 2019-2020, that goes into this fund. The fund is a restricted fund for the purposes of the sport, recreation, and physical activity programs defined by the act, so the money continues over. We did, absolutely, have impacts to our games programming as a result of COVID, with the cancellation of the Arctic Winter Games in 2020.

There are currently discussions under way, both with the Arctic Winter Games and with other multisport games or major events like that, where there are decisions being made in the future about whether those games can be held or can they be deferred. What is going to happen as a result of COVID is we could see some crushing of programming with multisport games, either with the Arctic Winter Games or Canada Games or other. While the money does stay within the fund, we expect in the coming years that there will be pressure on the games program area because of the result of the schedule and the changes to that. At this point, we are still recovering from the pandemic and no clear decisions have been made about games, including the Arctic Winter Games in 2022, so it's kind of a bit of a "plan around some of these decisions when they happen" scenario. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. It sounds like the money is still there available for multisport games. Is that correct? It's just not going to get expended, and no expenditures are anticipated in 2021-2022? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are, absolutely, expenditures out of the fund in 2021-2022. A little over \$5.8 million is planned to be disbursed out of the fund. Some of that is grants and contributions money that will go to some of the organizations that organized Team NWT that will attend these events. The number right there is \$5.2 million for grants and contributions. We're not quite into April 1, yet, where we'll be disbursing funds to organizations, and we wouldn't make any allocations around games funding until we have an idea of where we're going with that program. Notionally, \$5.2 million is identified for contributions out of this fund. We'll have to wait and see exactly how much does get disbursed, based on programming that comes forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I was talking about a different line item, but I think I have a better appreciation for it now. I'm just curious, though. There was an annual report for the Western Canada Lottery Fund that I think was tabled in the

House by the Minister on November 5th, and there is just one line item here about revenues. Why is there no sort of page in here that discusses money in, money out for the Western Canada Lottery program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Gary Schauerte answer the question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize if I'd added to the confusion, there. I was looking at the physical activity, sport, and recreation fund. I thought that's where the Member's questions were originating from, but I understand that he was looking at the sport, recreation, and youth activity. It is the fund where we will be disbursing money from the Western Canada Lottery program, and that is detailed in that physical activity item. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, okay. I see that the physical activity, sport, and recreation fund, that is the lottery money in and out. Somehow, I'm trying to reconcile that against the annual report financial statements, which are the most complicated I think I've ever seen in my life, almost. These financial reports from the annual report are somehow represented here on page 360? Is that correct? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte explain.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The annual report that we tabled in the House this past year represented the activity for 2019-2020, which theoretically should line up with the numbers that are presented here in this physical activity fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I can provide some assurance that they don't really seem to line up. I am looking at statement of operations. It has very different numbers in terms of expenses and revenues than what I see on 360. I am just trying to figure out how these two relate to each

other. Why don't I just cut this short, Madam Chair? If you guys would actually present stuff in ways that were understandable, it would be far more helpful. Why don't I just seek a commitment out of the Minister to provide a written explanation as to why the annual report figures differ than what is in the main estimates? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Nothing further, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions under sports, recreation, and youth or any of the work performed on behalf of others? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: On page 360, the grants, contradictions, and transfers, \$5,200,000, how are those grants and contributions decided? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte answer the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The applications for this funding come through our sport and recreation organizations. The primary organizations we work are Sport North, the Recreation and Parks Association, the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Northwest Territories. Within that, we also have 29 territorial sport organizations, and we also have regional recreation associations, as well.

Through the planning process, the sport, physical activity, and recreation framework, which has been a matter of discussion in this House and with our department, that framework document is intended to guide the investment of our government in this fund. That framework lays out the key areas where we want to invest as a government in terms of this sector. It also underlines some of our primary policy initiatives, one of which I would highlight is the Safe Sport initiative that comes out of the Red Deer conference where all Ministers made a declaration that sports should be harassment-free. It's initiatives like that that we build into the sport and recreation framework. That's how we use that

framework to guide the investment of these funds. Organizations make applications. We review those applications against the framework. The Minister has the final say on who gets the funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Just further to that, there is not a neutral board or a group? It's the five sports organizations that decide how the \$5,200,000 is going to be distributed across the territory? Those five sporting groups are all stationed in the capital. There is so much disparity with regional centres and small communities. It just doesn't make sense how things are done. I don't hear much common sense here. As a government, if we don't start doing things and being accountable and transparent in what we do and how we distribute public funds, it's disturbing to me that this is the way we operate. If you're a good guy, you'll get this. If you're a good girl, you'll get that in that community. It's very disturbing. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to go on to my other question. That was a comment. On page 362, clean water and wastewater funds, \$5,171,000. It's our part of whatever we put in. I want to know the terms of reference for this fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a federal agreement that is received. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister mentioned, this was a bilateral agreement with Canada where we received \$52 million to fund water and wastewater projects. There was an application process, an RFP process, with the ranking criteria to evaluate applications, and then, once the applications were reviewed, they were sent back to Canada for final approval. Canada had the final approval on all projects that were funded. In total, 29 community projects were funded through this \$52 million of federal funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: The emergency management development fund for \$81,000, that's the only thing I see in this whole thing for development on reserves. I would like to ask the question: we have two reserves in the Northwest Territories, one near Hay River and one in Fort Smith. Are we part of the

Northwest Territories? I just want to know that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister, did you want to respond to that?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the two reserves are a part of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: We talk about disparities in First Nations. We have two reserves, and throughout the document that we have gone through so far, this is the first time I have ever seen anything allocated to a reserve, \$81,000. How far is \$81,000 going to go with funding to two reserves? Most of the time, they don't even recognize Salt River First Nation, because there is some discrepancy that happened because the Hay River reserve was part of the whole territorial thing going back in other Assemblies. I'm just wondering about this fund, how it's allocated, the terms of reference, and who it is allocated to. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a funding agreement with Canada to try to support the GNWT to support emergency planning for the two reserves. It is funding allocated currently to the GNWT to support the planning exercise for the two reserves. I think it's a two-year agreement, and there is intention to have some broader conversations about emergency management for First Nations beyond this. Public Safety Canada has not given us clarity on how that project is going to move forward. It is a conversation that they have indicated that they want to start to have, and this funding was the first piece of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Thebacha? Thank you. Any further questions under the sport, recreation and youth? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not going to talk about the numbers as much because, when it comes to youth, we have got to put money to support them through sports and recreation and that. However, I would like to know,

when we talk about youth in this, what are we talking about in terms of age group? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to provide the Member with the number of youth programs that we do have. I don't want to say that there are discrepancies in the programming that we do have because they extend out to not only sport and recreation but also programming for leadership, leadership-building, skill-building, and also looking at the motivation of youth, as well. Just looking at the age groups, I don't want to say there is a discrepancy among that, but possibly for the attendance of sport and recreation programming. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I ask that because I look at the numbers, I look at the programs, and I am just wondering who is actually accessing those programs. It seems to me that it's probably a specific or maybe a limited number of youth because, in talking to some of the constituents in Hay River, just as an example, one person there, her son graduated from school and is at home now. He has got a lot of friends, and they come over because they have got nowhere to go and nothing to do. They stay at his house, partly because maybe the parents are drinking and a number of things. I am just wondering: are we targeting that group of youth, as well, whether we are targeting them through MACA, or is it a combination of through MACA; Education, Culture and Employment; and health? I have to ask: how are we doing that? Are we letting a group of youth slip through the cracks? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding that is offered by Municipal and Community Affairs is offered to the municipalities, the non-profit organizations, and also sport organizations. I don't want to just mislead the Member, but within the department, we do have youth and sport and recreation positions that go out into the communities. Also, they support the NGOs on what it is that they want to create to enhance youth opportunities and activities. I just hope that answers your question, Madam Chair, but if not, I am not too sure. With that information, I just wanted to say that I want to stay away from that MACA does not come in and create the non-profit organizations and have those organizations as the youth abroad; that is independent. Looking at youth groups, youth centres, those are independent, but

MACA provides the funding for those organizations to get started and for them to function. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Part of the question was: does MACA work with ECE and health in identifying targeted groups or targeted youth groups when it comes to funding? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Gary Schauerte respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Madam Chair. One program I think I would point to is the healthy choices initiative where we work closely with education and health on programming around after-school physical activity. One of the things we learned in our business is that young people can get in a lot of trouble between 3:30 and 5:00, when nobody is watching, and this program was specifically designed based on research around that targeted youth group. What we offer through working with schools and other service providers, youth centres or those kind of things, is an opportunity for structured programming between that period of time. As part of that, we are also offering healthy food snacks and things like that that are consistent with nutrition objectives. The idea is that we are looking at a perhaps at-risk group of youth, and we are trying to provide a program in response in a healthy way and doing that consistent with our colleagues at ECE and health, as well. I think that is an example of a program that may be trying to achieve some results in the area that the Member has asked questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. Thank you for that answer. That is some clarification. It's that at-risk group that concerns me because, if you have families that have money, they usually ensure that their children are looked after. It's that at-risk that really concerns me because they are out there and they do not have the support, so I am just glad to hear that you are working with ECE and with health on this. I will pursue the matter further. Thank you, Madam Chair. That is all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at page 362, work performed on behalf of others. There is New Building Canada Plan, Small Community Fund. There is a big jump from the actuals to now. I just looked on the federal website exactly what this is. It looks like it was established in 2014. I just wanted to get a quick description of what this is and then how long because, like any federal gift, there is always usually a time limit on it. If I can get those two questions answered? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Deputy Minister Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Most of the agreements we currently have with Canada for infrastructure are 10 years in length and then potential for extension or renewal after that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister Young. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Based on this, then, is this fund going to be stopping in 2024? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Ms. Eleanor Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the Small Community Fund ends in 2024, but since that agreement was signed, we have also had the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund and now the Investing in Canada Plan. They tend to stagger them so that one does not end and we wait for a new one to begin. The Small Community Fund is ending, but we are halfway through the Investing in Canada Plan, roughly, so that there is overlap between the different programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. We should make sure other Members are aware this covers a

wide kind of spectrum of different things, like highways. I am just going to read down a short list here: public transit, regional airports, short sea shipping, culture, recreation, tourism. This covers quite a bit, so my next question is: how do we pick and choose how we allocate this, the main estimate of 18, almost \$18.8 million? That is for the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Deputy Minister Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. The New Building Canada Plan was a territorial agreement. There was a portion of the funding targeted to territorial projects, and then there was the Small Community Fund component of it which was targeted to community governments. For the Small Community Fund, a piece of it, the part that MACA is responsible for, it was targeted to community government projects, and the final approval on all projects rests with Canada. For example, something like rail or sea ports, that's not within the community government area of responsibility, so Canada wouldn't approve a project in that category for a community government. If a territorial or provincial government applied, they might consider approval in that case, but for the piece that MACA is dealing with, it's just community government projects that are being sought and brought forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. That leads me to my next question. I know the federal government, they usually have really strict guidelines for whenever proposals get sent to them. Let's say a project doesn't get approved by the federal government and that money is not allocated. What happens to those funds, then? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Deputy Minister Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first effort is by MACA to make sure that the project

proceeds with the community government, and that's part of what our role in the administration of the program is. If, at the end of the 10 years, the community has not pursued the project, has not spent the money, and we have not been able to work with the community to apply for a different project, the terms of the agreement require us to pay Canada the money back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Let's hope we don't pay that money back and try to use whatever we can because we could use all the help we can get. I'm going down that list again. We see things like connectivity and broadband. That's an issue in a lot of our small communities. We talk about the cell phone service down the highways; I mean, yes. Anyways, that's merely a comment. I don't have any further questions on this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further comments or questions to the Municipal and Community Affairs, sports, recreation and youth, or to the worked performed on behalf of others? Seeing none, please turn to page 356. Municipal and Community Affairs, sports, recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$5,507,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Members, please return now to the departmental summary on page 327. Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, \$121,132,000. Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 78-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 286-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2021-2022 - MUNICIPAL AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS - DEFERRAL OF
DEPARTMENT,
CARRIED

MR. NORN: Thank you. I had my hand up there. I thought you forgot about me. Madam Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Consideration of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, 2021-2022 Main Estimates, operations expenditure, total department, is deferred. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us tonight. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Mr. Norn, what is the wish of committee?

MR. NORN: Madam Chair, I move that we rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, please, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 286-19(2), Main Estimates 2021-2022, and would like to report progress with one motion carried and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we have a seconder? Member for Hay River North. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you. Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements

7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act
 - Committee Report 8-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on Motion 5-19(2): Referral of Point of Privilege Raised by Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020
 - Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund
 - Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
 - Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
 - Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
 - Tabled Document 286-19(20), Main Estimates 2021-2022
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

