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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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Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

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(Thebacha)

Ms. Katrina Nokleby

(Great Slave)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

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Ms. Lesa Semmler

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Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for Youth

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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 28, 2023****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Good afternoon, colleagues. Today, I am pleased to announce the addition of the Tlicho language to the self-guided Legislative Assembly audio tour in celebration of Indigenous Languages Month. The Tlicho audio tour was translated and narrated by elder and Legislative Assembly interpreter Maro Sundberg. This is a first step in having the tour being translated in all Indigenous languages and marks a significant step towards language revitalization and advancing reconciliation here at the Assembly. Members of the public can take the self-guided tour anytime the building is open in English, French, and now Tlicho. Thank you, colleagues.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 316-19(2):
PROHIBITION CREEK ACCESS ROAD
PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE**

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the 19th Legislative Assembly, this government established its mandate of 22 priorities set by all Members and based on what they've heard from their constituents. Two of these mandate priorities are to increase employment in small communities and to make strategic infrastructure investments.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to travel the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road and I witnessed progress toward meeting these two priorities. I am referring to the construction of the Prohibition Creek Access Road, which is currently well underway. We have divided this project into two phases. Phase one, construction began in November and includes building 6.7-kilometre all-season road just

south of Norman Wells between Canyon Creek and Christina Creek along the existing Mackenzie Valley Winter Road alignment. By replacing this portion of the existing winter road with an all-season road, we are making our transportation system more resilient to climate change, increasing reliability for the shipment of goods and supplies in the region, and enhancing intercommunity mobility. This phase will also make it easier to access recreational and traditional harvest areas. Construction is expected to be completed in the fall of 2023. Mr. Speaker, phase two would see construction of a 6.3-kilometre all-season road from Christina Creek to Prohibition Creek. This phase is contingent on completing additional design work at the Christina Creek crossing, regulatory authorizations, and securing additional funding.

The GNWT has worked closely with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations in the Sahtu to move this project forward and to continue to advance the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells. The Memorandum of Understanding the GNWT has signed with the Sahtu Secretariat is evidence of this.

The Prohibition Creek Access Road project is creating valuable employment opportunities in the Sahtu region. As of January 2023, 20 workers from the Sahtu have been hired as laborers, truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, drillers and blasters, and supervisory staff. Five workers from other regions in the NWT were also hired as heavy equipment operators. As part of this project, Northerners are receiving training that will enhance their skills for future job opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the investment in this all-season road by the GNWT and the Government of Canada, is strategic. The Prohibition Creek Access Road Project is a capacity-building project to help prepare businesses, workers, and residents to make the most of opportunities provided by the eventual construction of the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway.

This project has not been without challenges. It is one of several infrastructure projects that has

experienced cost escalations recently associated with supply chain issues, inflation, material and labour shortages, and rising fuel prices. Mr. Speaker, I continue to lobby for the needed additional funding with my federal counterparts and my department is also working on advancing these files at a bureaucratic level. The federal government is a valuable partner in meeting the infrastructure and transportation needs of Northerners and seem to be appreciative of these challenges we face and are receptive to making their funding programs to meet our northern realities. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 317-19(2):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION 2022 IDENTIFYING INJURY
TRENDS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, Northerners should be able to expect to return home at the end of each workday uninjured and healthy. In 2022, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission received 1,722 reports of injury from workers. This represents a 2.1 percent decrease from the previous year. Awareness of the workplace hazards and safety trends in the Northwest Territories can help ensure that workers return home safe and healthy every day.

In support of their vision to eliminate workplace disease and injuries, I would like to highlight some of the steps that WSCC is taking to achieve that outcome.

The most at-risk demographic for workplace injuries in 2022 were individuals aged 25-34, representing 26 percent of all claims. Positive, safe behaviours must be supported as soon as one enters the workforce in order to make safety second nature. WSCC continues to develop their young workers program and resources for workers under 25 so that they could take the knowledge and awareness they develop as young workers and continue to apply it to their working environment throughout their careers.

Mr. Speaker, the most commonly injured body parts last year included both the back and hands, representing 24 percent of all injuries; Sprains, strains, and tears continue to be one of the most frequently reported injury types; and, being struck by an object is one of the most frequent types of accident. Over the last year, the WSCC produced four seasonal campaigns designed to raise awareness on

specific occupational health and safety trends. These campaigns were focused on lifting safely, hand injuries, sprains and strains, and being struck by an object. All campaigns, which are accessible on the WSCC website, provides further resources to learn more about common risks and injuries in the workplace and how to prevent them. In 2022, trades laborers and heavy equipment operators were injured more frequently than other occupations. Ahead of the construction season, WSCC ran a campaign highlighting the process of how to submit notifications on high hazard work sites. As a result of these efforts, WSCC received a higher number of notifications compared to the previous years which enabled occupational health and safety inspectors to prioritize high hazard inspections. WSCC continues to keep a close eye on the northern workplace safety trends to better determine where resources and support are needed to help workers return home safely every night. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1386-19(2):
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have closely followed and participated in the review of resource management legislation and regulations in the 18th and 19th Assemblies and have been reflecting on my experiences to date.

I sent a detailed seven-page letter with my thoughts to the Premier and Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources; Lands; and Industry,

Tourism and Investment. I tabled it in the House and the less-than-enthusiastic reply too.

I commend Cabinet and this government for its progressive and innovative approach to the co-development of resource management legislation and regulations with Indigenous governments. This is an accomplishment that we should all be proud of and a true expression of reconciliation and co-management that all NWT residents have come to expect. I support this co-development approach and want to make sure it has the time and resources necessary to do its work. From every report of recent activities, this process appears to be working well. There is still a need to provide more information and work with those

Indigenous governments that are not part of this process.

I acknowledge that there has been some improvements since the 18th Assembly in terms of public engagement in post-devolution resource management legislation and regulations. However, the extent of information being shared by departments and timelines for public engagement have varied substantially and shown little consistency. In particular, I am alarmed and dismayed that GNWT has failed to embrace and implement an approach to resource management that includes meaningful public participation in both the development of resource management legislation and regulations, and in modifying and establishing new processes for decision-making about resources.

Public participation in these two significant aspects of resource management does not come at the expense of relationships with Indigenous governments but rather should be seen as an essential part of co-management. Public participation opportunities are what NWT residents have come to expect from responsible resource development and co-management itself.

It is not clear to me, whether GNWT continues to endorse and implement its own Open Government policy as signed by the Premier on January 8th, 2018. I offered other specific suggestions and it is not clear anything is going to change. I'll have questions later today for the Premier. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1387-19(2):
FLOOD MITIGATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by wishing my daughter Keelan a belated Happy Birthday which was earlier this month while she was in Florida.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government's National Disaster Mitigation Program is a program that provides access to financial support for risk assessment, flood mapping, mitigation planning, and investments in nonstructural and small-scale mitigation projects. Municipal and local governments, public sector bodies, private sector bodies, Indigenous governments, and nongovernmental organizations can make applications to this program.

Mr. Speaker, apart from raising the road along Riverview Drive in Hay River, building up a

short berm in the downtown area, and asking residents to take mitigation measures as outlined in the engineering reports each received, I ask what has been done to address overall mitigation for the West Channel, Old Town, New Town, Corridor, and Paradise Valley, because residents are concerned and are asking the question and wanting answers.

Mr. Speaker, the flood damage to Paradise was extensive. The only access road was compromised and the temporary one was constructed with no proper drainage. The embankment between the access road and the river had vegetation removed which diminished the stability of an already unstable bank. Residents are asking when the access road will be restored with proper drainage and when the bank stabilization measures will be undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, sections of the corridor were not spared from flooding and will require some form of berm and vegetation between the river and homes. The downtown core and Cranberry Crescent areas will also require some form of berm for flood protection. The West Channel area, situated along the lake, requires repairs to a berm between the airport and the residential area. In addition, there is an issue with the water course known as the Oxbow, which also allows water to flow inland from the lake during high water levels which results in flooding. A flood gate should be installed as a preventive measure.

The Old Town itself has minimal flood protection. Consideration must be given to raising the road running along the perimeter of the island. Mr. Speaker, throughout the winter, this government has been silent on what the overall flood mitigation plan is for Hay River. I understand, or am hoping, that this government is working with the Town of Hay River and Indigenous governments but any discussion, barriers, and solutions concerning flood mitigation is not being replayed to the general public. Communication and transparency is needed otherwise we may well be asking ourselves, once again, what went wrong, what are the lessons learned, and who is responsible for future costs. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1388-19(2):
AURORA COLLEGE – DECOMMISSIONING
THE LAST RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my statement from yesterday, I am

going to carry on with the same subject with focus on Breynat Hall at Aurora College.

As I said yesterday, Breynat Hall is a structure in Fort Smith that has a heavy history of colonialism and abuse, and that's because Breynat Hall is a former residential school. And, again, the structure is one of the last remaining former residential school buildings that is still in active use in the Northwest Territories today.

Mr. Speaker, Breynat Hall was built in 1958 and was run by the Catholic Church as a residential school until 1975. And according to the National Centre For Truth and Reconciliation, at least one student died there in 1960. From 1975 onward, Breynat Hall has been use by Aurora College as a single student residence in Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear about this, and I know the Minister of education is already on side with this, but Breynat Hall must not continue to be used when Aurora College transitions into a polytechnic university. There is far too much historical baggage attached to that building. Therefore, it must be inappropriate for it to be continued to be used for the future headquarters of the polytechnic university. And it appears that the need to dispose of Breynat Hall is understood by the university transition team because it was stated in the polytechnic university master plan released in September 2022 that Breynat Hall would be removed and replaced with a new student residence.

Also I strongly hope that the future student residence building will have Indigenous accents built into its architecture.

Mr. Speaker, during its time as a residential school, Breynat Hall was used by students from various NWT communities including Lutselk'e, Behchoko and Fort Res, among others, and over the years numerous constituents have told me that they feel uncomfortable and even disturbed by the continued use and existence of Breynat Hall at Aurora College in Fort Smith. There has also been several former NWT politicians who attended Breynat Hall, and most have all agreed that it has had a very troubled past and it must go. I am sure there are even some students attending Aurora College in Fort Smith today who are descendants of former residential school survivors who attended Breynat Hall in the past. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

In closing, Mr. Speaker, for these reasons it is essential that the new headquarters of the future polytechnic university in Fort Smith be

built without Breynat Hall on its grounds. I think it also might be a good idea to have a memorial placed near or on its former site to act as a permanent reminder about the history that occurred there. I will have questions for the ECE Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1389-19(2):
CHILD CARE SUPPORTS AND HIGH
SCHOOL

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year students walk across NWT graduation stages with a spectrum of stories of what it took to accomplish this milestone. In my graduating class, a handful of my peers who walked the graduation stage just a few blocks from here had the most special dates to honour the effort they made to get there. Mr. Speaker, their dates were their babies.

Since 2016, an average of roughly 36 babies are born to teen parents in the Northwest Territories. That is 36 young parents potentially working to achieve a pivotal milestone with their peers. Pursuing education as a parent at any age is an accomplishment but doing it as a teen is a monumental accomplishment, Mr. Speaker. While there are champions that helped keep the doors to education open for those parents I graduated with, barriers to their success that existed then persist today.

Mr. Speaker, supporting the education of teen parents is not a foreign concept in schools. Here in Yellowknife, before my time, Ecole St. Patrick High School had an in-care daycare where students could drop off their child as they ran to class. Paired with child care, parents took family life health, a full credit class that provided support, financial literacy, and healthy family learning to teen parents. Decades ago, Inuvik's Samuel Hearne Secondary School, now East 3 Secondary School, also had an in-school child care and supports.

Today, decades after these programs have disappeared, Sir John Franklin High School has revived some programming for young parents. Thursday afternoons, the school hosts a support group for moms, dads, and parents-to-be who are continuing their high school education. Here, people can access peer and experience supports, public health visits, cooking classes, and guest speakers. But access to education for young parents relies on a parent's ability to access both the

space and funding for child care. Space is a big barrier especially in today's child care landscape and given the short turnaround between birth and return to school. But accessing the child care funding is a barrier this government can address today.

Funding through income assistance requires that a person be an NWT resident and over 19 years of age. This criteria closes the door for teen parents. The second funding option is a voluntary service agreement with child and family services. The historical stigma closes this door for so many parents. For some youth, child care is a significant barrier to education. Today I am asking education to create a safe, accessible door where teen parents can get funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1390-19(2):
FUNDING FOR ELDERS WHO PROVIDE
CARE, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE TO
YOUTH

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to address you today on the issue that is a critical to the well-being of our society. As well, all known Indigenous elders in the Northwest Territories are an integral part of our culture and heritage. They have contributed significantly to the development and growth of our communities over the years, passing down their traditions, traditional knowledge and customs and values, from generation to generation. However, in recent years many of these elders have found themselves in a difficult situation due to various reasons such as substance abuse, mental health issues, or other social problems. Some parents are unable to take care of their children. In these situations, grandparents have to step in to raise their grandchildren often without necessary financial resources.

This has become a critical issue in the Northwest Territories where many Indigenous elders are living on poverty and struggling to make ends meet on a fixed elders' monthly income and, in some cases, a single fixed income. They may lack access to necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, let alone the resources needed to provide for their grandchildren's education, healthcare, and other needs. As a society, we have responsibility to ensure that our elders are taken care of in their later years of their life, especially when they are providing care and support to the next generation. It is not just a matter of compassion or respect but also an

investment in our collective future. These children will be the future leaders of our community, and it is essential that they receive support and guidance they need to succeed. Therefore, I urge all of you to consider what we can do to support these elders who are raising their grandchildren. This could involve providing financial assistance, access to healthcare, social services funding support, or simply offering emotional support and recognition for their invaluable role they are playing.

In conclusion, let us remember the importance of the role Indigenous elders play in our society and the challenges they face raising their grandchildren. We owe it to them and to the future of our communities to provide them with support they need and deserve. I would have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1391-19(2):
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE TRAINING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year the Aurora College heavy equipment operator program graduates, on average, 16 new students per year. Many of the graduates dream of a job working with the various machinery that they were trained on, such as a dump truck, loader, grader, excavator, and caterpillar. The AGO training only allows students to choose two pieces of machinery and most times there are no other options but only a dump and a loader combination.

Many Northerners went through the AGO program and went on to full-time employment and, if lucky, to get a GNWT position and they can work until retirement, which is typically 30 years. Mr. Speaker, a lot of times newly graduated heavy equipment operators do not have the required number of years of experience on certain pieces of heavy equipment and therefore are usually never hired.

Mr. Speaker, when I see road construction, whether new construction or resurfacing, I typically see our trained heavy equipment operators operating a packer. If they're not driving the packer, then they are used as flaggers. All the AGO trainees come out with air brakes endorsements and a class 3 driver's license. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the infrastructure Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1392-19(2):
FOOD SECURITY

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I was lucky to participate in Grow NWT, an agri-food industry conference hosted by the Territorial Agri-food Association here in Yellowknife. The conference kicked off Thursday afternoon with the blue sky brainstorming session on how to foster the agri-food sector for the future. This event saw roundtables of growers, processors, chefs, government, subject matter experts, big thinkers, and others interested in tackling the barriers and issues facing food production and food security north of 60. The conference got into full swing on Friday with opening remarks by MP McLeod and Minister Wawzonek, as well as by Kevin Wallington, president of the association. What followed was likely one of the most inspiring conferences I've ever attended. The passion in the room was palpable and the air of excitement contagious.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the day it became evident to me what a large role the agri-food industry can play in the future of our territory. Growing our food locally will pay economic dividends by creating a robust new industry to help with our diversification mandate. Items would cost less to transport, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing our carbon footprint. But what struck me most about the presentations and discussions from last week was how much this sector could play in our mental well-being and physical health. When I have personally dealt with depression, one of the things my doctor always said to me is to get out in nature, that this was the best medicine I was going to find. If we could create an industry that allows people to be outside, with their hands in the dirt, while also paying them a living wage, I am sure we would see a drop in stress and depression affecting our communities. We would see people reconnecting with the land and we would see the land healing them in return.

One of the barriers raised by the entire group was the idea that there needs to be a shift in how we look at the food sector industry. We need to create agricultural land designations and all levels of government must return land to the people. Not only is this necessary for reconciliation, it will give residents of this territory control over their own future. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was never so worried as when I sat on the agricultural federal/provincial/territorial table as Minister during the pandemic and realized just how far at the end of the supply food chain we really are. I never want to have that worry again, Mr. Speaker, so now is the time to get behind our food growers and agri-industry and start taking food security back into our own hands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1393-19(2):
NORTHVIEW LEASING

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. \$20.1 million a year. That is the amount of money we provide every year to Northview, more than we spend on community water and sewer services. According to Northview's own 2020 prospectus, the funds, they own approximately 50 percent of the rental market in Yellowknife. 50 percent of our town, Mr. Speaker, is owned by one company and we are their single largest landlord. You think this might be a problem we would like to address. However, Mr. Speaker, during the life of this Assembly, that number has grown every single year as we add more and more office space to one landlord. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not a hard problem to solve. Step one, remove them from BIP. They no longer need to be a BIP'd company, Mr. Speaker. This company is a pinnacle of everything that is wrong with GNWT procurement.

It started in the '80s by a former deputy minister who went and got a handful of sole source contracts from the government and made themselves rich. And here we are continuing to line the pockets of now southern and foreign billionaires, Mr. Speaker.

Second, change the leasing of improved real property, which has not seen any change since 1998 and is, in fact, the policy that is responsible for growing this company. Follow our own policies conduct a lease to own analysis of all of our buildings.

Third, commit to publicly tendering all of our leases. You can trace many of our leases back all the way to 1998 when they were originally sole sourced. They have not been tendered in any meaningful way since. Many we inherited from the feds on devolution and we did not publicly tender them.

Finish the procurement review, Mr. Speaker. We have spent three and a half years reviewing procurement and not one penny that has gone out this door has changed with regards to procurement because we will not finish this review, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, let's approach some local developers and some local people with this \$20 million a year we spend and get a little creative. See if someone will build us some buildings, build us some housing, anything other than giving this money to Northview. I'll have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure on whether she is going to accomplish anything at all in regards to this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1394-19(2):
EULOGY FOR ARIEL DUNTRA

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ariel Mary Lynne Duntra was born at Fort Liard Health Centre on March 25th, 1991 to Jimmy Deneron and Molly Duntra. Ariel was the middle child, right between her sister Angeline and brother Jamie.

Ariel attended the Echo Dene School where she was active in sports. This is where I got to meet her. She was very competitive and at the same time being a sportsman-like athlete. Other athletes liked to play against her. Beside school, she enjoyed traditional activities, especially participating in ecology camps throughout the Deh Cho.

Ariel was never afraid to roll up her sleeves and get to work. She started working in the oil and gas field and in the construction industry as a cook's helper and camp attendant. As well, she worked at the Liard Hot Springs as a cashier and gas attendant. On top of this, she took the introduction to mine training course.

Ariel was very close to her siblings and especially her two nephews Maddox and Xander. She enjoyed spending time together cooking, watching movies, and barbecuing outside in the gazebo with them. As a good auntie, she bought Xander his first bike last year and then bought Maddox one. I can tell you she enjoyed hanging out with her family and friends, especially when it came to being out on the land and enjoying a traditional meal cooked over the open fire.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Ariel had a heart of gold and an awesome sense of humour. Because of these attributes, she had many many nicknames that she cherished.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately Ariel passed away on September 8. Ariel was a shining star to everybody that knew her and was a very special person. I can tell you her parents, siblings, extended family, and friends will sadly miss her dearly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community.

Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1395-19(2):
FEDERAL LEGISLATION FOR CHILD AND
FAMILY RESOURCES

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know in this House that the overwhelming majority of children within the child and family services systems are Indigenous. Our system for income support then further disadvantage Indigenous youth as they try to advance their education and career. Many communities do not have supports, such as Home Base seen in Yellowknife, to help children access programs and services. There has been an acknowledgement that the child and family services system is not working for Indigenous population as reflected in the recent federal legislation on child and family services.

This federal legislation acknowledges that Indigenous governments have the right to create their own laws to regulate child and family services. However, our own government has challenged this federal law and the work of partners such as the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in federal court. Mr. Speaker, our system is not talking to one another. We are making sole policy decisions which are negatively impacting Indigenous youth in the NWT. Our youth have pride and should be supported in their effort to receive education, housing, and employment opportunities. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

**Reports of Committees on the Review
of Bills**

COMMITTEE REPORT 43-19(2):
REPORT ON REVIEW OF BILL 63, AN ACT
TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, and commends it to the House.

Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, received second reading on November 2, 2022 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. The Official Languages Act recognizes the "official" status of eleven languages in the NWT. The Act sets out the rights, rules, and responsibilities for using these languages in different parts of government.

Bill 63 updates the Act for the first time in twenty years. Many of the proposed changes were recommended by committee in early 2022. Specifically, Bill 63:

- Clarifies and strengthens the role of the Languages Commissioner;
- Merges the two languages boards; and
- Updates the preamble to recognize:
 - o The impact of colonialism;
 - o The relevance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
 - o The government's commitment to fair access to services for residents who speak Indigenous languages.

This report describes how committee engaged with the Minister before Bill 63 was introduced. It also summarizes how different stakeholders responded to the proposed changes and what committee decided on key issues.

This report is separate from committee's upcoming report on our statutory review of the Official Languages Act. That second report will touch on some of the larger changes committee wants to see. Committee will present this report before the end of the February/March 2023 sitting.

Committee Welcomes Changes During the 19th Assembly

The Official Languages Act needs to be reviewed about every five years – with the last review happening in 2014. Committee started a new review in early 2020, but it was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Committee was unable to travel to communities and consult the public because of public health orders, local outbreaks, and the Members' desire to avoid spreading the virus. As a result, many plans had to be postponed.

In December 2021, committee decided that the review of the Official Languages Act could not be finished in time to make changes to the law before the 19th Assembly's term ended. However, it had been almost twenty years since the Act was last updated and, during that time, many important and straightforward amendments had been suggested. Therefore, committee urged the Minister to work with us to create and propose new legislation before the Assembly's term ended. The Minister agreed and welcomed Committee's input for a bill.

I will now pass the reading over to the Member for Kam Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: One second, please. Okay, colleagues, let's try this again. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

BILL 67: AN ACT TO AMEND THE FIRE PREVENTION ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 67, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act, as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE REPORT 43-19(2): REPORT ON REVIEW OF BILL 63, AN ACT TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Right from the start? Here we go again.

Mr. Speaker, Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, and commends it to the House.

Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, received second reading on November 2, 2022 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. The Official Languages Act recognizes the "official" status of eleven languages in the NWT. The Act sets out the rights, rules, and responsibilities for using these languages in different parts of government.

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This report describes how committee engaged with the Minister before Bill 63 was introduced. It also summarizes how different stakeholders responded to the proposed changes and what committee decided on key issues.

This report is separate from committee's upcoming report on our statutory review of the Official Languages Act. That second report will touch on some of the larger changes committee wishes to see. Committee will present this report before the end of the February/March 2023 sitting.

COMMITTEE WELCOMES CHANGES DURING 19th ASSEMBLY

The Official Languages Act needs to be reviewed about every five years – with the last review happening in 2014. Committee started a new review in early 2020, but it was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Committee was unable to travel to communities and consult the public because of public health orders, local outbreaks, and the Members' desire to avoid spreading the virus. As a result, many plans had to be postponed.

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the Act was last updated and, during that time, many important and straightforward amendments had been suggested. Therefore, committee urged the Minister to work with us to create and propose new legislation before the Assembly's term ended. The Minister agreed and welcomed Committee's input for a bill.

I will now pass it over to the Member for Kam Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HALF OF COMMITTEE'S PRIORITIES ADDED TO THE BILL.

Committee set out to provide its priorities for changes to the Official Languages Act. To do that, committee looked at all recommendations made since the law was last changed, in 2003. Committee looked only at recommendations that were legislative in nature that came from:

- The Languages Commissioner's annual reports;
- Committee's previous two reviews of the Act; and
- Public meetings held in Inuvik in June 2021 and virtually in January 2022.

Committee identified close to 50 past recommendations in total, which are documented in an appendix to this report. While most of these recommendations had merit and continued relevance, they could not all be put forward due to the limited time available. Committee therefore provided the Minister with the 12 changes that we thought were most important. Those changes were to:

1. Update the preamble to acknowledge the impact of residential schools and colonial policies on official language communities, and affirm Indigenous Peoples' language rights according to UNDRIP;
2. Strengthen the Languages Commissioner's ability to get information from public bodies;
3. Impose response requirements on public bodies for recommendations from the Languages Commissioner;
4. Empower the Languages Commissioner with alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;
5. Require the Languages Commissioner to reside in the territory;

6. Ensure housing authorities are bound by Official Languages Act;
7. Make the Act flexible and open to creative solutions from communities;
8. Recognize Michif as an official language;
9. Broaden concepts of "significant demand" and "nature of the office" and work toward accessibility of services in all official languages in all areas;
10. Establish a mechanism to address violations of the Act;
11. Provide a bilingual bonus to all government employees who speak an Indigenous official language; and
12. Clarify the role of the Languages Commissioner in raising concerns and making recommendations to the Minister.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment included about half of these changes in Bill 63. Changes number 1 through 5 were accepted and included in the bill, while change 6 can be pursued through a change to the government institution regulations. In correspondence with committee, the Minister committed to making this change in the regulations. Unfortunately, changes 7 through 12 were not included in the bill.

Committee is pleased with the changes that ECE included in the bill and commends the Minister for working together with committee to introduce changes to the Act.

However, committee is disappointed that Bill 63 did not include more changes and was not more ambitious. Other governments in Canada have recently implemented more significant changes to bolster official and Indigenous languages. Committee hopes that the government will introduce additional legislation to protect, promote, and revitalize official languages with the same level of ambition in the 20th Assembly.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1: That the Government of the Northwest Territories commit to a second phase of legislative changes to protect, promote, and revitalize official and Indigenous languages in the 20th Assembly. This new legislation should be based on past recommendations, suggestions arising during the review of Bill 63, and the advice in the committee's upcoming report on its statutory review of the Official Languages Act.

The new legislation should also seek to implement Articles 13 and 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous governments should be invited to co-develop the legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to pass the reading of the report over to the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

STAKEHOLDERS OFFERED THOUGHTFUL SUGGESTIONS TO STRENGTHEN LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND COMMUNITIES

Committee sought public feedback on Bill 63 with a public notice and targeted engagement letters to those who may have had an interest in the bill. Committee received written submissions from:

- Collège Nordique;
- La Fédération franco-ténoise;
- The Languages Commissioner; and
- The Northwest Territory Metis Nation.

All written submissions are included in an appendix to this report.

Committee also held a public review of Bill 63 on January 18, 2023. At that meeting, committee received oral comments from the Minister, Collège Nordique, the FFT, and a member of the public. Committee also met with the Metis Nation to hear their input on January 30, 2023.

Committee appreciates everyone who offered their feedback and ideas for the review of Bill 63. Their participation demonstrates a passion to protect, maintain, and enhance the vitality of official language communities in the territory.

Updating the preamble

All participants agree that it was a good idea to add language about colonialism, UNDRIP, and fair access to services for residents who speak an Indigenous official language into the preamble. However, the Metis Nation thought that this change should not just be in the preamble of the Act but throughout the whole Act so that the GNWT is fully committed to UNDRIP and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. Committee agrees with the Metis Nation and hopes that the GNWT will make bigger and more transformative changes to the Official

Languages Act in the 20th Assembly to reflect these commitments.

Clarifying and strengthening the Languages Commissioner's role

Eligibility requirements

Bill 63 would require the Languages Commissioner to live in the NWT and forbid them from being a member of the public service. Participants agreed with these changes. Committee agrees that the Commissioner must be connected to the people they serve.

Alternative dispute resolution

Bill 63 would also allow the Languages Commissioner to refer matters to alternative dispute resolution. Participants supported this change but wanted to see the bill provide more tools to deal with complaints. The FFT suggested setting up a language rights tribunal to adjudicate on language rights violations. Committee thought this could be a good idea but was outside of the scope of the bill. A future review should study how this idea could work. The Languages Commissioner wanted to have the option to resolve a complaint without doing a full investigation. Committee found that the Act does not currently provide her that power. Committee thinks it might be good for the Languages Commissioner to have a way to solve problems informally, but there are important policy questions to think about first. Committee encourages the Languages Commissioner to explain more about her recommendation for informal resolutions, perhaps in an annual report. Committee also wants to see how alternative dispute resolution works before adding another mechanism.

Deadlines for information requests

Bill 63 would require public bodies to answer information requests from the Languages Commissioner within 60 days. Participants agreed with this change but thought more could be done to ensure the Commissioner gets the information she needs. The Languages Commissioner wanted to be able to set the deadline herself, based on each situation. Committee was worried this power would give too much discretion to the Commissioner and too little predictability to the public bodies. Fixed timelines written into law is also the approach taken for other statutory officers, like the Ombud and the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The Languages Commissioner was also concerned that the part of the Act dealing with information requests, section 22, stops her from requesting information without doing a formal investigation. Committee asked

the law clerk for advice and believes the Commissioner can ask for and receive information without doing a formal investigation. Given this information, committee does not think the Act needs to be changed. The FFT wanted to give the Languages Commissioner the power to force anyone to answer a complaint. This change would significantly expand the authority of the Commissioner, who right now has very specific powers in investigations. A future study should review this suggestion.

Supreme Court orders

Bill 63 would allow the Languages Commissioner to go to court and get an order when a public body has not acted on a recommendation. Participants agreed with this change, but the FFT wanted to see some additional changes. The FFT wanted to place a three-month time limit for public bodies to act on a recommendation, failing which the Commissioner could get a court order. Committee was concerned that more complex language rights cases could take more than three months, so we preferred the more flexible approach in the current bill. The FFT also suggested that the law enable the Languages Commissioner to collect damages and costs from the public body in question at the Supreme Court. Committee notes that the Court can already award damages and costs, so this change is not needed.

Merging the Languages Boards

Bill 63 would combine two Boards: the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. Most participants agreed with this change but suggested some improvements. The Metis Nation questioned the name of the merged board, suggesting that the name should explicitly include the word "Indigenous" to reflect Indigenous participation on the board. The FFT suggested that the government delay the merger and was worried whether the combined board could focus on French and Indigenous languages at the same time. Collège Nordique supported the change and thought the government could go farther to ensure greater transparency from the merged board.

Committee notes that this change has already been delayed, as it was first recommended in 2009. Committee has heard that the two boards already mostly function as a single entity though it is not yet reflected in the Act. The Boards themselves would prefer to be a combined entity to improve efficiency. Committee is confident the new board will fulfill

its mandate with respect to each official language and their distinct needs.

Committee agrees that the public should know more about what the board does. Separately, committee has heard that, in practice, the current boards are organized by the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat, which might make them less independent. Since the combined board will give advice and recommendations to the Minister and evaluate language programs, the board independence is important.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 2: That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment ensure independence and transparency at the merged languages board. The department should provide a proper framework and resources for the board to fulfill its mandate, including timely appointments when vacancies arise. The board should disclose meeting agendas, minutes, and other documents of public interest. The board should also release an annual report that summarizes recommendations to the Minister, the Minister's response, progress on implementation, and the findings of program and initiative evaluations.

I will now ask, Mr. Speaker, to turn it over to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Scheduling statutory reviews

Bill 63 would match the timing of statutory reviews of the Act with the schedule of the Legislative Assembly. This means a review would happen within the first two years of every other Assembly rather than every five years.

Several stakeholders were worried about the change. The FFT believed it could delay a review indefinitely if the Assembly sat indefinitely. However, the territory's Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act says the Assembly can only last for four years so a review would still happen regularly, about every eight years.

The Languages Commissioner was concerned that waiting so long between the reviews might not give enough chances to improve the law. But committee believes that doing the review in the first two years of an Assembly will help make sure any changes suggested during the review can become law in the remaining two years of the Assembly. Committee does not

want to repeat the experience of the last two reviews, neither of which led to legislative changes.

Other suggestions to support official languages

Committee heard several other ideas to improve the Official Languages Act including:

1. Ensuring the Languages Commissioner, the Minister, and the Languages Board develop policies collaboratively;
2. Requiring government to take steps to support official languages communities;
3. Requiring each public body to have performance measures on how well they are following the Act; and
4. Making the Premier, rather than the Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment, responsible for the Official Languages Act.

Committee also received a suggestion that would not necessarily require legislative change. A member of the public recommended that the government to set up a language resource center in the large communities. These centers would document and preserve each Indigenous official language, and such resources for future generations to revitalize the language.

While these suggestions were out of scope for the review of Bill 63, committee hopes they will be studied the next time the Act is reviewed.

Committee Amended one Clause

Clause 10 of Bill 63 requires the Languages Commissioner to provide more information on her annual report. The goal of the clause is to ensure useful information is available to the public. One subclause, as originally drafted, would have required the annual report to disclose "what recommendations, requests and applications were made by the Languages Commissioner respecting each complaint."

The Languages Commissioner was concerned that this wording could cause a complainant to be identified in an annual report and, if so, discourage residents from making formal complaints. Committee was also worried that the Languages Commissioner could be led to make her recommendations more broadly worded to protect the complainants' privacy. Committee felt this was not a desirable outcome, potentially undermining the effectiveness of the recommendations.

Committee therefore agreed to and passed a motion to amend the subclause. The

amendment required a summary of recommendations, requests, and applications, rather than the exact text respecting each complaint. Committee believes this change will allow the Commissioner to make specific recommendations but then summarize those in the annual report, reducing the possibility that a complainant might be identified.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hand this over to the MLA for Yellowknife North. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON:

Conclusion

On February 15th, 2023, committee held a clause-by-clause review. Committee passed a motion to report Bill 63, as amended, to the Legislative Assembly for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' review of Bill 63.

Recommendation 3: The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker --

MR. SPEAKER: Did he read his motion? I didn't catch him.

The 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. Committee Report 43-19(2) has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

COMMITTEE REPORT 44-19(2):
FINAL REPORT: A NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES APPROACH TO THE UNITED
NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS
OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND
NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs is pleased to provide its Final Report: A Northwest Territories Approach to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements, and commends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, The Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs committee was created on October 29, 2020 after the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Motion 21-19(2). The Assembly tasked the special committee to seek and encourage discussion and recommendations on opportunities and challenges in meeting the Assembly's priorities. Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a commitment in the Government of the Northwest Territories 2019-2023 Mandate.

Much has happened since. At the same time, when committee began its work in December 2020, Canada released a proposal for legislation to implement the UNDRIP. When in June 2021, Canada's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act was passed into law, committee was in the midst of hearing from witnesses to learn about the different perspectives on UNDRIP and land negotiations and self-government agreements in the Northwest Territories.

Committee acknowledges the policies driving Canada's new approach to recognizing and implementing Indigenous rights. Following British Columbia's Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy for Treaty Negotiations in British Columbia, Canada replaced the Comprehensive Land Claims Policy with the paradigm of co-development for Crown-Indigenous dialogue.

Canada aims to increase flexibility in negotiations and respond to Indigenous nations' unique rights, needs and interests. The federal government indicates it is removing final settlement language and replacing rights extinguishment clauses with flexible agreements. The process for negotiation is agreed upon in advance in co-developed memoranda of understanding and framework agreements.

Committee acknowledges the actions taken by the Government of the Northwest Territories and Indigenous leaders in creating new meeting tables and working on advancing work on implementing UNDRIP. The NWT Council of Leaders forum formed an officials' working group to advance UNDRIP in the NWT. This

working group has prepared a Memorandum of Understanding to collaboratively move forward with legislative framework discussions (NWT UNDRIP MOU).

The committee is pleased to present this final report, which was developed following the committee's mandate as determined by the terms of reference. This final report recommends actions to the Assembly and the GNWT based on submissions and recommendations the committee received from witnesses.

I'll now ask, Mr. Speaker, if we could turn it over to the Member for Hay River North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Background

The special committee began work on December 4, 2020 and heard from legal experts, scholars, researchers, Indigenous governments and nations, and the GNWT. On March 30, 2022, the committee published the interim report: "what we heard" about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements, summarizing the comments, issues and outlooks expressed by experts, scholars, Indigenous governments and organizations, and the GNWT. Throughout the process, we respected the confidentiality requirements of ongoing negotiations and the confidentiality commitments of the Indigenous governments and nations. The interim report is attached to this report as Appendix A. Public presentations were recorded and are available on the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly YouTube Channel.

This Report

As a result of the committee's deliberations during the past two years, committee is making a series of recommendations aimed at:

- Ensuring informed governance.
- Enabling an NWT constitutional framework.
- Monitoring UNDRIP implementation.
- Making GNWT policies consistent with UNDRIP, and
- Moving land agreements to a conclusion.

ENSURING INFORMED GOVERNANCE

Most legislatures, including the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, provide orientation programs to new Members. The

information generally focuses on the functioning of the NWT legislature, consensus government principles and process conventions, rules and procedures, Caucus, Cabinet and committees, budget process, legislature services and issue briefings.

In Caucus, all Members develop the priorities at the beginning of the term for a Legislative Assembly. The committee heard that educating Members in Caucus on Indigenous negotiation tables and current mechanisms for collaboration would be an excellent opportunity to share the perspectives of Indigenous governments. In addition, presentations to Caucus would show the different ways to view UNDRIP.

Committee agrees that it is an excellent opportunity to inform Members at the beginning of a new Assembly on the jurisdictions of all governments and the mechanisms for discussion and finding solutions.

Committee impresses on the Assembly and the GNWT not to underestimate the significance of existing mechanisms in their role of moving reconciliation forward and preparing the implementation of UNDRIP.

Consequently, committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1: The Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs recommends that

- a) the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly includes in all transition and orientation material for all MLAs post-election, and
- b) the Office of the Secretary to Cabinet of the Government of the Northwest Territories includes in post-election materials specific to Cabinet

an introduction to the history and role of each of the following:

- a. NWT Council of Leaders
- b. Modern Treaty and Self-Government Partners Forum
- c. Intergovernmental Council and Intergovernmental Council Secretariat
- d. The jurisdictions of public government, exclusive and inclusive Indigenous governments
- e. NWT Council of Leaders UNDRIP Memorandum of Understanding.

I would like to pass the reading on to the MLA for Yellowknife South. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Enabling an NWT Constitutional Framework

Committee heard that an approach is needed to accommodate the rights of each Indigenous nation in the NWT in relation to the Canadian Constitution and consideration of the distinct circumstances of each nation's path to self-determination. Witnesses told committee that there is a need to reconcile the distinction between "the public" and "Indigenous peoples" because most of the NWT's public is Indigenous.

The need to reassess the relationship between public and Indigenous governments was felt by many. Witnesses told committee that together, we need to look at how the declaration is informed by the Constitution, on the one hand, and by the governance models used in the Northwest Territories on the other.

The Northwest Territories Act, a federal statute, creates the Northwest Territories Assembly and defines its legislative powers. This Canadian law may also need to be reviewed for consistency with the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples at a federal level.

UNDRIP does not override existing laws in Canada. Canada and British Columbia require their laws to be "consistent" with the declaration. UNDRIP can be seen as informing the Constitution. Committee heard that making Canada's legislation consistent with the declaration may require amending Land Claims Agreements. This concern refers to the federal resource management legislation governing the regulation of resources in the Northwest Territories, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

UNDRIP has at its core the right to self-determination, which in turn requires a system that allows the diversity of political communities. UNDRIP also formulates Indigenous peoples not as a minority but as "peoples." A constitutional arrangement amongst all nations in the Northwest Territories would redefine our relationship with each other. As such, UNDRIP would help to strengthen existing co-governance and co-management approaches between the Northwest Territories and Indigenous governments.

The goal of shared decision-making means to advance the building of Indigenous nations and governments, to avoid the past "top-down" approach taken by public governments and to acknowledge that approximately half of the Northwest Territories population is Indigenous. Rebuilding our relationships will move us forward to agree on policies that will resolve conflict, encourage collaboration, and establish long-term working processes. Collaboration is the foundation to reach agreements for all groups and may include facilitated collaboration to re-establish, strengthen and maintain effective working relations and mutual trust.

The current forums and tables create relationships, enable the Members to respect each other's unique positions and accommodate the Northwest Territories diversity. The existing Northwest Territories tables are suitable for a Northwest Territories-specific approach. The Northwest Territories Council of Leaders, the Modern Treaty and Self-Government Partners Forum, and the existing Intergovernmental Council are three separate places for exchange. The Legislative Development Protocol, established in December 2020, is an effective model of attaining UNDRIP objectives and respecting the political realities of the Northwest Territories.

Recommendation 2: The Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs recommends that the 20th Assembly establish a special committee on UNDRIP implementation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And over to the MLA for Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS:

Monitoring UNDRIP Implementation

Most witnesses favoured legislation as the mechanism to implement UNDRIP in the NWT. Committee heard that the Government of the Northwest Territories should pass a law to implement UNDRIP to adopt the declaration as the minimum standard for how the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous peoples in the NWT will be upheld in Government of the Northwest Territories law and policy.

In other words, implementing UNDRIP in NWT law offers a solution that initiates the process of harmonizing and aligning Government of the Northwest Territories laws, policies, and practices with the declaration's minimum

standards for recognizing and respecting Indigenous peoples' rights.

Choosing to implement a law obligates the Government of the Northwest Territories to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous governments and organizations when addressing legal and policy issues. The consequence would be that of the government is working under the same standards. Choosing a law to implement UNDRIP may create obligations for an action plan, independent monitoring and implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

- **Action Plan:** An action plan, committee notes, needs to be mandated so that the responsible Ministers collaborate with Indigenous governments in bringing existing laws and policies in compliance with UNDRIP. The NWT UNDRIP MOU in process under the Northwest Territories Council of Leaders UNDRIP working group could require the Government of the Northwest Territories to prepare a joint action plan in collaboration with Indigenous partners.
- **Monitoring:** An action plan can provide for accountability in the implementation through reporting against key indicators. The law must include a mechanism that will monitor how the law is being implemented so that we can work together to adjust if needed. For example, Ombuds are created to hold the respective government accountable and Auditor Generals exist in provinces for the same purpose.

In Canada, no independent bodies are tasked to monitor how governments implement and apply the declaration. It has been said that this absence may lead to interpretation gaps in UNDRIP implementation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission asked for an independent agency to hold the government accountable for its commitment to implementing the UNDRIP. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Calls to Action 43 and 44).

- **FPIC:** Operationalizing consent is the most important mechanism for implementing UNDRIP and realizing reconciliation. Any UNDRIP legislation and attached action plan should enable shared decision-making and delegation between the Government of the Northwest Territories and Indigenous governments in areas of shared responsibilities. Consent would be built into policy and legislation, as is the case with the NWT Mineral Resources Act and Protected

Areas Act. The principle of consent must permeate and apply to all activities.

The Government of the Northwest Territories may choose to adopt the approach taken by Canada and BC and require its existing laws to be consistent with the principles and objectives of UNDRIP to strengthen the ongoing co-governance.

The goal is to enable innovative, consensus-based modes of collaborative governance, where Indigenous and public governments operate cooperatively and in a spirit of consensus to confront shared problems and address shared interests.

Committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop its approach, including identified measures for progress and begin at the very start by including performance measurement principles in the UNDRIP work plan proposal of the NWT UNDRIP MOU for developing the UNDRIP law.

Recommendation 3: The Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs recommends that the work plan proposals to be suggested by the Government of the Northwest Territories under the NWT Council of Leaders UNDRIP Memorandum of Understanding should include:

1. Description of who or what entity will monitor progress.
2. Identification of who or what entity will be accountable for progress.
3. A dispute resolution mechanism other than the Government of the Northwest Territories for disputes between Indigenous governments over the implementation of UNDRIP, land access, land exclusivity and other inter-jurisdictional disputes.
4. An established process or determined place to ensure the implementation of existing self-government agreements or land claim agreements is consistent with the principles and objectives of UNDRIP.

I will now turn it over to Yellowknife North.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Making GNWT Policies Consistent with UNDRIP

The committee has received multiple recommendations that the GNWT must systematically review existing policies to

ensure compliance with UNDRIP and that policies are consistent.

Harmonizing and aligning GNWT laws, policies, and practices with the declaration's minimum standards for recognizing and respecting Indigenous peoples' rights is crucial to the reconciliation process. Some urged to expedite the harmonization process, seeing the need to ensure policies are consistent and effective for the timely completion of land agreements. Others want to see opportunities for interim and incremental measures.

The benefits of updating and aligning policies with UNDRIP principles mentioned include:

- Facilitating the finalization of land claim agreements.
- Empowering the public service to act in accordance with UNDRIP.
- Facilitating the implementation of UNDRIP.
- Advancing reconciliation.
- Establishing, maintaining, and improving government-to-government relationships.

Committee agrees that advancing reconciliation requires ensuring all GNWT policies are consistent with UNDRIP principles and suggests a systematic review of the GNWT policies issued on the authority of the Executive Council and ministerial policies. The Executive Council is responsible for the overall management and direction of the GNWT and authorizes long-term policies and policies guiding the establishment of departments. Currently, 49 policies are under the authority of the Executive Council, and 43 are ministerial policies.

Committee suggests that the GNWT establish a process for the systematic review that includes Indigenous governments and Members of the Legislative Assembly in the review cycle.

Committee suggests starting with GNWT "Policy 11.51 - Aboriginal Land Claims" (effective May 16, 1998).

Committee suggests the GNWT consider the objectives of the NWT UNDRIP MOU on implementing UNDRIP in legislation in its systematic policy review.

Recommendation 4: The Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs recommends that the GNWT systematically review GNWT policies against the principles of UNDRIP and in consideration of purposes and objectives established by the NWT Council of

Leaders UNDRIP Memorandum of Understanding,

- a. Beginning with the review of policy 11.51 "Aboriginal Land Claims;"
- b. Continuing with the review of the policies listed under the authority of the Executive Council and ministerial policies;
- c. While at the same time, establishing an understood process to ensure a "check in" with Indigenous governments and Members of the Legislative Assembly before final versions are concluded.

I will now pass it over to the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Moving Agreements to Conclusion

Repeatedly, committee heard from Indigenous nations the desire to develop mechanisms and processes to move land and self-government agreements forward. We also heard that change is needed immediately and that, at the same time, agreements need to work on the ground and also have legal complexities that require more time for the negotiation process.

Finding innovative ways to meet practical goals requires the parties to have exploratory discussions with each other. The current negotiation tables are where all parties meet: The Government of Canada, the GNWT, and the Indigenous nation. The negotiation tables offer an opportunity to encourage brainstorming and identification of new ideas to build solutions. All parties can take this opportunity to be informed to the same degree, work together and co-develop a rights-based approach to negotiation.

The need for policies encouraging approaches to negotiating and concluding land and self-government agreements is imminent. The GNWT provides some guidance with the NWT Core Principles and Objectives; however, to address the concerns that have troubled NWT negotiation processes, a co-developed policy framework would open paths for a renewed relationship.

An example of activities overhauling an outdated Canadian negotiation approach is British Columbia's 2019 treaty negotiation policy, co-developed by the federal and provincial governments and the First Nations Summit. The policy replaces the previous

settlement language with a rights-based negotiation approach and removes extinguishment clauses. Canada changed the federal negotiation approach by adopting the British Columbia negotiation policy principles, established Discussion Tables for negotiations and created the Collaborative Self-Government Fiscal Policy. The federal government put forward the realization that it requires flexibility to not only complete agreements but also to provide the means so that Indigenous parties strive for self-determination. Canada acknowledges that the concept of the 1980s and 1990s agreements is entirely different from today and that the needs have evolved since then.

Changing the status quo of the NWT negotiation process may require co-developing a process that will allow specific mechanisms borne out of the self-determination of Indigenous nations without land agreements. Canada's Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA) established a regulatory regime in the NWT's Mackenzie Valley that resulted from negotiations of comprehensive land agreements. Committee heard the MVRMA was considered the basis of governments' resource management regime for all NWT, including areas without completed land agreements.

Committee suggests the GNWT take the existing negotiation tables as an opportunity to co-develop a policy framework for negotiating and concluding land agreements and potentially other agreement processes.

This GNWT policy framework would:

- Commit governments to co-develop a land agreement and self-government policy framework.
- Ensure that the negotiation process respects the inherent rights of all Indigenous nations.
- Develop approaches recognizing the rights of participating Indigenous nations to choose different paths to resolve land, water and resources issues.
- Ensure that governments remain connected and equally informed at the negotiation tables.
- Facilitate alignment of policies.

To ensure that mechanisms and processes will move land and self-government agreements toward conclusion, committee recommends the following:

Recommendation 5: The Special committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work toward establishing a shared framework with the Government of Canada and Indigenous governments and organizations for the resolution of outstanding land and self-government agreements;

And further,

That the Government of the Northwest Territories make the option of an independent facilitator available to all negotiation tables.

Conclusion

It has been committee's privilege to be tasked to raise discussions on reconciliation, the UNDRIP, and the work on concluding land agreements in the NWT. Much has changed since the committee began work in December 2020, and committee members are hopeful that the collaborative efforts underway will continue and conclude with the desired outcomes. Committee found sincerity in the Government of Canada's new approach to negotiations and commitment to keep the flexibility to address the current needs.

Committee has learned of the Indigenous leaders' profound commitment, tirelessly representing their communities' interests over decades and persuading governments of the need for reconciliation just as tirelessly and long.

A collaborative approach looks at the interests of all parties, understands that it is about balancing rights and interests, and aims at crafting solutions that meet the groups' interests. Challenges may include overlaps and intergovernmental issues but must be dealt with. Getting better at collaborating will help overcome the obstacles.

Recommendation 6: The Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife North, that Committee Report 44-19(2), Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs Final Report: A Northwest Territories Approach to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and Negotiating Agreements, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The 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. Committee Report 44-19(2) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1395-19(2):
FLOOD MITIGATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister responsible for MACA tell me if funding has been accessed by this government, the Town of Hay River, or Indigenous governments, to the National Disaster Mitigation Program, or other programs, to address flood mitigation assessment planning and projects? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past the department has accessed national disaster mitigation funding. Example is the Tuk remediation community mitigation plan. Unfortunately in 2021-2022, that program got sunsetted and so it's not available. However, in saying that, MACA is working closely with leadership and administration of the Town of Hay River and the K'atlodeeche First Nation Reserve on community level mitigation. MACA's working closely with the town, the reserve, and the federal government to determine which mitigation options are eligible for federal funding, government funding.

Public Safety Canada's conducted an eligibility review of the town's Hay River list. And the Member talked about a number of items, and I believe the town submitted the majority of them, if not all. The intent is to provide certainty in the Town of Hay River on what projects will be funded through the DFA and other programs available. So we are working through this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of floods over the last two years, and the Minister

had mentioned on various occasions about lessons learned. So will the Minister tell me where the department is in developing a "lessons learned" report on flooding and when can we expect to receive it? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Municipal and Community Affairs started working on the first phase of the afteraction review for the 2022 flood, which is focused on preparedness and response. Feedback was sought through online surveys, which was open to the public from January 9th to the 23rd. MACA consultants held public engagement session in Hay River on January 19th. Consultants compiled target interviews -- or going to interview key regional and territorial emergency management organizations in community, people in the community. We expect a summary of the final report of phase one on the after-action program to be available this summer. Then phase two will be after the completion of the recovery phase and it will undertake this winter -- or coming up winter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we'll never be able to completely stop flooding, so we have to find a way to mitigate it and mitigate the damage it does. It's important that we keep our residents safe.

So will the Minister tell me what supports his department has provided to the Town of Hay River and surrounding communities to ensure an emergency preparedness and evacuation plan is in place prior to the upcoming spring breakup on the Hay River? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This might be a little bit of a longer answer, and I apologize. Municipal and Community Affairs is reaching out to all community governments to offer updated community plan templates and community flood preparedness packages, community emergency planning workshops, tabletop exercises to practice and validate emergency plans. Municipal and Community Affairs has worked with the Hamlet of Enterprise to deliver a community emergency planning workshop. A workshop is scheduled for the reserve for early March. MACA's ongoing discussions with the town to provide support in updating the community emergency plan. The Be Ready for Flood campaign is being rolled out to residents and community governments of the importance of planning and prepared for flooding. We've also hired five regional staff that are working with all the impacted communities, or potential impacted communities, to work on their preparedness for this. And we have increased

our staff at headquarters as well. So we've started working on this -- or enhancing our services to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, advanced warning of potential flooding is instrumental in keeping people safe. Any break in the warning system could result in damage to property or, worse, loss of life.

Will the Minister tell me what, if any, work has been done to ensure that there is an early flood warning, flood alert, and imminent flood warning system in place for this spring breakup along the Hay River? Because I know in the past some of the instruments that were on the river were damaged. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Member for these questions. Mr. Speaker, Municipal and Community Affairs will issue alerts on communities' requests and working with them on developing the process. We have also offered to work with the Town of Hay River, the reserve, and Enterprise to develop templates for alerts to assist with assistance of alerts required on urgency basis. We've also worked with ENR as well to get that information out to the residents as and when needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1396-19(2):
FOOD SECURITY

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ITI who is responsible for the agriculture sector. As I said in my statement, it was really exciting to be at the conference last week and I noted that ITI was there. Not only was there a tourism component but there was also people attending the conference. So could the Minister speak a little bit about what she plans to get from her staff that attended, what sort of feedback were they giving, and how is that going to be incorporated into the department's work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to also be at that conference albeit in my case

very briefly. I have, however, already received a summary from the department about their attendance. And immediately on my arrival on the Friday, I was very pleased to hear from them that they had been at the visioning exercise that took place the day before. I would share the comments earlier. There was a distinct sense of excitement and interest in the room because it did stretch across the entire food value chain from production and growing, harvesting, through to the commercial aspects of the food chain.

So with respect to some next steps, Mr. Speaker, there is a report coming back from the executive director of the agri-food organization, and I am quite confident that when we receive that, we'll be able to work with her and action some of the items that came through. I know they'll be -- I've also spoken to their president of the board, and he is also looking to sit down with myself and the department to see and map out where we can all work better and work together to move forward following this conference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for her response. And I'm actually not surprised to hear that she's already gotten a summary report because I did note that the people that were there from the department also seemed to be very keen and excited by the conference.

Mr. Speaker, I note that there has been an agricultural strategy for the Northwest Territories that ranged up to 2022. Can the Minister speak about the next step for that strategy and whether or not there's going to be a report on how well the last five years did? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point the next steps are to ensure that we have continuous funding and availability of funding. And I can say that the Canadian agricultural partnership, which is one of the most significant funding sources available, has been renegotiated between the federal government and all provinces and territories. It is seeing a 25 percent increase over the next five years. And with that now in place, that puts us in a good position to look forward and determine where the GNWT can and how we can actually look at our growing sector. I would also note there's other funding opportunities, often working with CanNor, often working with other federal pots. So, again, having had this conference with a viable organization and association they're running, we're in a much better place to look forward to what the next five years should bring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to hear the Minister acknowledge that there is more than just a food conversation and that it does span a lot of the different sectors. I'm interested to know a little bit more about that renegotiated federal pot of funding. Glad to hear it's 25 percent, however is there the ability to be flexible with that money and not have it go towards directly agricultural products like seeds? The reason I ask is that one of the number one cited barriers are things like fuel, power, heat, and transportation so I'm wondering if we have flexibility with that money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the specific implementation of the federal funds is being negotiated literally right now. What I can say is that there are five priority areas that were negotiated between the provinces, territories, and federal government. And they are reflective of priorities that I think we have here in the North. One, climate change and environment and looking to adapt. Another one, market development and trade, again recognizing the breadth of opportunities here in the Northwest Territories. Building sector capacity, growth, and competitiveness, which certainly will speak to the higher cost that we have here. And science research and innovation, again looking for ways to adapt to northern realities and northern opportunities I would say. So it certainly would be my hope that we'll be able to, you know, find what we need within those priorities and make that therefore a workable program.

Mr. Speaker, at the risk of going on a little bit too long, there's one more thing I really should add.

We've also signed on to agri-vest and agri-stability. Never been in this before, Mr. Speaker. We have signed on to this program now, and it's going to give more stability and another opportunity for our local industry to see themselves have some risk prevention opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to hear that the Minister -- this seems timely, she can take my thoughts back to that negotiation and hopefully make them aware that what works in the south does not work for us here in the North generally.

My last question is just around one area that hasn't been touched on that I think is unique to us, that our southern counterparts may not have, and that is the food tourism industry. The

Northwest Territories has a lot of interesting unique foods as from your region and others. So can the Minister speak a bit to how the department is promoting and supporting the food tourism industry? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is likely an area where more work can be done, and there's no harm in acknowledging that. It's a good year to do that. This July there will be the first -- I'm going to get the name wrong; I'll have to get it right later. But it's an opportunity in July to celebrate food and celebrate gastronomy here in the Northwest Territories. Chefs are coming in. There will be opportunities for foraging and harvesting. It's a first of its kind, Mr. Speaker. So acknowledging that there's work to be done here. There's opportunities here. And as I've said, this July we'll be getting underway, the food organization's putting that on. So looking forward to seeing where that goes in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1397-19(2):
OPEN GOVERNMENT POLICY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My mouth is watering, but my questions are for the Premier who is responsible for the implementation of the open government policy. Can the Premier tell us whether this government still accepts and endorses the 2018 Open Government policy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the open government policy continues to be a guiding policy for the GNWT. This policy establishes a roadmap for how the GNWT shares information and data with the public and the way we engage with residents on government decisions. It includes principles in encouraging the transparency of data and information in a way for citizens to become informed so they can participate meaningfully in potential government decisions, respecting however any privacy and information collection concerns as per the NWT access to information and protection of privacy legislation. We also continue to advance the implementation of the open government policy through several initiatives in that increasing transparency and accountability, such as our recently launched open data portal, our public engagement portal, and the GNWT's public engagement employee guide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that. In my January 13th letter to the Premier and resource Ministers, I compared and contrasted some of the ongoing development of resource regulations that have left the public to the very end of the process with little time and limited access to information.

Can the Premier tell us how the open government policy is applied to these processes for developing resource regulations and if that work is documented somewhere other than my letter? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The open government policy is overarching and continues to shape our government's direction. Under this policy, the GNWT encourages citizen participation in GNWT decision-making where appropriate. One of the principles of open government is that citizen participation in potential government decisions should be encouraged. During this Legislative Assembly, Cabinet endorsed a guideline for the publishing of draft regulations online for public input. This pre-publication process allows residents to directly shape the context of regulations, including resource regulations, in an open and transparent manner. While regulations are ultimately delegated legislation, we appreciate and recognize the public's role in shaping their content and continue to review the process and progress to ensure our legislation and regulations best serve the residents of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier again for that. The other place where our resource management legislation regulations have largely fallen down is public participation in actual decision-making. That requires public registries where information can be accessed, and stakeholders can have a say during decisions and appeals. Members of the public and committees have to propose amendments as departments seem to forget about the public or don't have access to resources to do the work.

So can the Premier tell us how the open government policy is applied in drafting legislation and regulations to ensure there's public participation in decision-making? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the drafting of legislation, departments engage in open government policy which captures the wide range of interactive engagement activities that occur throughout the legislative development process. Over the course of the 19th Legislative

Assembly, this government has made significant improvements to ensure that legislation and regulations are developed collaboratively with Indigenous governments through the legislative development protocol. The GNWT also launched a public engagement portal and put in place communication guidelines to standardize how we engage with the public. Regular Members and standing committees play a crucial role in the legislative process, including seeking public feedback on bills, proposing amendments, and holding public hearings. I believe ensuring that the public has the ability to participate in the development of legislation is a task that's shared by all Members of the Legislative Assembly. This government is committed to improving how all departments engage with all partners and residents, how decisions are made, and how information and data is shared. This is important and ongoing work that will extend beyond the life of this government. It's something that we'll always have to continue to work at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. There's a huge difference though in resourcing of departments to develop new legislation and regulations around resource management. ITI has been tremendously successful in securing millions of dollars for the Mineral Resources Act implementation, while Environment and Natural Resources and Lands have got nothing. It's not clear whether these other departments even ask for additional resources.

So can the Premier tell us how the open government policy is applied to the budgets of departments as they develop resource management legislation and regulations? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each department is a little bit different. As the priorities are developed at the beginning of each Legislative Assembly and ongoing, the departments develop and they implement work plans. Departments may consider where there will be significant legislative work, and they may consider making requests for additional funding to support those efforts. They may also decide that they can do it internally. Each Minister is individually responsible for the implementation of the open government policy and for ensuring that their respective departments and agencies follow the principles of the policy when carrying out their mandates. This includes ensuring that the departments are appropriately resourced to

carry out engagement activities related to legislative projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

QUESTION 1398-19(2):
SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING
GRANDCHILDREN

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, it takes a community to raise a child. And, Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement earlier talks about elders in our community. The social phenomenon of grandparents providing primary care to grandchildren is all too commonplace in our society.

Can the Minister speak to this phenomenon and what his department has done to recognize the support elders providing this type of support to their families? This question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Minister R.J. Simpson. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is something that I think most people in the territory are familiar with. The most recent stats I could find show that we are second in Canada when it comes to grandparents raising their grandchildren, after Nunavut. It's quite a big margin, right. It is quite common here. I'm sure that all of us have relatives who are doing this. Maybe they were raised by their grandparents. I'm sure Members have raised some of their grandkids here, so it is quite common. The department acknowledges this. Through the income assistance program, we do provide assistance to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. And, you know, while some benefits outside of the income assistance program require the grandparent to have custody of the child, the income assistance program doesn't do that. So if a child -- grandchild is dependent upon the grandparents, they're living with the grandparents and they're raising them, then we consider that a dependent of that grandparent and so we fund that accordingly. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. Our elders have spent their entire lives supporting themselves and their communities. Many haven't needed government assistance but now -- or financial support in their children and grandchildren and don't know where to go to get much needed assistance.

Can the Minister help get the word out on programs that could provide financial support to these elders on fixed income and the monthly pensions for elders? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I can speak to what ECE is doing; of course the department of health has a number of programs as well. But we have our income assistance program, and I know that there's some stigma around that but it really is there to help the residents who need that help. And we want residents to access that. We of course also have the seniors home heating subsidy which we've increased during this government, and we had a one-time top-up last year as well. And we have the -- we also have the senior citizens supplementary benefit which is administered by the Government of Canada on our behalf that low-income seniors receive automatically. So if someone comes to ECE looking for that type of support, those are some of the options they have. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister. Would the Minister consider developing a special grant-based program to provide no strings attached cash to elders providing support to their grandchildren? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we don't have a plan to develop a standalone program such as the Member is talking about. But we have been undertaking a review of the income assistance program, and in this budget, there is \$5 million for some significant changes. So seniors can expect to get some more support in that area. As well, there's other avenues. There's Jordan's Principle, Inuit Child First Initiative, Canada Child Benefit, and things like that as well. Again health and social services does also provide support when it's needed. But we are taking significant steps in this government to better support our elders. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, elders do not need to undertake productive choices, mandates attached to the income support funding. Can the Minister waive these requirements for elders living in poverty? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it was just yesterday in this House that I made an announcement about the changes to our income assistance program. I'm sure it's all over the news right now, and everyone is reading about it. But part of those changes is to

remove the productive choice. So I can say yes to the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1399-19(2):
DECOMMISSIONING LAST RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of education tell us what dialogue or community outreach has taken place with Fort Smith to date regarding the replacement student residence for Breynat Hall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as Members may be aware, we've recently, in partnership with Aurora College, released a facilities master plan. And that is a plan that outlines potential infrastructure developments for the college for the next 10, 20, 30 years. As part of that work, a team travelled to Fort Smith in September and they met with Indigenous government leadership. They met with Town of Fort Smith staff and leadership. They met with Aurora College staff. They met with Aurora College students as well. There is also -- there was also an online survey that was open to the general public. What we heard back from Fort Smith was primarily focused on the expansion of the trade spaces, office and meeting spaces, and integration of family supported spaces on campus as well as student housing and, of course, the future of Breynat Hall. This information can be found in a "what we heard" report that was released last year. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain how constituents of Thebacha can provide their direct input of potential ideas for the future student residence that will replace Breynat Hall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in my last response, I believe I said the team travelled to Fort Smith in September but that was actually when the master plan was released. So it was earlier than that, and I know from my discussions with Indigenous government leadership in that community that they did appreciate that consultation and they felt it was valuable. The master plan is a plan, and it requires money to be implemented. And so we are currently looking for some funds to start that work, undertake a planning study. And once we do that, then we can start engaging with groups in the Member's community, so

Indigenous governments, other interested stakeholders, and we can start talking about what the school will look like, how we're going to work together, and the college may decide as well to undertake some public consultation on their own but I can't speak on their behalf. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister have an estimated time for when his department will have a concrete plan in place for a new structure that will replace Breynat Hall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a date however we are working on securing some funding to do the planning study. We are approaching the federal government. I've met with a number of Ministers to try and sell this project. The Premier has taken it directly to the prime minister, so we are looking for money to get this going as quickly as possible. Hopefully, you know, we'll see something in the next budget but if not, I guess we will have to figure something else out. But we do plan to move ahead as best we can and hopefully with the support of the federal government. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of any plans to put a plaque or a memorial of some sort at the site of Breynat Hall within the future polytechnic university and if not, would the Minister be open to the idea? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am a fan of plaques and memorials. They're ways that, you know, the public can learn about the history of the territory and the people of the territory. So there is no current plan to do this however if that's something that community leadership, Indigenous governments would like to do, we're happy to have those dialogues and start those conversations because, you know, we need to know our history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1400-19(2):
CHILD CARE SUPPORTS FOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

During my Member's statement, I spoke about access to child care funding for teen parents in the territory. And I spoke about how income assistance requires that participants are over 19 years of age, and that is not the case for many teen parents in our territory. And so I'm wondering if the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment will create a door through ECE where teen parents can access funding specifically for child care? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the income assistance program is for residents who are 19 years and older. Residents under 19 can access funds through health and social services or have the -- they may be able to access funds through health and social services as well as other supports beyond just financial supports that ECE would not be able to provide regardless of the age of eligible applicants. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also during my Member's statement today I identified that there is a historical stigma associated with child and family services. And this stigma might be heightened especially in somebody who is 16 and already feeling a little bit nervous about their new role as a young parent and really looking to, as much as they absolutely can, continue their studies to be able to graduate with their peers and gain the support and the champions in their life to be able to do that. And so while I understand that the government has codes that they use to do their administrative work, to charge costs to the right places, I'm wondering if ECE will create this door and then code it however they want in order to work within the budgets they need to work with within the greater kind of government funding that I know exists on the back end but that I don't think is appropriate for the residents of the territory to have to fall within because they're looking for a safe place to enter that door that works for them to access education. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And what the Member is talking about is the dream of integrated service delivery where someone would approach the government, not the department of health or ECE or whatever; they would just approach the government and they would receive the services they need. Unfortunately it is much much more complicated than applying the right codes. So I wish I could say yes that we can do this, but it has proven to be a challenge to really kick start integrated service delivery across government,

and I can't make the commitment to do what the Member is saying. At some point in the future I hope that's how things work, but not today. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm the kind of person that tries to look for the cup half full in some areas but talking about integrated service delivery is not cup half full for me right now, because this is something that we need to be able to do now and not 5, 10, 15 years from now for students across the territory. What I'm looking for here isn't full-on integrated service delivery. It's an opportunity to open a door for teen parents who are just looking for funding supports for child care. And while I understand what the Minister is saying as far as health having that funding, what I'm asking for is an ability for ECE to either take that in or to work with health in order to create a new door for them to be able to facilitate that access for kids who are looking for daycare. So whether that is working with a route for that to happen through school counsellors or school administrators, having forms that are safe for students to fill out where they don't have to fill out voluntary service agreements in order to be able to access these funds. And then on the back end if that at the end of the day ends up being some type of a service agreement with health and social services, awesome. And luckily, we know that health and education can work together because they've done that in the past. And that is the beginning of potential for great things.

So what I'm asking from the Minister is if he will work with health to figure out to do this in a safe and accessible way that is culturally safe for teens in the territory to access funding for child care? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So there is a program, and it is not through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. It's through the health department. So a lot of what the Member is asking for already exists but it's now with health. So we did just undertake an extensive review of the income assistance program. There's a significant amount of money in this budget to enhance that program. We could do so much with that money, and we could make, you know, so many enhancements, but we couldn't do everything. So I don't expect there to be any significant changes to the income assistance program like the Member is talking about during the life of this government. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate what the Minister is saying. But I'm not asking for him to dive into

his income assistance funding pot that I know that he's worked very hard to increase and has worked very hard on improvements to that system, which I'm very thankful for. But what I am asking the Minister to do is accept that I am saying that he is a safe place for students to go. He is a safe space for students to say hey, I need help to continue to pursue my education.

So will the Minister please work with health and social services to open that door? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I think what we should be working on is increasing the number of child care spaces and making them accessible to high school students. It would be great to include child care spaces in schools. We've amended our school capital standards to make sure that that is now possible, and going forward that's going to be an option. We have a bunch of money flowing in to the early learning and child care sector. So we're doing a bunch of things. To get at what the Member wants, we're not doing exactly what the Member wants but we are trying to achieve the same goals. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1401-19(2):
HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR TRAINING
AND EMPLOYMENT

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are related to my Member's statement on highway infrastructure training for the infrastructure Minister. And I applaud all the young men and women who stepped up to improve their education and gone to Aurora College to take the AGO program in hopes of a better future for themselves.

Question to the Minister is does the department have any employment plans for graduates of Aurora College heavy equipment program? Mahsi.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department does not currently have any employment plans for graduates from the Aurora College heavy equipment program. However, having said that, we will always welcome applications from the graduates who graduate from Aurora College heavy equipment operator program and to apply on any of the positions that we have opening. Also, we encourage the applicants to reach out to our departments, regional managers, supervisors, to see if there's any upcoming positions.

I want to note, Mr. Speaker, highway operator positions are critical for maintenance of our highways, safety of the travelling public, and any vacant positions that we have are immediately filled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And mahsi to the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, in the years 1975 to 1982, there was a federal government highway construction project out building the Liard Highway. The program was called Hire North. The program provides on-the-job training opportunities to many Northerners, young and old, on heavy equipment and experience building a highway. Has the department considered such a program for the road to nowhere project in the Great Slave Geological Province? Mahsi.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our department is always interested in maximizing training employment opportunities during the construction of the Slave Geological Province Corridor. Having said that, we are in the early stages and regulatory applications have yet to be submitted. Because we're at such an early stage of this project, we have yet to identify any programs related to training that could take place as part of the construction phase of the project. So once we get to prior to advancing the construction phase of the project, we will work hand-in-hand with GNWT departments, Indigenous organizations, and other parties who are interested to be able to identify ways to maximize training/employment opportunities for this very important project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And mahsi to the Minister for that. As this project may be on the books and upcoming, it's a great time to plan at least to get a stretch of the road anyways for training opportunities because we need experienced operators all the time in the job descriptions and lots of these people are going back to the communities with nothing to look forward to, that there's limited positions in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of conversations and initiatives in advancing the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to Tulita and points beyond. Can the department ensure training opportunities for new AGO graduates and others to gain valuable experience on heavy equipment and the art of road building? Mahsi.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have -- we are doing this. I mean, we are working on the Mackenzie Valley Highway. As I mentioned in my Minister's statement, taking a drive up there you see local

employment. There are people from some of the other regions that are participating right now in building that road. We have -- the ongoing commitment is the employment opportunities for the Prohibition Access Creek. So since January, the Sahtu residents have participated in over 1,000 person hours of training that's related to this project, Mr. Speaker. That's good news. The training isn't just specific to heavy equipment operator training but to other variety of skills that are needed to be able to make this road complete. So it's things like surveying, drilling, blasting operations, construction laborers, to name a few, Mr. Speaker. So I want the Member to be assured that this is something that our department will be looking into going forward as we advance any infrastructure projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And mahsi to the Minister for that. As she's stating that there's currently contractors working on that road and as the contractor, their bottom line is profits, and rarely will you ever get a contractor to hire people just fresh out of AGO program with no experience because it'll affect their bottom line. So perhaps the government has to look at a different avenue and encourage apprenticeship opportunities in there.

Mr. Speaker, investing in our young adults as they chart their own course in the heavy equipment world is an important step to self-sufficiency and gaining very valuable experience. Can the Minister commit to ensuring the department provides AGO summer student employment in the communities for the graduates? Mahsi.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 2022, Infrastructure hired 51 students. 51, Mr. Speaker. That's a pretty good number, I'd say. While I can't commit to committing to providing heavy equipment summer student employment, as the Member has requested, we would ask the graduates again to apply when these positions come open. One example, Mr. Speaker, I do want to take the time to express that the Tlicho had received some federal money for apprentices. You know, there are Indigenous groups that are going out there, seeking federal money to be able to do this. And we're here to partner, and that's what we want to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1402-19(2):
COOPERATION BETWEEN INCOME
SUPPORT AND CHILD AND FAMILY
SERVICES

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do our child and family services systems and income security benefits program work together to support youth who are aging out of the GNWT child welfare system? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have details on sort of that operational matter of how the two departments might work together, but I can get back to the Member. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about early intervention and education of child and family services, what we do not see is how the government supports these youth when they age out of the child and family services. Does income security have specific programs for applicants who are also accessing the child and family services? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: That's not my understanding, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it would actually be health who provides the supports as they transition out of the system, not ECE providing supports as they transition in. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, I was trying to find out what kind of supports that we have in place for youth aging out of the system, so thank you.

Can the Minister advise if ECE income security is working with health and social services to ensure there is a pathway for youth to access programs when they become adults. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that level of detail on me right now. I can get back to the Member, though. Thanks.

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

QUESTION 1403-19(2):
LEASE PAYMENTS TO NORTHVIEW REIT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd really like to leave this Assembly believing that I have made some progress on the amount of money we pay Northview. The only public figure out there is the one reported by the CBC which

states that the GNWT pays them \$20.1 million a year; that was in 2020. I'm just wondering if the Minister could perhaps provide some sort of updated figure, whether we have added more leases; in which direction this amount of money is currently headed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The number of commercial office leases that the GNWT has with Northview has not substantially changed in the last year. There was one lease that was for storage space that was renewed when Northview was successfully a proponent of an RFP process.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to add that there was one RFP for space for health and social services for which Northview was unsuccessful and we were able to give it to a local supplier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what, I guess I'll be satisfied that it hasn't substantially changed and we're just hanging around with that \$20 million a year. I guess to me, step one of this is the leasing of improved real property policy. It hasn't been reviewed since 1998. I'm not actually convinced we're even following the policy currently. It does require for every single lease averse a comparison to ownership. But I guess, can I get a commitment from the Minister that we will review and make changes to the leasing of improved real property policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a whole-of-a-government approach. I can't commit right now because we need to have a look at the procurement review. Once it's been completed, Mr. Speaker, we can work with EIA to be able to see if there's changes required to the policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really hoping that the procurement review leads to come changes there. I think it has been suggested multiple times that leasing be reviewed as part of procurement and there are some recommendations there in the initial report, so I'm optimistic.

I guess, as much as I rant about this, it's not necessarily a simple path and the Department of Infrastructure, for its part, largely just receives requests from departments when they need office space and they go out and tender it. But I think a clear strategy/action plan, whatever the GNWT is so famous for creating,

needs to be brought to diversify our commercial leasing. And is the Minister willing to create some sort of plan that allows us to bring diversity to our commercial leasing portfolio over the coming years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is required to initially obtain new office space by public tender or a request for proposals except where Executive Council has authorization to negotiate. Mr. Speaker, these requests come through Executive Council. We as a government have a look at these case by case. We also, I want to note the Department of Infrastructure cannot influence or restrict which businesses choose to pursue any of these opportunities. That's to them. And we receive requests however method. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, well, I perhaps disagree that the department can't, you know, specify a business. But we specified them in BIP as giving them extra money, perhaps we can go the other direction for a couple decades, Mr. Speaker.

I guess, I recognize that new office space has to be tendered, and we've been doing that, but the problem is that with the renewals. And if you go through the number of leases you have, it's very clear they have been renewed term after term and have not gone out for public tender in many years. So I guess my question for the Minister of Infrastructure is that all of our existing leases will not just be renewed defacto? You know, for example, we've been renting the Scotia building since it was built, Mr. Speaker. So perhaps it is time for whenever any renewal comes up, will the Minister commit to departments that we are going to go out for public tender on those? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision to exercise renewal options within a leased contract depends on a lot of different things. There are things like continuity of programs and services, getting value for investments made to a space, and whether or not the GNWT is prepared to incur costs related to moving and fitting up a new space. These decisions must be made for each lease and not as an overall approach to restricting businesses to one vendor. Once the term of -- and the option of a contract has expired, the GNWT will move forward as per our procurement policies, guidelines, trade agreement requirements, so

we can't exclude a specific business from these processes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1404-19(2):
CHILD CARE FUNDING SUPPORTS FOR
TEEN PARENTS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've got a couple follow-up questions for the Minister of health. I'm wondering if the Minister of health will acknowledge some of the historical stigma that exists within child and family services and create a safe path for teen parents in the territory to be able to access funding for child care without entering into a voluntary service agreement so that a teenager in the territory can bring proof of enrolment at a high school or active enrolment at a high school, proof of enrolment at a child care facility, and access funding that will pay for that child care so they can continue their education? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point we don't have a process of the kind that the Member is suggesting. Voluntary support agreements are used often to provide money to people who have needs related to raising their families. And so I'm a little unclear why that wouldn't be an appropriate vehicle and why we would need to create something different. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very thankful for the paths that child and family services does have available as I do have some constituents who have successfully used them. I also have some constituents who are in need and who have said I cannot use that; that is not a safe space for me. In our Standing Committee on Social Development, in our review of homelessness prevention, and also our review in child and family services, we've also heard very raw personal accounts from people who have also said I cannot use that; that is not a safe space for me. And so while I acknowledge what the Minister is saying about how there are existing avenues, what I'm asking for is another door with a slightly different face on it that is more of a culturally safe place for people to be and way for people to be able to access this funding. So how they code it on the back end, if it has to be coded to CFS, that's fine; I'm looking for something that doesn't require a voluntary service agreement, that just requires people to

be an active student and requires them to have a child in child care. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is very important to be able to provide culturally safe services to people who need the services of health and social services; however, we don't at this time have a plan to develop the kind of program that the Member's asking for.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not asking for a new program. I'm not asking for a new funding pot. I'm asking for a new door. So what I'm asking for is for a door where people can access funds that already exist within child and family services, where somebody can simply come to the door and say, here's my proof that I am an active student at a high school in the Northwest Territories; here's my proof that I need child care, maybe it's in the form of a baby in their arms; where they can then access funding without having to enter into an official voluntary service agreement, because people have told us in the territory that is not safe for me. And I think that we need to respect that, especially if it stands as a barrier for access to education. I appreciate the services that are offered by the Department of Health and Social Services, but I think it's okay for us to acknowledge that it doesn't work for everyone and there are other ways for us to paint this so that it is accessible to everybody.

So I'm asking if the Minister's willing to work with me and other Members, who have experience with this, to be able to create a slightly different door for people to access something, where they could potentially go to a school counsellor to help them fill out a form and to help gain that proof that CFS might need for them to prove that they're an active student. Maybe it's with a school administrator. I think there are great ways that this can be done. And so I'm wondering if the Minister of health is willing to do that work so that we can work on this together. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of commentary there. So I'm going to take the question on notice and get back to the Member.

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

QUESTION 1405-19(2):
OPTIONS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH CARE
COUNSELLORS TO DELIVER MORE
SERVICES

MS. SEMMLER: I'm waiting for my light. I'm sitting there waiting. I'm just going to add on to

my colleague, and I'm not going to have commentary, but, you know, we have health and social services staff in the school now. We have CYCCs, Mr. Speaker. So why not use this avenue, even if it is some type of a form that maybe we don't call it a plan, that the Minister will look into using the CYCCs so that we're supporting these kids to graduate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Okay. Yes, the item's already been taken as notice. So I need a different -- okay, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. Will the Minister of health look at different options for different things on different programs that our CYCCs and our cultural -- you know, we just announced a nice department that's going to take in cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, and so will she consider this type of stuff that will look into the CYCC's jobs in the schools and how they can support students? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Health and social services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

MS. SEMMLER: I really appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. You know, I think that we need to utilize this department in all venues if we don't have integrated service management. This department could be a great integrated service department that's going to flow through all of our health and social services. And, really, I think we hear it from our youth, and as somebody who graduated with a six-month-old and a daycare in a school, that I think this is something that, you know, could really benefit because I'll put it out there, Ms. Jagpal, I wouldn't have graduated without you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 56-19(2):
MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GAP

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 56-19(2) asked by the Member for Yellowknife North to the Minister of Municipal

and Community Affairs on February 9th, 2023, regarding the multiple infrastructure gap.

The methodology for calculating funding gap estimates was developed in 2014 during the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs', or MACA's, Municipal Funding Review. During that review, community level detail was shared for information purposes only and to provide councils awareness for their budgeting and future programming decisions. At the time, there was very little information on the cost of piped infrastructure, solid waste sites and roads. Because these are significant assets to municipal governments, these assets were included but as estimates only.

For 2022, MACA estimates that there is a territorial municipal funding gap of approximately \$40 million, of which an \$23 million is related to capital, \$10 million to general operations and maintenance, and \$7 million to water and waste services. The gap is based on an estimated total of \$3 billion in community government assets. While these values are an aggregate of community level data, MACA is not comfortable providing the data at an individual community level because the assumptions and estimates are applied broadly and cause the data at a community level to be less precise.

As part of its current review of the community government funding policies, MACA is reviewing various calculation methods and making recommendations. This work is being undertaken with an Advisory Group comprised of Members from the Northwest Territories Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories.

The department anticipates having updated community level detail available after the Advisory Group has made recommendations. Municipal and Community Affairs remains committed to updating the community government funding policies and anticipates this work to be completed this spring. Costing estimates, community level details and an approach for regular community government updates will be provided with the updated policies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 860-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 64-
19(2): SUICIDE PREVENTION

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 64-19(2): Suicide Prevention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 861-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE
REPORT 36-19(2): REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE 2020-2021 PUBLIC
ACCOUNTS

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 36-19(2): Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 public accounts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 23, 29, 56, and 61, Committee Report 40-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), Tabled Document 813-19(2).

Colleagues, by the authority given to me as Speaker, I hereby authorize this sitting beyond the reasonable hours of the day, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee, Member for Frame Lake?

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Bill 56 and Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates, with Municipal and Community Affairs and Justice. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act. I will ask the Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories -- bill, sorry. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm here to present Bill 65, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act.

On April 1st, 2022, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation publicly changed its name to Housing NWT. The bill will amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act to legally implement the name change for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to Housing NWT, and it is intended to take effect April 1st, 2023.

While Bill 56 is only intended to formalize the name change to Housing NWT, it is part of the larger renewal process that is currently underway of Housing NWT. Work on the renewal has been done with the participation of the Council of Leaders housing working group and took into account recommendations contained in the Legislative Assembly's Motion 30-19(2), Actions for Improved Housing Outcomes.

The name change was one of 40 proposed changes arising from the renewal. This renewal has and is being carried out in accordance with the strategy for the renewal of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. A more comprehensive review of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act is identified in the strategy; however, it was noted in the strategy that due to the time constraints, a comprehensive review of the Act itself would likely carry over to the 20th Legislative Assembly.

A substantive review of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act during the 20th Legislative Assembly was also specifically identified as one of the 41 proposed program and policy recommendations arising from the renewal and discussions with the Council of Leaders housing working group.

Despite the focus on policies and programs, the renewal process has identified several potential changes to the Act but there has not yet been developed in detail and require further discussion with our partners and stakeholders.

To move forward with these and potential changes yet-to-be identified in a hurried

manner will not serve the public interest or Housing NWT's mandate values of collaboration and reconciliation. Some changes may reference Indigenous self-government and may involve significant analysis, legal advice, and input from stakeholders.

Failing to move forward with the legislated name change also carries some risks, such as unnecessary public confusion and increased costs. While the program and policy changes Housing NWT has been announcing are substantive and go to the core of Housing NWT's mandate, they do not hinge on further changes to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act.

I hope that with the context, the committee is prepared to move forward with Bill 56 on the understanding of the comprehensive review of the Act, with public, Indigenous governments and stakeholder engagements is intended to occur during the 20th Legislative Assembly.

I look forward to continuing to work with all Members of this Legislative Assembly on the renewal of Housing NWT to reach our shared goal of improving housing outcomes for NWT residents. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Oh yes. Yes, I have witnesses, yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, will you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: To my right, I have Mr. Jamie Fulford, associate deputy minister. And Stephen Flanagan to my left. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. I'll now turn to the chair of Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that reviewed the bill for any opening comments on Bill 56. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on October 20th, 2022, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review.

On February 16th, 2023, the standing committee held a public hearing with the

Minister responsible for Housing NWT and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill.

Madam Chair, I just want to say that committee has been fairly hard on housing this term. We have definitely tried our best to hold them to task and to really push change from the housing corporation, now Housing NWT, and are thankful that they've bought in through -- this work, really was born out of a motion that was brought forward by this side of the House and I think I can honestly say that it was the motion that was most positively responded to from the other side of the House. And so I want to pay credit where credit is due.

With that said, I also think that committee has given a lot of grace to housing corporation in saying that they want to be able to properly resource and fund and support the work of housing and the change that we expect to see. And so we wanted to see a lot more ambitious legislative changes through this, and we're hoping to see a lot more ambitious legislative changes in the length of the 19th Assembly. And so, you know, given that a piece of legislation was opened, it would have been nice to have seen more substantive changes put forward. While that is said, I understand what the Minister is saying and hope that the 20th Assembly will get a more substantive piece of the legislation from Housing NWT.

So thank you very much, Madam Chair. Individual Members may have additional comments or questions at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll now open the floor to general comments on Bill 56. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't want to speak very long but I guess it takes a lot of time and effort to bring a bill forward, and a lot of time in this House, a lot of time on the, you know, part of the staff, Department of Justice. So to just get, you know, a bill brought forward that only changes the name while this renewal process is going on is a little bit disappointing. I would have thought if we're going to open up a bill, let's make some substantive changes. You know, put in some of the vision work and so on that -- clearly, the housing folks have already started to do some work on this but so be it. But I had expected to see a lot more. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions or comments on this bill? Seeing none, does committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Where possible, I will call the clauses in groups of five. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill.

---Clauses 1 through 19 inclusive approved,

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now return to the bill number and title. Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act. Thank you to the Minister, and thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates. We will now consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs have any opening remarks?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, I do, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2023-2024 Main Estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$62.577 million, or 50.8 percent, over the

2022-2023 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the department while continuing to meet the Government of the Northwest Territories' fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Much of the increase in the department's proposed main estimates is funding of \$61.729 million to complete recovery work related to the 2022 flood in the Town of Hay River and on the K'atlodeeche First Nation Reserve.

Other highlights of the proposed estimates include an increase of \$1.375 million in initiative funding. Of this amount, \$833,000 is for community governments to assist them in providing municipal services and to fully achieve the Government of the Northwest Territories' mandate commitment to reduce the municipal funding gap by \$5 million. There is also an increase of \$89,000 for the Deline Got'ine government consistent with the terms of their financing agreement.

The remaining \$453,000 in initiatives funding is to provide for three additional full-time emergency management organization positions to provide greater support to community governments and for the department to increase capacity for emergency management activities and support monitoring and situational awareness, mitigation, and prevention of territorial emergencies.

Other increases include \$8,000 to support the costs of providing NWT 9-1-1 services in both French and English; \$227,000 in forced growth funding for projected increases in rebates to senior and disabled persons for property taxes; and an increase of \$15,000 for projected increases in amortization due to the depreciation of new vehicles in Fort Simpson and Inuvik.

Reductions reflected in the proposed main estimates include \$507,000 for the sunseting of one-time funding in 2022-2023 for additional NWT 9-1-1 staffing costs and \$150,000 for auditing services required for the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. There is also a decrease of \$120,000 in the contract services budgeted to reflect a reduction of this budgetary item across all departments.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly and vision of Budget 2023 by meeting the mandate commitment of reducing the municipal funding gap of \$5 million.

I look forward to answering any questions the committee may have. That concludes my opening remarks, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I do.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. On my left is deputy minister Laura Gareau. And on my right is Jennifer Young, director of corporate affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does 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 336, with information items on page 337 and 338. Are there any questions? There are no questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think this is the part of the budget where we can talk about transfer of land to community governments. And I know that there was some work done to look at how to do this, at least as a pilot or the first one with the City of Yellowknife, and I'm just wondering where we're at with that process. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working with the city on that right now. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I'd kind of like for a little bit more detail. Like, is there actually like areas identified? Have there been any consultations with Indigenous governments about their interest in some of those areas? Are you ready to sign over title to these areas to the city? Is there a timeline? Can I get a little bit more detail, Madam Chair. Thanks.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So it's just not the City of Yellowknife. So there's 65 lots applications submitted by community governments to the Department of Lands in

2022-2023. MACA's working with Lands to verify how many of the applications were completed. The process to complete a land transfer may extend beyond a fiscal year. We also need to understand that we also have to work with section 35; we need to consult with the Indigenous governments. We've also worked with the NWTAC on given the process of what we're trying to work on there, so we're working with them on that. And, yes, if the Member wishes further detail, we also have in 2021-2022 working with Tsiigehtchic, Ulukhaktok, Norman Wells, Sachs Harbour to adopt their community plans and zoning bylaws. This year we're working with 2022-2023 -- sorry, Enterprise, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Behchoko, Fort Simpson, Tulita. Our anticipated continue reviewing of their community plans. Wekweeti, Nahanni Butte, and Sambaa K'e are initiating review of their community plans and land use plans. So, again, like I said, we are in part of the consultation under section 35, Tulita, Enterprise, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Wekweeti, and Behchoko; we're also working on those there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. And thanks to the Minister. That's a little more helpful. Can the Minister just tell us where we're at with regard to the process in Yellowknife? Has there been an agreed upon set of lands identified? Has there been any consultations with Indigenous governments? Is there a timeline when the process might be completed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So, yes, the Department of Lands is working with them. So like we're working with NWTAC on this as well. We have reached out to the City of Yellowknife. We're having those conversations. But we also need to do section 35. We're working on the boundary. There is pieces of land that the city has asked for, and we're working on those. I guess you call them low hanging fruit, to get those things -- that done, but there is some other areas that we still need to work on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is any of this going to happen before the end of this Assembly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We are hoping that there will be some of this stuff done. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Maybe I'll just be really specific here then. Is there actually going to be any land transferred from GNWT to the City of Yellowknife before the end of this Assembly? Thanks.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I'll turn it to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The work that we've been doing has been ongoing for a number of years, and we anticipate it will take a while yet. There are a number of partners involved. It's not just MACA's timeline. There's the City of Yellowknife. You know, they have quite a bit of business of their own that doesn't always involve this project. There's YKDFN as well. They have their timeline. You know, we are certainly hoping to get this done in the life of this Assembly but some of the timing is out of MACA's hands, because it's with partners, and it's also dependent on their timing and priorities. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks for that. And I'll probably have some questions closer to the end of this Assembly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under community governance? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just curious of the 12 positions that are located at headquarters for this area. Is there a plan to move any of these positions out of the capital, and also are many of them vacant? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, there's no plans to move any of these positions out. And the vacancy, I think there's two or three. But we

can get back to committee with the further detail, that number. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess just the fact that it is community governance, it seems kind of ironic that there aren't any members or workers in the communities. So just more of a comment there.

Can the Minister or the department speak around the number for the community planning? I guess my question here is that we have seen -- there was a large or more amount there, sorry, in the 2021-2022 actuals; however, it has stayed steady the last two years and it's a little bit less. Given that we sort of talked a lot about wanting to empower communities and they do have a lot of responsibility for their own disaster mitigation as we learned through the flooding, or disaster planning, can the Minister or department speak to whether we're going to see an increase in funding here coming forward? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, not at this time we don't see an increase in this area. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Would this not be where the work on the community plans would fall under? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For further detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister noted, we don't have any funding increases for staff in these main estimates, and there's no requests being brought forward. However, we are looking at internally where we do need additional support, and community planning is definitely a key area. It drives several other activities in the department, everything from location of infrastructure to, you know, supporting communities for climate change to, you know, helping, you know, attract new business and, you know, make homes available for residents. So it's a very important area. We are looking for options to increase positions in this area by approaching the federal

government. But those plans are very, very preliminary, and we don't have any more to report at this time. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I find that a bit concerning given that as I travelled through the Deh Cho after the flooding, that the comments I was hearing was that it is on the communities to save money and prepare for floods and other climate change-driven emergencies; therefore, to hear that the department acknowledge that there is a need for work here, and it's very critical work in my opinion, to only have \$177,000, which I'm assuming is just one position, I'm alarmed by that and I think that if anything this would be an area where we could possibly or hopefully be increasing capacity within communities by hiring regional people in those communities to help with the community planning that the communities themselves are lacking capacity to do so. No question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions? Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I just want to just briefly talk about the way the guys line yourself up here in the -- on page 332, in regional allocation. You know, the Tu Nedhe-Willideh riding itself has four communities which is Dettah, N'dilo, Lutselk'e, and Fort Resolution. And in here on the allocation, maybe if you could maybe help explain the allocation of North Slave region, you got five positions. Can you tell me where those five positions are for the North Slave region? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yellowknife and Behchoko. But as the Member is saying, Fort Res also is served out of the South Slave as well. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And so I take it that there's no positions in N'dilo and Dettah. Also going back to the South Slave region now, they got nine positions. How many of those positions are in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. The positions are in Fort Smith. That's where the regional office is. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Okay, thank you, Madam Chair. I guess, you know, the position that I hold, again I mentioned, is that it's the Tu Nedhe-Willideh riding, and it's funny, you know, in all those government documents in front of me here on the budget for this fiscal year, it doesn't make no reference to the Willideh riding. And so I just want to know maybe will there be, in the Minister's plan, to start looking at how we're going to start moving out Dettah-N'dilo out of the North Slave region and also Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e out of South Slave region and start having its own region? Because when I read this, it's really skewed because it says that we got all these positions but there's nothing in our communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So right now the regions are set up as a template through Department of Finance, and these are the regions that we utilize. Thank you. And report back on. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So then can the Minister make a commitment to start working with the Department of Finance, and also the Premier's office, to start looking at how we could get this right because when I look at this budget, there's really nothing there for our communities and regions. And so I just want to see if the Minister can make a commitment on that? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I can't make a commitment that's government collective. But, I mean, I'm more than willing to have those conversations with the Minister of Finance on how we can move forward if it's possible. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Also, I'm just thinking under the page 336 of this document, it talks about community planning and in it there's a budget, and it doesn't really look very much in there, but

overall I just want to say that, you know, I was the chief for the Yellowknives Dene First Nation from 1999 to 2003. And we put in plans already for the community for lot development in N'dilo and also in Dettah. And in Fort Resolution, they have their plans and Lutselk'e. But there's really no new lot development in our four communities. I'm just wondering when can the department start working with the community, Indigenous governments to start looking at coming up with some plans so that -- because when we talk -- it's in the GNWT mandate to look at housing but then I take a look at the Yellowknives Dene First Nation housing strategy, there's no lots available to build houses so that's why there's no new construction in our communities. So I'm not sure if -- how we could try and get those things sorted out. Can the Minister maybe briefly talk about that? Mahsi.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we do have a community planner available to help work with the communities on it. The communities have gas tax and capital money that they can actually build their own lots and develop their own lots. We're more than willing to have our staff work with them to help them develop this process. And, again, they do have money that they can do that with. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Okay, thank you, Madam Chair. I think that's good that -- if they're willing to make themselves available. It's just that, you know, the monies that they're looking to planning for lot development, I'm not sure really where in the capital plan where the money's going to come from. Say if we had a plan come up in three years, say we were to do N'dilo and Dettah for example, where in this budget is it going to come out from, because right now on the planning we're only talking \$177,000. Would that be coming under infrastructure or something like that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So it's in the capital budget that we provide the money to the communities, and the communities make the decisions on how they're going to spend that capital funding. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Okay, thank you for that. I don't really have any more questions other than to say that -- just a comment that I think it's also two issues I think we -- you know, we can't get a commitment on trying to sort out the name change properly because, I mean, my riding's got four communities but yet we're logged into the South Slave and North Slave but then when you break it all down, there's really no monies there for my communities. And when you take a look at, you know, other projects that's going on, I mean -- I mean, I'm going back to 1999. I could even go back further, that there was really no new development -- lot development in our communities. So, but yet the mandate of this government is to have more housing. Well then, yes, we could have more housing but then if we get no money more lot development then, you know, we got to start planning for that. So I'm looking forward to mention this to the Indigenous governments at the local level and say that, you know, we should actually start working together. And I'd like to see the Minister reach out to the chiefs and the Indigenous governments to start a dialogue and go from there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions, comments, under this section? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to get a sense I guess, when we talk about community planning, what are the components of that; if you could maybe just elaborate a bit on that? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. This area of MACA is responsible to provide advice on community planning and development to community governments, and we have a number of tools to assist in that area. Under municipal legislation, community governments are responsible to develop community plans and develop zoning bylaws, and it's the staff in this unit that assist them with that. Community plans are a very important planning tool for community governments, and they cover a

wide variety of purposes, including describing future land use plans. You know, they have statements around protecting environmentally sensitive lands. They address provision of everything from transportation services to public utilities to municipal services and facilities. And it's the staff in this area, along with staff in our regional offices, that provide community governments with support for their community planning responsibilities. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Have those components, I guess, expanded over time, or are we looking at anything new? I guess what I'm thinking about is we're talking about emergency preparedness just because of flooding and the amount of money that was spent, I guess, to repair damages. So how much has that responsibility expanded for communities, you know, as they develop their plans, and is there numbers attached to those increased responsibilities? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So as community governments and MACA become aware of I guess common themes across community governments, we would work to update our templates and our guidance documents to community governments. For example, the Member mentioned emergency preparedness. So we would -- although that wouldn't necessarily be in a community plan but certainly things like, you know, taking climate change adaptation into account and location of buildings. You know, those sorts of things would make its way into your guidance documents. We work closely with the NWTAC on some of the requirements that are required under community plans and just to make sure that it's applicable to all community governments and not just one or two. But certainly our tools and guidance and templates do get updated and communicated to community governments as circumstances change. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You talk about, I guess, climate change adaptation. And I'm just thinking about, I guess, the community of, I guess, Hay River and K'atlodeeche, the reserve, and the ones on the south side of the lake. We have Taltson there which is spilling over excess energy. I'm just wondering if that's been a consideration when we're looking at adapting and trying to reduce greenhouse gases and reduce costs? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you. So these are community plans so we don't have that detail. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. [audio].

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Sorry, we don't have it here with us. If the Member wishes, we can provide that information later on. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, I wish to accept to get that information. My last question is I guess with respect to the number of positions. How many positions are actually in the territories, and are there any positions that are outside the territories? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, they're all in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you. I just wanted to ask about the active position summaries. North Slave, the Minister mentioned that there's five positions, and they're situated in -- or posted in Behchoko and Yellowknife. And in Tlicho region, it says here Tlicho, it's good that it's there, we're not part of the North Slave, but still it's there. And then

there's three positions. So I just wanted to know if these three Tlicho -- these three positions if they are active, and where are they posted or situated at?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So the three positions are in Behchoko. The five are in -- the other five are in Yellowknife, the North Slave ones. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay. So nothing in Fort Res, or just like my colleague here said, because North Slave is -- it's not just Yellowknife. North Slave according to -- you know, it's kind of a little bit confusing here, the system that they have in place because sometimes North Slave consists of Lutselk'e, Fort Resolution, Yellowknife, N'dilo, and the Tlicho region. And South Slave sometimes, you know, like they refer Fort Resolution as part of South Slave. So there's two. And it would be nice if we can just get, like, the correct regions, you know, or just to identify, like, take Tlicho out of the North Slave region so then we can do our own. We know what we have, what we can work with, instead of here, like, South Slave and North Slave. And most of the jobs that's mentioned it's all in Yellowknife and yet here headquarters is Yellowknife. They have 67 positions. They increased. They went up from 64 to 67 positions this fiscal year. So it's just more of a comment. It's just that I just -- it would be nice to see because every communities we've been talking -- we've been saying that we need more jobs in small communities. We would like to see more of these positions that are in headquarters or in Yellowknife or in North Slave to decentralize some of those jobs into small communities. And it would be nice to see this headquarters because MACA is important to a lot of -- to all the communities because a lot of our funding comes from MACA to operate for community government operations. So it would be nice if we can have most of these positions decentralized to the region. So will the Minister commit to decentralizing some of the headquarters positions to the regions? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So thank you. So from 64 to 67, those three positions are the emergency measures positions that we're bringing to the table here. The other decentralization, we would have to look at it. I'm not going to make a commitment to move things

around just to move things around. It has to be logical, and we need to do it. We do have regional offices out there in the North Slave. We also have in Behchoko which we have a MACA regional office there as well. So right now we do have regional offices but right now we're not looking at decentralizing positions. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you. When we signed the devolution in 2013 or 2014, it was part of the devolution agreement that most of these jobs that are situated in Yellowknife were supposed to be decentralized. They were going to decentralize a lot of those Yellowknife positions to the small communities. And it's not happening, and they have no -- they're not going to do that. They don't have a plan in place to do that. So I just wanted to ask the Minister, like, according to the devolution agreement that was signed, is there a plan to decentralize those positions to the regions as outlined in the devolution agreement? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I'll have to get back and look at that devolution agreement. I didn't -- I don't remember that being part of the agreement but it could be, and we'll look into it. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Well, I know -- I was part of Tlicho government at that time and Premier of the day did -- and it was part of the agreement. They did mention that it was part of the agreement that they were going to be decentralizing because one of the things that a lot of people were against the devolution agreement was because of the centralization of power. And that's not what they wanted. And this is our -- the experience from the -- the experience of other First Nations in the province that they were going through all this. So it just said that from what our neighbour was going through, so to avoid that. So it was part of -- it was mentioned. So there was a lot of discussion on it and it's just more of a comment. So it would be nice if they can -- yes, to review the devolution agreement and start decentralizing a lot of those positions as -- you know, as mentioned in 2013-2014. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. Did you have any further questions for the Minister under this section? All right. Are there any further

questions, comments under this section community governance? Seeing none, please turn to page 336, Municipal and Community Affairs, community governance, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$2,136,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now start on page 338, community operations, which is on page 340, with information items to 341 and 342. And Members, I'd just like you to keep your questions in the area that we're -- on the section that we're talking about because we have seven sections to get through on MACA tonight. So if there's questions under community operations? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to community with the increase of fuel and that, are we giving any of the communities extra funds to be able to operate, you know, for heavy equipment and stuff, fuel, and the cost of fuel, the rising increases across the board; is the department looking at any increases for that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So right now we have the \$833,000 that we're going -- that is to O and M. So that would fit part of it. I know there is some conversations with the finance minister to talk about the carbon tax and that there. So that's part of the conversation that committee's having with the finance minister. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, that's really good to hear because communities -- I talked with my mayor of Tuk this morning and increases across the board cost -- like, for a litre of diesel fuel is \$2.60 in the community of Tuk. So right across I think what we should be looking at through MACA is, like, you know, for the planning and stuff like that, they should be working with the communities and trying to get the actual cost so they're not stretching the communities so thin that, you know, they're having to make choices in regards to providing service. So is the Minister committed to working with the communities and I guess all the, you know, mayors to try to work with them to try to alleviate the pressure? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So as the Minister stated, the main estimates reflect an increase of \$833,000 to reduce the municipal funding gap. And that money will be going to community government O and M. And part of the formula used to distribute O and M does include recognition of increased fuel and other costs. In total, in the 2023-2024 budget, there's about \$120 million going to community governments in total. When we look at the O and M budget, the water and sewer budget, as well as the capital funding being provided to community governments, and both the water, sewer funding policy and the O and M funding policy do take into account increased inflation and price increases for salaries and things like utilities and those matters. We're currently working with NWTAC and the local government administrators of the NWT on reviewing our funding policy. So we are currently working with them to examine the factors in those policies that account for things like inflationary increases for community governments and how to account for that going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I really appreciate that. And then just to note, prices are increasing. I mean, we pay triple up in my riding in regards for everything. I think that the contractors' costs and increases in there for inflation on those contracts, it's going to trickle down to the constituent and we're going to having to start to just pay more. I am really hoping that the Minister and the department work with NWTAC to really get those hard numbers and look at that on a go forward with the plan in regards to helping small communities and small community governments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so I agree with the Member. We do reach out to the communities, to our regional governments. We do the audits. We also work with NWTAC, as the deputy minister talked about. We also work with LGANT. That's the administrators that work with the communities. So we do have constant contact with the communities and the leadership as well as the staff there. So we do have those conversations there, but we will continue to do that. And, you know, NWTAC

conference is in Hay River this June so we will be attending that as well. So we are working with them. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I just want to -- for everything, like if we do take over carbon tax and stuff like that, it's going to be a lot -- they should be talking to them way quicker than June, a little sooner. You know, hearing it from the contractors' aspect in the community, it's not good. And they're barely making ends meet, Mr. Minister. I mean, again, I really stress that they do reach out to NWTAC and LGANT sooner rather than later and work together with them to try to provide for -- you know, provide service for our people. Thank you, Madam Chair. That's it.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The thing is that the NWTAC is just -- the conference is just one part of it. We do have constant conversations with NWTAC. I have meetings with the board of NWTAC. I think it's every three months we have meetings. We used to do it once a year, but we've opened it up. They have the opportunity to meet with Cabinet, not just at the bear pit but at other times as well. So we do have those conversations with NWTAC. But I can now honestly tell you that I have numerous phone calls from leadership, mayors from across the territories, chiefs, about their issues on a regular basis. They have my phone number, and we do have those conversations. But as well as our regional staff have those meetings with the leadership in their regions, so we are working with them. So the NWT -- and I apologize if the information sounded like we only do it once a year. It's on a regular basis. And we do take their concerns seriously. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any other Members have questions for community operations? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to the reduction in contract services which looks like it was reduced significantly for the size of the budget. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So that was our commitment from last year's budget when they

asked us to do a cut, and this is our share of the cut. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering where -- or what line item the delivery of Investing in Canada infrastructure plan audit came from and if that was in this section here. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I'll turn to the director of corporate affairs. Thank you.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the funding for the audit is sunseting this year at \$150,000, and that's found in the contract services line item. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, can the Minister speak to whether or not this audit was completed? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, it was not.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. Is the intent to complete this work, and if yes, what kind of timeline, or is the intent to not complete this work now that these dollars are being sunset? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, it's still going to be done in this fiscal year, and we're hoping to have it done in the next three or four months.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: So just so I'm clear so then not in this fiscal, in this calendar year before the end of the Assembly? Because the fiscal year would mean you'd have to have it done for us by the end of March 31st. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Clarity, 2023-2024 fiscal year. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just wanted to ask about the grants, contributions and transfers that are found on page 341, and it speaks to the community financial services contribution, which I believe is for communities that need additional support in completing their required financial reporting commitments to MACA and may not have qualified staff on their payroll. I note that there's a consistent amount of \$135,000 earmarked for this. And I'm wondering if MACA also provides training opportunities to municipal governments as well to have kind of local qualified staff so that they don't always have to continuously reach into this fund. It's great to have, but is there also AN avenue for community governments to achieve that training in house? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, so this grant and contribution funding is to assist for a variety of reasons. You know, there may be just auditors unavailable. There may not be staff available. Like, there may be short-term vacancies in the finance department or the senior administrative officer or band manager position. And, yes, through the school of community government, MACA does offer financial training and the intent is to train community residents or staff to be able to do some of these -- some of those functions in a community government so that there's a pool of people to draw upon as well as, you know, train people up to be able to take on positions when they do become vacant. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other Members with questions under community operations? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think this is the part of the budget where some assistance is offered or support for community asset plans. And, of course, those are important in terms of communities being able to manage their -- you know, their equipment, debt, all that

kind of stuff. Where are we at; are there still communities that don't have asset plans? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, there is, but we are working with the communities moving forward through regional staff and the school of community government as well. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: I'll take that promotion, Madam Chair. Sure, so how many communities don't have asset plans? Thanks.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the director. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Madam Chair, there's a variety of stages that communities are at with regards to their planning, asset management planning. So 15 communities are at a preparation stage; five are in the data collection stage; six are in the training stage; and six are using their plan that is developed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, boy, that's -- only six have plans in place and they're using them. That's a lot of catchup. Are the ones that have them in place and they're using them, is it the tax-based communities, or is it a mix, or where are we at? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the director. Thank you.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. It looks to be a mix of communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. And thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, and look, I don't want to single out any communities. I just don't think that's terribly helpful at this point. But what specific support

then do we offer to help communities get their plans in place and know how to monitor and use them? Thanks.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we do have the training through the school of community government. That's provided to municipalities. We also have regional staff that work with the communities on that. So, again, it's a very lengthy process, and we work together with them at the speed of the communities. So, again, depending on the community's speed, where they want to be and the availability of the staff, that's how we work on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I was wondering do we have, like circuit riders; people that you send out to the communities to work with them on this? Do we have templates of the documents that people can just use as a basis for putting these things together? And, you know, how much money do we actually devote to this? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we have four staff that are actually to do that. But we had vacancies. We just filled the two, and we're working on filling the other two. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. Do we actually have, like, document templates that people can use and they can plug their information into? The four staff, is this the only thing that they do, or do they have lots of other stuff on their plates? And, you know, is there money for travel in and out of the communities? I'm just trying to get a sense of what the support is. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so there's several stages of doing the

asset management work. The frontend piece is a -- it's information gathering. So, you know, so the community government gathers all the information on its assets. MACA also has information it gathers. You know, the preparedness piece is a big part of it. Just gathering all the information, determining what tool is best for which community; you know, do they need -- do they need a spreadsheet or do they need a full compute program. You know, like, the City of Yellowknife is going to be different than -- you know, they're going to need a different asset management system than a smaller community. There can be a lengthy data collection process depending on the community government and what tool they're using. There's -- could be software training. So there's several steps, and MACA does support them throughout all of that work. Using funding from Federation of Canada Municipalities, the NWTAC is looking at options and templates for asset management plans. And we have been working with select communities to pilot those plans. As well, last November the NWTAC along with MACA and ENR and Infrastructure, hosted an asset management and climate change conference and funding was provided to each community government to send two representatives to that to assist with the training and with their training on the importance of asset management, what it is and how to do it. So MACA has several tools in place and supports in place to help community governments with this, recognizing they are at very different stages of work on their work to get their asset management plans in place. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I didn't think I was going to go this deep on this dive but, look, if we don't have -- if we only have six communities that actually have a completed asset management plans and they're using them, how can we calculate a municipal funding gap? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I'll turn to the deputy minister for that deep dive.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a very good point, and it's one of the issues we did encounter when we did the 2014 municipal review. Things like -- there's two or three classes of infrastructure, things like underground pipe, roads, and there's a third

that I don't remember. We did have -- you know, we worked with communities to get the information they had but we did have to use approximations to value the costs of those assets. So, you know, and this was, you know, widely communicated when we were doing the 2014 work that for these -- for some of these pieces of infrastructure, the cost -- the replacement costs we were using were just an approximation based on the best data that us and community governments had at the time. You know, we have refined our -- some of our estimates, us and community governments have refined some of our estimates around those pieces of infrastructure and we have better data and we have third party data from academics and research institutions and places like that. So we do have -- and there's also the data that we obtained from the NWT's insurance program on the replacement value of their assets. So I'm sorry, I've also gone on a deep dive on that topic. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so we also partner with NWTAC and LGANT. So the information we try to work with is just not going to communities, but it's working with our partners as well. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm not sure I'm treading water or sinking, but. Okay, I just can't stress enough if we don't have community asset plans, we can't even calculate a municipal funding gap. But anyways, I'm going to move on to one other thing because I know I don't have much time left.

What are we doing to help communities divert hazardous waste from their landfills? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we are working with community governments on a project to remove hazardous waste from their solid waste sites. There's us, ENR, and community governments are working on a project. We've taken a regional approach. So there's work underway with external contractors to remove hazardous waste out of community governments' sites. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Community operations is just one percent of the entire budget of \$185 million, and it is equal to \$2 million. You know, when we talk about MACA and the regional centres and small communities, one percent of the overall budget of \$185 million is not very much. And yet we have the regional offices doing an amazing job, and we have staff within those offices that do an amazing job for the communities and the regional centre. I'm just wondering if the Minister will be able to answer if he thinks that's a fair allocation for community operations at one percent in an overall budget of \$185 million and the communities and regional centres get \$2 million of that budget that's actually allocated for the regional centres and communities? Is that a fair -- is that a fair percentage; would he consider that a fair percentage? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So that's the headquarters technical part of it. If you look at the budget, and I think it is regional operations, 54 percent of the money that's in there. So community operations is our technical aspect of it and headquarters operations. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: 54 percent of the \$2 million is what I think it is. It's all broken down into different areas. You know, community operations is, like, that's one percent of the entire budget. Sports and youth and recreation is only five percent. So I'm just wondering, you know -- I think I'm being very clear that community operations is one percent of an \$185 million budget. I don't think that is a correct assessment for the communities and regional centres. I'd like to know if he thinks that's a fair allocation for communities and regional centres. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For further detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, the chart on page 330 does show that community operations is -- the budget is one percent of MACA's total proposed budget.

Generally how we're structured is our technical staff are in headquarters and our regional staff are in our regional operations. And regional operations is also where all of the larger budgets are that are allocated to community governments. So our O and M monies, sport, rec and youth funding, like a lot of our bigger funding programs are in the regional operations area, which is where our regionals -- because our regional staff are the program -- they're the ones working closely with community governments to deliver those programs directly to residents. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: So, Madam Chair, do you think that -- we have two out of three MACA's 109 positions that are in Yellowknife -- are located in Yellowknife. If you count Yellowknife at 62 percent and North Slave at five percent, that's 67 percent of the personnel are located here in the capital. The regions, including Tlicho, which is at three percent, South Slave at eight percent, Deh Cho at seven percent, Sahtu at seven percent, and the Beaufort Delta at eight percent is 33 percent. So when I look at these figures, there's a lot of micromanagement of the regional centres. You know, so you have a budget, and when you have that many two to one or three to whatever out of Yellowknife, the micromanagement that is happening to these eight staff in each region must be incredible. And you know, it's -- we're not being accountable and upfront sometimes. You know, and I support the staff at the regional centre. The staff -- there's very little staff and they're expected to do all these jobs but were micromanaged from here. Building an empire, again, at this level. And I want to know if the Minister agrees with that statement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, I don't agree with that statement. I spent 23 years in the sport and rec world in a regional office. So I knew -- the experts in the region are our superintendents and our staff there. They're the ones that give advice and recommendations to headquarters on how programs are dealt with through that there and how we can better improve it. So that there is very much -- our experts, our superintendents, and our staff work with each division within the department there. So I do not agree with the Member's statement there. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't expect the Minister to agree with my statement but I'm sure the statement is true. I think that a superintendent and the eight staff that are at our regional centres are doing an incredible job to be -- and to have that many people to report to at the headquarters level, and supposedly serving all the communities and regional centres, is phenomenal. And when I look at some of these figures, it just tells me that the balance is not there to serve the regional centres and all the communities in the Northwest Territories. When you have too many chiefs and not enough Indians, that's what usually happens, Madam Chair. And I think that the Minister has got to look at this, and this is where some of this decentralization should really occur because, you know, one of our mandates, one of our main mandates was decentralization and putting all 14 positions here back into the capital is not agreeable because I think that, you know, we have to also give bonuses to the small communities and to the regional centres to make sure that they are able to move forward and do the amazing job that they're already doing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions or comments under this section? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes. I want to ask the Minister regarding this program management. So I don't know what this program management is and maybe they can elaborate on that. And as well there's a decrease from last fiscal year to this upcoming fiscal year. If they can explain that why there's decrease. And, yes, thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So it was less travel because of COVID and grants and contributions. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Yes, that clarifies. Another one too is that last year I know the Minister said that they were going to look into possibly transferring jobs to the regions to the small communities. And to date, there's nothing. So I'm just wondering all these 14 positions, it's all located in headquarters. Will the Minister commit to moving any of these positions to the regions and to small communities?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. No, I will not.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Well, that's what they said last year that they were, you know -- that that's what they were going to look into it. And then even like I said before it was part of the devolution deal. And I do support that I would like to see a lot of these position decentralized to the small communities and to regional centres because just like everybody else that we do need lot of jobs in these communities, and people have to live. And at this time, we don't have too many jobs in small communities, and they're all located in Yellowknife. And North Slave positions, North Slave positions are not really north -- it's not small communities. They don't represent small communities. They represent Yellowknife. They're all headquarters positions. So it will be nice if we can change that, do something about that. And, you know, like instead of having North Slave, you know, change that to headquarters. And instead of -- and for Tlicho region, we should have our own region. And even like my colleague said here too, like, have their own region as well. So, yeah, no, it's just that it's -- that's what he said last year. That's what the Minister reported last year, that they were going to try and, you know, possibly transferring some of those positions to the regions. And it's not happening, and I just wanted to know why the 14 positions that they're not going to move. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we looked at it. It's not feasible. We need the positions where the positions are located. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: They're not feasible. Why they're not feasible? Like, is it -- what is it? If he can elaborate more on that too, that would, you know, would help us.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So the positions are where they're located is about the team working together. You got to remember with Municipal and Community Affairs, we work collaboratively. Moving a position to, say, Behchoko might not be suited for the position work with people from the Beau-Del. That's why

we have regional that we work there. The headquarters staff work with our regional staff on territorial projects together, and that's best suited where these positions are. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Well, technology have improved, you know so they can do teamwork from wherever they are, from which community that they are representing. So that's not a good excuse not to transfer any of those positions. So it's okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member, did you have any further questions under this topic? Are there any further Members that have any questions under community operations? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I just want to make one comment, Madam Chair, and just talking about moving positions out. Like, we're talking about a change to affirmative action. We're talking about, you know, trying to increase the number of Indigenous people and Northerners in the public workforce. And, you know, looking at some of the numbers, you know, one way that -- the one way that I think that we have to do it, or we really have to look at, is decentralization of some of the -- you know, some of the services that we provide. And I think MACA is probably one where we could do that. So, you know, if we're going to -- we got to look at what we're doing. We just can't say no. We've got to take into account other initiatives we're trying to do which is affirmative action. And, you know, in some of the communities we look at, you know, 40 to 55 percent Indigenous hires in the public sector. In Yellowknife, I think it's about 15 percent. But if we -- and in the smaller communities we have, you know, 90 percent, 95 percent Indigenous people, but we still don't have the -- meet the targets there. So this is one way. And I think we really have to look, you know, at not just MACA, not just at the people we have here, but how we can maybe, you know, move some of the staff into the regions or into the small communities. Thank you. Just a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. If there's no further comments or questions under this section, please turn to page 340, Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$2,233,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Directorate, beginning on page 344 with information items on page 345 and 346. Questions? Seeing no questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: I'm going to -- no, I'd rather have my colleague go first.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I'm going to move on then. You used your time. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Okay, sorry. So thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we have regional management in this section which has quite a bit of funding involved in it and I'm wondering -- pretty sure we all know what it is. I'm wondering if the Minister can confirm if regional management increased in expenses as well as contract services? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Five letter word: Flood.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm sure there's going to be a lot of questions about flooding here today. I'm wondering if the Minister can confirm for us here today what total cost estimate we are at for the flooding recovery at this time? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So it's 175 for the Hay River and KFN flood, and the 2021 was approximately \$40 million.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, can committee expect to see any additional supplementary appropriations from previous years' flood going forward, or from here on out is it only dollars for future flooding? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the funding that's in the main estimates for the flood is just for the Hay River flood. We are not base funded. No department in the GNWT, including MACA, is based funded to do disaster recovery. Because of its very nature, we don't budget for it. So, for example, in 2023-2024, or five years or ten years from now if there were a disaster, flood, fire, or other event, the responsible departments involved would need to seek funding through the supplementary appropriation and special warrant process for the recovery work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So just to confirm, are we expecting any additional funds for the previous year's flood that we already saw, or is this \$175 million and \$40 million, is that the total for cost recovery for the 2022-2023 flood -- or sorry, the 2022 flood year? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the 2021 flood, we do not anticipate any additional funding requests coming forward. We also do not anticipate any additional funding being required for 2022 recovery, but we may need to change the cash flow. Right now, we have funding in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 once the budget's passed for the 2022 flood. But we may have to reallocate how much in which fiscal year, and we would need to do that through the supplementary appropriation process in 2023-2024. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And that's a helpful clarification for when that comes through.

I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what percent or how much of that \$175 million and then \$40 million will be reimbursed by the federal government and what portion of that the GNWT is responsible for putting forward. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. We believe about approximately 90 percent. It fluctuates with -- depending on the government, federal government. But we're looking potentially up to 90 percent for Hay River. KFN is 100 percent because it's EMAP. It's a different program that we do with the federal government with reserves. So it's a hundred percent with that so, for the KFN. And then 90 percent for the Town of Hay River. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And, Madam Chair, in what years will this money from the federal government be reimbursed? Is most of it already reimbursed to the territorial government, or will it be reimbursed in this fiscal year or next fiscal year? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the 2021 flood, the federal auditors were in Yellowknife two weeks ago. There were four auditors here working with us on putting together our claim. So the GNWT has requested an advance, a 50 percent advance, on our 2021 total. It's with the federal process right now so the timing's dependent on them. But we're hopeful it will be -- we're running out of time to receive it this fiscal year. But the advance would be received early in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. For the 2022 flood, we do not anticipate being finalized with recovery until late in 2023-2024 so we can't even start a claim. So the timing for the full reimbursement to be received is uncertain. But we're certainly working with Public Safety Canada on advances for the 2021 costs and the 2022 costs. And as the Minister mentioned, KFN is different. It's under a different federal program. And under that program, the federal program, we can -- it's a rolling reimbursement. So as we spent money, we can seek reimbursement. So we're just preparing right now our first invoice for Public Safety Canada to be reimbursed. So we'll be receiving that throughout the -- we'll be receiving 100 percent reimbursement throughout the term of the 2022 flood for KFN only. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering how -- typically after natural disasters and emergency situations like this occur, you know, we've got different examples of that here in the territory. We've got the example of the landslide that occurred in Fort Smith. We've got wildfires that we hear about every summer and that are lasting longer. And different disasters receive different levels of support from the federal government. And so I'm wondering how long it typically takes for those funds to turn around. Is it typically kind of a two-year average, or is it typically actually must longer for us to receive the money back from the federal government? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So you're probably not going to like this answer: It depends on the application. If you look at the wildfire season, I think it was in 2014, we only got our money just last year or the year before. It took a long process. Like, even as the deputy minister said with the reserve, it's going to be different. It's going to be a quicker response. And that's why we try to get the advances from the federal government. So we hold money, less of an impact on it. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, you know, any kind of natural disaster or something, we want to do our best to avoid. At the end of the day, it did happen and that was \$175 million and \$40 million of goods and services that came into the territory. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what percent of those contract dollars went to BIP'd companies or the rate of companies that were BIP'd that those dollars went to; if that can be clarified for committee today? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We only have part of the information. So I'll have to get back to the committee with that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Members, we're going to take a break. Take a recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

I call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are continuing on -- order. Minister. Continuing on with Municipal and Community Affairs,

directorate. And I will go to Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking at the contract services line items for the last three years -- or the last two and the anticipated coming up on page 344. Could I please get the amount of -- or percentage of that that is sole sourced? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, we'll have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that I will just leave it there then. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have one question. I'm wondering when there will be a change of policy on disasters? We had a tornado a couple -- in 2019, and just one home was destroyed. And I want to know if there's going to be a change in policy for no matter which disaster it is that -- it doesn't have to be widespread, because it could have been widespread if it went down the whole street, and yet we have a couple that is still having a lot of problems, a lot of financial problems because of that. And I'm just wondering if the Minister is ever considering changing the policy or how is this person supposed to be covered? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we -- as I said before, the disaster assistance policy is a living document, and every year we look at it. But it's -- when it's a disaster is called not specifically to one right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, would the Minister clarify not specific to one? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. To if it's a community disaster, then that's what we look. But if it's only impacted with one individual, no, we wouldn't be doing that right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: So as a government, we look at disasters in numbers, or we look at it as a great effect that happened in the community of Thebacha, of Fort Smith? We had the one individual lose his home, lose everything, and now they're using it for housing -- like, a housing duplex, NWT Housing duplex, and the senior is living in a little four by four there and paying top dollar. Is that the way we treat people in any kind of disaster? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's unfortunate these things happen but, again, the disaster assistance policy is the one we work with the federal government, and it is, again, multiple units or multiple homes that are impacted and that's how we deal with it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I'll do a statement, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I didn't know I had my hand up. So I think this is the section where work on ATIPP applying to municipal governments is supposed to be found. So can we get an update of where that work is at? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's a working group in place made up of MACA, Department of Justice, and representatives from LGANT and NWTAC, and that group is looking at various options on what the structure would look like; like who would administer this, what the timing would be, and how much it would cost if there were, you know, training supports or other things put into place

for community governments. So that work is ongoing. And I do have a draft report from that group that I'll be reviewing and speaking to Justice more about the different options on -- and when I talk about options, it's, you know, is there a body that could assist community governments; should each community government do ATIPP on its own; should MACA do it; should -- so there's different options. So that paper is with me right now for review and for further discussion with LGANT and NWTAC and Justice. And we anticipate having the finalized option done by the end of this fiscal year or early next fiscal year.

What is being contemplated is that, yes, all community governments would be brought under ATIPP, but it would likely be done in a phased approach with communities with greater capacity going first. And, again, but the timing of that is to be determined but it is definitely in process. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, no, thanks. No, I knew about the working group and as a former city councillor, I -- you know, Yellowknife actually has a pretty good records management system so it's probably not a huge issue for them, although a recent report might have me believe otherwise. But, yeah, I think it's more of an issue for the smaller communities where they may not have really good filing systems or staff and training and so on. So, okay.

So is it actually going to be brought into force for -- and a phased-in approach, yeah, probably the tax-based municipalities first. Is that going to be done before the end of this Assembly; is that the plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. No, it's still -- we're working. Again, like the deputy minister talked about, it's working with the NWTAC and LGANT to make sure -- like, we got the draft reports and we're working on that there. So it's going to take a little bit more time, so it won't be done by this Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I think my hopes were just dashed. All right. Well, anything you can do -- I understand that there was probably some slowdown because of COVID but I know that successive information and privacy commissioners -- well, at least one, made the

recommendation for about 20 years in a row so it's an important area to get sorted out.

I want to move on to building standards legislation. I think we're the only place left in Canada that doesn't have a Building Standards Act, and this is part of the problem that having the fire marshal do all of this stuff rather than actually have a Buildings Standards Act where it could be -- would be sorted out at the front end. Is there any possibility, or is MACA even looking at this, because we're the very last jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't have this? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So, yeah, so we are starting to work on some stuff but it'll be legislation that we recommend for the 20th Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I guess all my hopes are being dashed but I think that's something we'll have to look at in a transition report as well, Madam Chair. And you know, I want to give some credit to former MLA Bob Bromley who I know really tried to push this at one time, without much success. There was just no uptake from the Cabinet side, and this is something that's got to get fixed. I think that's all I've got, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we agree. I mean, we've heard the Member, and we heard other Members here on the floor talk about the importance of it so we started doing the work. So when the 20th Assembly, the foundation will be started there. So it'll give them a head start in the 20th Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, just in regards to where Ms. Martselos had a question in regards to disaster mitigation and the timelines that we'd have for, I guess, people getting paid for their insurance and stuff like that, getting -- for the architects to come in. Does the government have any architects in site on, say Hay River for instance; do they have any architects that are able to go in to assist people with houses that have been damaged through the flood and through a blast that they had in the community? What's their

timelines on that to getting people settled back into their homes safely. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So maybe the Member can clarify. I might be on the wrong path, but each resident are responsible for their own homes. And we have Pathfinders there, and we work with them to do that. The Member from Hay River South and Deh Cho and Hay River North has talked to us briefly. And so we do have an individual that's pretty well informed and working with us. But to have a specific somebody like a technical advisor, no, we don't. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, does the Pathfinder, I guess, help or assist them to find somebody? Because if not, that Pathfinder's lost right now in regards to assisting the people in the community, Hay River. So is the Minister or that Pathfinder able to assist them to get an architect into the community sooner rather than later because the timeline -- it's winter time now and there's cracks, and there's cracks in the basements. We don't have basements back home but that's what -- I just read the text. But is there any way that the Pathfinder could assist in that blast area, I guess, in the community? And it was from damage from the flood. So is the Pathfinder able to assist? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So I'm not too sure if he's talking about the blast that happened, that there was a propane blast. That wasn't part of the flood. But in regards to the Pathfinders, we do have a list of contractors that are available. We get that information. The community owners have to make that decision. In regards to the blast, they might have to be dealing with their insurance. However, the home that had the accident, their insurance would have to be the ones they would reach out to. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, Madam Chair. No, just in regards to that, the biggest thing I guess is a timeline, from start to finish, in regards to disaster mitigation for the flood. What is your timeline on people actually seeing funding, and are they getting an advance to help them to get through what's

happening with them? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Yes, so we do give advances. And it's application based. So they come and they ask for -- it's up to 50 percent. But we also have exemptions depending on the person's financial situation. So, again, it's on per person and it's, again, situation-based. So we do have it. And then the payouts, we pay out as soon as we can moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, no, just in regards to that, the timeline on the payout. Like, if somebody fills out the application, how long does it take for them to see money in their bank account? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Again, it depends on the application and if they have all the receipts in place moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first question I got is the estimate is \$175 million dollars for Hay River and K'atlodeeche First Nation. What does -- what are the major costs, I guess, associated with that? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The major costs are with actual repairs to damaged homes and then the replacement of homes that were completely lost in the flood. The construction and replacement costs are fairly significant.

There's also many people that -- so we -- I'll just back up a bit. We have approximately 500 unique files. So there's 500 registrations, claims for disaster assistance, so. And those can range, you know, from \$20,000 to, you know, the maximum is \$600,000. So the actual claims

being paid out are another significant cost. We have costs for project management oversight. And we have costs, you know, that we paid out to community governments for assisting with recovery efforts. There's also costs of other GNWT departments. So, for example, Housing NWT and Infrastructure. So damage that was done to GNWT assets through the flood. So those would be the largest categories of flood costs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have anything further to add, Minister?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so accommodations as well. Mitigation and abatement work as well. So it's a wide range of costs. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to mitigation costs, how much work I guess -- or do we really know what that cost will be because I guess when I'm thinking about mitigation, I'm thinking about the berms and the items like that, I guess, that we haven't really identified yet. Do we have any idea what that number may be? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So each resident is up to \$75,000. But then on top of that then it's the town and the reserve. And we're working with Public Safety Canada on those costs. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So using, I guess, Hay River and the reserve as an example, I suspect there will probably be a bit of berming going on there and we haven't really seen much happen up to this point. Is that because -- is it because we're looking to the federal government to provide that cost, or are we just costing out what that damage or what that requirement would be? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. It's kind of a combination. We have to get pre-approval from the federal government as part of it and then also the costing there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. As we move into spring here, which will be fairly close, in the building season, in Hay River, and the reserve as well, people are actually -- you know, they're getting anxious to get to work on their buildings. They're still waiting to discuss some of the -- you know, the -- I guess to reconcile the adjuster's confidential report with the mitigation assessment reports. And it's not -- and it's not something the pathfinders can actually provide them with that, really, with that support. It has to be somebody with, I guess, a little more technical background and probably somebody with a little more authority. So are we looking at increasing the staff in the next little while while we get into spring to support the pathfinders and be able to deal with the more difficult damages? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so we do have one technical person that we have besides our pathfinders. But we also have the five regional people out there. And so right now we're not looking at increasing the support system there. However, in saying that, if the need arises and if that's something that we have to look at, then we will look at that. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Like, I have a number of people, I guess, coming into my office, and I'm providing them with some of that technical assistance as well because they're not quite sure, you know, where to start. So I think that I would like to see the department actually look at maybe what they could do to provide some additional support in the community.

With respect to technical support, like Mr. Jacobson was alluding to, is that when people come in, at least into my office, there's an engineering firm in Hay River so I usually, you know, contact them and let them know that, you know, one of the residents might be in touch with them, because I think it's important there is that some of the residents they just don't have the technical expertise, they don't know where to start, so they need somebody to kind of walk them through it. And I know that government doesn't want to do it because of liability. So we have to make sure that they have that help. And the question that came up was can the monies allocated to damage on their property be used for that technical expertise as well? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so we've reached out to the federal government to see if these are actual -- we can do it that way as part of our costs and we're just waiting back -- to hear back from. I'm hoping that it is -- we're going -- they're going to say yes to our cost to it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I think it's important that -- you know, that we do have on the MACA's side somebody there that could actually provide some assistance when they are looking at the two assessments. Like, you have the one which basically gives you an idea of what it costs to actually do the repairs to the homes as is, then you have another assessment which is actually engineered or mitigation report. And the two sometimes don't -- like I say, don't reconcile. And, you know, one's saying this is, you know, it's going to cost a hundred thousand dollars to fix it up. And then you have an engineering report that says, no, the place can't be fixed up; it can't be moved; it can't be lifted. And we need somebody on site, you know, probably sooner than later, to address that with the people that are having that issue. And that's kind of why I'm looking for somebody to be there. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, so the individual we had who was out on annual is back now, and he'll be into the community more often to help address these type of things. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of timing for people to complete their damages to their homes, has anybody in the department talked to -- I guess, keeping tabs on how client -- or how the homeowners are making out? I suspect we're looking at going into next year as well to complete and maybe even the year after that. So I'd hate to see that, but I have a feeling that's what's going to happen so how are you tracking that? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we are tracking it, and I'm going to give the bad news. It's going to take more than just one year. In the

riding I represent, we're still just finishing up on homes right now. So it could be up to two years, and we're hoping it gets done quicker but right now we are tracking those and making sure we're updated moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Perfect. Are there any further questions from Members under the Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate? Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about some of your contract services. Maybe can you maybe just explain to me, so I understand, how your contract services and procurement works? For example, in the flood in Jean Marie River, when that happened, it wasn't very long when I see in the Town of Hay River Arcan doing some work there. And I'm not really sure -- how does that work? Can you maybe help explain so I understand how the policy works on that. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I believe the MLA's referring to our contracting work related to the flood. So just -- well, I'll back up.

Just generally as a department, we follow procurement rules. You know, go out to RFP or use a sole source mechanism. For the vast majority of departmental work, we go out to RFP but with -- when we're moving into the recovery phase for a disaster, as we did in 2021 and 2022, we do procure external assistance through the sole source mechanism because of the urgent nature of the work, for example, to get construction companies in to do emergency abatements, so things like ripping out the drywall, removing wet insulation. We want to get in there sooner rather than later. And so we do sole sources on an emergency basis. And we report on all of our contracting, whether it's through RFP or sole source, through the GNWT public registry. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just thinking, you know, now that we talk about Municipal and Community Affairs and directorate and operation and spending and that kind of thing, I know -- I know with the housing corporation they have a whole department that does construction management and that kind of thing and they've been, you know, letting out tenders and contractors and RFPs etcetera for years. So I guess my question is to MACA when this flood happened, do you guys have a project management division in your department? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, we do not.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Now that you don't have a project management department, so how is -- how does, for example, Jean Marie River they -- when the flood happened, I'm assuming that there's somebody that comes in there that does the assessment and then the next thing you know they -- then the requirements of project manager. How do you -- where do you go for your sole sourcing for your assessments or if you want to call them inspectors, and how is that project management tendered out, say in Jean Marie River they had the flood, so. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The GNWT has things like standing offer agreements or companies that have been preselected to do various types of work, and MACA refers to those. We also talk to our sister departments, primarily Infrastructure and Housing NWT, to assist us with, you know, recent experience they've had with contractors. But typically we rely on the information on the GNWT website in terms of who's available to do different types of work. And then we may procure them on a sole source basis. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. Okay, I'm just trying to understand how the policy works and how your procurement works and that kind of thing. So I understand how the assessment is done. I know how the construction management is done. So it goes out to sole source contract and RFP, that kind of thing, or even as a standing offer agreement. When the standing offer agreement is done, how does that work? Thank you. Does that go out to RFP and contractors are selected and project managers are selected through this process? Can you explain that. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we rely on advice from infrastructure, housing, and finance. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And so I'm just trying to understand how this whole thing works. Okay, so the other question I now have is that my constituency in Deninu Kue, Fort Resolution, we have, you know, local contractors that have their own equipment, you know, that have their own trucks, gravel trucks. And, you know, they just -- they're small contractors, you know, in the community. They've done a lot of work over the years building the roads in Fort Resolution and that kind of thing. So, you know, like, I'm not really sure if MACA has reached out to the guys in Fort Resolution or the contractors there to help build capacity and to help get involved in some of these projects that are ongoing, whether it be the flood in Jean Marie or Hay River. I just want to know what are you guys doing to reach out to the contractors in Fort Resolution. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So the 2021 flood, we did a one process. In the 2022 flood, the Town of Hay River, the people are responsible for their own. On the reserve, KFN, their development corp, is the one that is the lead on there. So they are the ones that work and do the work. And that is from direction from chief and council of how they wanted it done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So if -- whether the Metis or the Dene in Fort Resolution wanted to bid on work on projects,

then what you're saying then is that essentially the Town of Hay River would deal with its own contractors and the reserve and that kind of thing. And I understand that. At the same time, like, how does one get involved in the bidding process if there's already -- you know, we're talking about the GNWT tax dollars that are there and, you know, everybody should have an opportunity to bid on that. So, again, the community do need work. We do -- the communities do matter. So I just want to mention that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So for repairs and replacement of homes, those construction projects in Hay River, each individual resident or business is responsible for doing their own repairs. So it's them getting the contractor and not MACA or the GNWT or the community government. So you know, we're certainly encouraging contractors to make themselves known in Hay River so that residents or businesses or non-profits can hire them. And as the Minister said, for repairs and replacement of homes on KFN reserve, it's Naegha Zhia, that was the band's dev corp doing that work. And they may be looking for partnerships, so. And I'm sure they would reach out if they needed any additional assistance. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. So I think that would be great if that could happen. How does one from Fort Resolution -- we have the -- the band had their own equipment. We have the Metis that have their own equipment and other small little contractors that have their own gravel trucks and those kind of things. So when does the standing offer agreement come out to tender again? Because now we hear the communities could also build capacity by partnering up with other contractors as well. So I just want to -- that would be the question.

The other one is can -- is this information being -- is that public information as to who is all involved in the sole source contract and the standing offer agreement? Mahsi.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So the first part, reach out to the Department of Finance. The second part, yes, it's all public. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions to the directorate? Seeing none, please turn to page 344, Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$66,463,000; does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee will now turn to page 348, public safety, with information items on page 349 and 350. Questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. My first is in regards to the Office of the Fire Marshal. I believe that there is a bit of a willingness to give the code compliance engineer, of which there was one to do all plan reviews, a bit of a contracting budget so that when either they go on vacation or there's a bit of seasonality to the work too in that the GNWT tends to submit all of its code reviews at the one time because of the fiscal cycle. So they get pretty business and get backlogged, which has caused some frustration.

I guess my question is, have we secured the services so that the chief code compliance engineer could have a little fallback of some sort of contractor when needed. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Not used to doing this to the Member, but yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm very happy to hear that. I'm just looking at the line item here, and I note there is no change in budget. So could the Minister perhaps just speak to -- the OFM is a pretty small shop. Is that to be funded internally from MACA; is that found in some other contract services budget; or will we see a sup coming forward? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No, it's internal. We take it from -- as an as and when. So we try to find the money within because, you know, the contract services we have to cut and so we find money within. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister just tell me who we've hired for that contract? Do we actually have a contractor in place, or are we just planning to go out and get a contractor? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We'll have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Yes, happy to see that. As long as it exists, and then I would -- you know, I'll probably follow up before the end of this Assembly, just how it's going, after a few people have kind of gone through the process of using a contracted plan review function.

My next question is in regards to the 9-1-1 program. Can the Minister just provide the House an update on what their current shortfall is in funding 9-1-1 versus what we are getting from the revenues through a levy? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The first part, we're back here on Thursday doing a technical thing to committee. So we'll be able to provide the first part of the answer that the Member was looking for. But for that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we're in the process of actually trying to quantify whether or not we need to bring forward a request to increase the 9-1-1 levy. We're doing things like changing shift schedules and reviewing job descriptions to assist with recruitment of relief positions. And we're doing several actions on the operational side to see if -- to reduce costs, and we have been successful at that. And we're expecting to be in a position to make a determination about the levy in probably three or four more months. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister or the deputy minister help me understand what's going on with the City of Yellowknife? I've tried to deep dive on this

issue, and I can't get my head around it. I know for the last few budgets, the Yellowknife city council has refused to buy dispatch software because they believe the GNWT should. I know that the City of Yellowknife has dispatchers, but they don't have the same level of training as ours, and there's this fight going on about who should have dispatchers. Can someone just give me an update about what is going on with regard to dispatch in the City of Yellowknife? And, yeah, I'll start there. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we are working with the City of Yellowknife with the city manager. We've had conversations. We're working together to address this very issue and other issues in regards to the 9-1-1 service. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, do we have an idea of when it should be resolved, that both parties feel content that, you know, calling 9-1-1 is safe? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you. So first and foremost, phoning 9-1-1 is safe. I'd like to make that publicly known. Right now, there is a bit of a situation in the city right now and so once that gets resolved, we'll be back working with the administration to get this resolved. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, "safe" is probably the wrong word. But I believe at one point the mayor publicly said that you shouldn't call 9-1-1 and you should continue to use their dispatch numbers, which I think is -- you know, we don't want to be the situation where we're fighting over which dispatch to call in an emergency. And this is clearly still ongoing because they cut the software again in the last budget. So I'm going to try once more. Can someone just explain to me what a possible path forward is here? Does it involve us making all of their dispatch staff GNWT employees? Does it involve us paying for their software? Does it involve them firing their dispatchers and us hiring more? I just don't actually understand the problem other than just no one seems to be happy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you. So we've had better conversations with the administration. We think we're moving in a positive direction. For further detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the city manager and her staff and MACA staff have been working with an external consultant to look at 9-1-1 operations, both the operations of MACA and the city and how those operations interact. We have a draft report with a number of recommendations that we are -- the city manager and I are and staff are in discussions on that report. We are not yet ready to make that report public at this point and mainly because we want to have responses to the recommendations and a path forward that we can communicate to our staff and to the public and obviously to MLAs. But as the Minister noted, you know, that work is on a bit of a pause given the other priorities that the city has right now. And so the timing of when we will move forward on that is uncertain at this point. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, you know, I hope it's resolved at some point. I don't even -- yeah, that's all I'll say.

My next question is in regards to ground ambulance and highway rescue. I know we are not going to implement a territorial ground ambulance system. We do not have the money to do that. I think MACA cost it out a decade ago and it was tens of millions of dollars. But instead we have this \$185,000 that I think ends up just causing far more headaches than it solves, and we never increase it. Is any progress being made on reviewing the funding we give a couple communities, which is barely anything, to make sure that they are still willing to take calls on highways when there's emergencies? Like, we know that this has saved many lives over the years and so we want to expand it, but \$185,000 isn't going to do. So are we going to be increasing this ever? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I can't speak for "ever." I can speak of right now we have \$185,000 that we split up between five communities. As the Member's talked about, this service was provided by those communities prior. To this, we've just been able to provide

this funding that we have presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. Do we have any other Members with questions for public safety? Seeing none. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Where are we with with regard to 9-1-1? The government allocation to 9-1-1 seems to be going down over time but the amount of fees have been capped. What's going on? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So there was a one-time increase but it's been consistent throughout. There was just an increase that one time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: So if the government contribution from MACA is declining over time, the fees are capped, what's happening with the expenses as a program? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So 9-1-1 was established in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, and it was not a full year of operation. So the first full year of operation of 9-1-1 was 2021 and what we're -- what you see in the budget is the 2021-2022 actuals. So our first couple years of operation, the actuals did exceed the budget because all costs weren't known. And then in the 2022-2023 Main Estimates, we had an additional \$500,000 on a one-time basis to help with some -- fund some relief positions. But now in 2023-2024, we're showing the \$1.3 million budget. That is what we estimate that we actually require going forward now that all those sort of one-time startup costs that we experienced in the first couple years that weren't -- that weren't budgeted for but we actually ended up paying. Now that those have stabilized, we're at the \$1.274 million budget range. And the levy has not changed and we're

currently doing -- on the revenue side, and we're currently doing work to examine whether or not we actually need to change that levy amount. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I was around in the last Assembly when this was being proposed and it was supposed to be like a user pay system. So if I compare, you know, the revenues found on 333, I know we're not looking at that page right now, but we're losing \$250,000 a year. Or we're putting -- GNWT's putting \$250,000 a year into this. This is not sustainable. So when are the fees going to be increased because it's just not sustainable. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So step one is that we're seeing lots more people get away from land lines. There's one. The second thing is that once we know our actual costs, then we will come back with -- and that was part of the work that we were doing with the consultants. So there's a whole process to it. So we know what the actual costs are and how -- what our recommendations are and what our costs, then we would know what we would have to look at to break even. But right now, we're comfortable with what our budget is right now. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. While the Minister may be comfortable with it, I'm not, because we continue to put \$250,000 of money into this. It was supposed to be revenue neutral. It was supposed to be covered by the fees. And it's not. And the Minister says that but we're just going to keep pouring money into this? And, look, in no way am I criticizing the people that do this work. They're great. They do a great job. I even play hockey with some of them sometimes and they do a great job. But this is not sustainable the way that this is working. I don't know what else to say, Madam Chair. If the fees should be increased, and you have to go to the CRTC to do that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Sorry, I apologize, but I may have missed the question. Right now we've gone through COVID. We're going through this process. We

want to make sure we do it right. And right now we have \$250,000. That's where we are. If we need to go cost neutral, we want to be able to do it with the right information. So I would have to disagree with the Member that this is the amount that we have right now, and we're able to provide this service. And then we are working towards this cost neutral, but we want to make sure we have the actual costs what it's going to be. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks. Maybe I'll try to make it clear then. Does a fee increase require an application to the CRTC, and how long is that going to take? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It does not.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I just think that this needs to get sorted out. I don't think I have anything else -- oh sorry, consumer affairs. Is there any prospect of -- well, it's not going to happen in the lifetime of this Assembly, and I've raised it in the last Assembly, we have some of the weakest consumer affairs protection legislation in the country. You complain, and nothing seems to happen. So are we ever going to improve that legislation or even conduct a review? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So presently we have no plans on it, but we will -- as part of that transition, it will be brought forth to the next Minister to look at. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I guess there seems to be a lot of MACA issues piling up for transition. That's about all I can say. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, I'll just take it as a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions? Seeing none, Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety,

operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$2,535,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, please turn to regional operations beginning on page 352, with information items on page 353 and 354. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So earlier today I received another non-answer to my question for the Minister to tell us how much each community gets of this community funding and how much that compares to the gap. I guess I'll start by saying is the Minister willing to publish that fact so we could have a coherent conversation about the municipal funding gap? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So once we do the final review, then we're working, we will be able to do it. Thank you. With the municipal governments. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. I guess I want to clarify, do we know that number? Do we actually have that information and you just won't share it publicly, or is it that you actually don't know what the gap should be for each community? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we are in the process of working on the three areas, and once we have that information then we will be able to provide it to the municipalities. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay, I guess getting what the communities should be getting under the formula seems impossible. Is the Minister willing to publish what the communities are getting? So I'm not concerned about what the formula says they should get; what of this actual public money that's being spent, how much is going to each community under the formula presently - the actual money, not the hypothetical money? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Can the Minister just tell me how he -- can the Minister commit to tabling a breakdown by each community? I don't want to ask -- I don't want to go how much does Aklavik get in this budget and under each fund, you know, for every single line item. Can we just table it as a breakdown? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Good. So we can start there. Knowing how much communities are getting under this current budget, not how much they're supposed to get though. I guess back in, 2014 when the last public numbers were out, quite a few communities were over funded, and the plan was to stop funding them inflationary increases until they essentially caught up. Are there any communities still in that category of being over funded? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We'll get back to him.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you for the commitment. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. And I know that this is with the communities and, you know, we're trying to get some feedback, but can we get a bit of a timeline on when we expect, or even when the Minister would be comfortable sharing draft new funding formula policies? Just trying to get some sort of timeline where we're at with this. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: We're hoping to have it in the first quarter of the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. And I know there's -- I do -- well, I don't get why we can't

share what we think the current gap is for each community. But I do get why there's some inaccuracies. Like, the Minister spoke earlier about asset management plans. It's actually very hard to, you know, know how much it's going to cost to replace all of your sewer pipes and roads and a lot of communities don't have that data. But I know one of the points of tension is that if you get federal money, if a community goes and gets federal money, it's a little unclear how that affects the funding formula or how it should even. You know, if you managed to pull down \$50 million, should you be entitled to less money, or should we be saying no, it's not going to affect the formula as I believe it presently doesn't because you went and got the federal money, and we're happy to -- we want to kind of support that.

Can the Minister just speak to how, if at all, the new policies are going to address this issue of, you know, surprise federal money coming into municipalities' budgets? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It will have no impact. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: I'm going to try one more time to kind of get some information what the gap is. We added \$5 million here. I see that line item for the mandate commitment of \$5 million but the formula does have inflationary kind of increases built into it. So can someone just tell me, from the beginning of this Assembly until the end, what the change in the gap is? I imagine -- I think it's roughly nothing. We just managed to barely curb inflation with \$5 million but if we have that information, could it be provided. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So it's approximately still \$40 million. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: And then next I guess a bit of an accounting thing. It's nice to see this \$5 million, mandate commitment funding of \$5 million. It's very clear and you can track it. But I'm also a little concerned. Sometimes I see things like this, and then they just disappear because it's not actually in the community government funding line item. Is the plan next fiscal essentially will it just automatically read that the community government funding line

item will be \$54 million, or is it essentially up to the next Assembly to go well, we need to create a mandate funding line item again? How exactly is that \$5 million going to play out in the next budget? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you. So the \$5 million is -- what we do is we divide that money up and we -- there's a portion of it that is allocated to the O and M formula. There's a portion allocated to the water/sewer formula and a portion allocated to the capital formula. So what we are planning to do, and we will likely do it this fiscal year, is we will actually move those amounts to the appropriate budget. So for example of the \$5 million, roughly half of it, 2.594, is actually capital. And we've been flowing it out as part of our overall capital formula. So we'll actually just move it and add it to that budget, same with water/sewer, same with O and M, so that those funds will actually be in the budget line in our main estimates where they should be and to reflect what we have actually been doing, which is rolling that funding out through our formulas to community governments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, just over the weekend, or week or whatever day it is, another water line went in my riding and it created a bunch of havoc and thank goodness that, even though they're on strike, the city workers did come out and take care of that. And I want to say thank you for that. Sorry, a lock out, as my colleague corrected me. And so therefore I would like -- yeah, I just want to say thank you to that.

And so when I look at the water and sewer services funding, and note that we're not increasing from last year and have actually decreased from the actuals of 2021-2022, can the Minister or department speak to whether or not there's a plan to increase that or other pots of funding municipalities and communities can be accessing to repair their crumbling infrastructure? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the water and sewer services funding you see today, that's for their operations. Like, so that's to pay staff, that's to run their water treatment plants, it's to hire, you know, water truck drivers. The infrastructure costs that communities experience for, you know, to actually build, you know, new water treatment plants or install new pipe, that's actually community government responsibility and they fund that using their own source revenue and capital funding provided by MACA as well as there's -- MACA administers two federal funding programs that are allocated to community government capital. So it's on the capital side that community governments would do things like repair underground pipe. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I do understand that it would be under the capital. However, if we're not keeping up with the cost of doing maintenance and operating systems, they will start to deteriorate. And given the fact that we have seen an increase in supply chain costs, lack of contractors, the inability for, you know, people to get into communities at a cheap rate -- I think was actually just seeing something where a fundraiser meant to raise money actually ended up costing an NGO money because they had a bunch of changes to travel. So given that operations and maintenance then leads to less repairs and capital funding needed later, can the Minister or department speak to why we're not increasing the amount of operations and maintenance funding in this area? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, right now there's where our budget is. Unfortunately this is the money that we have that we allocate. I can tell the House here that I've been working with my colleagues from Nunavut and Yukon trying to reach out to the federal government to get additional funding for municipalities. And I actually have another meeting this summer with the two Ministers, as well working with NWTAC and their co-sisters across the territories, this approach with the federal government to get more additional funding because I think the Member is correct, there is crumbling

infrastructure that we're trying to get funding for. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm glad to hear the Minister acknowledges that this is a concern. I think another piece that really needs to be acknowledged here is the impacts of climate change and the extreme weather events that we're now seeing as a result of that. The increased amount of freeze/thaw cycles as well as, I imagine, more extreme weather changes quicker. So my -- I guess I just want to reemphasize that there needs to be an increase here, and not only here but in actual preventative work for the communities, in order to not only repair what's really -- or degrading but to prevent further degradation. So I do just really want to emphasize that. I think money spent here and in the communities would be well spent.

My next question is about the increase to the senior citizens and disabled persons' property tax relief. Can the Minister or the department -- I believe it's about a 230K increase. Can the Minister or department please tell me how that is actually going to translate to any sort of reliefs on the ground and in what way does a senior citizen actually benefit from that increase? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the increase for senior citizens and disabled persons' property tax relief does reflect that there are additional -- we're projecting that there would be additional seniors and people with disabilities who will be eligible for that in the upcoming fiscal year. So the intent is that more people will be able to take advantage of this tax relief program. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And is this a program -- and I probably should already know this, but is this one where there is income testing? It is wrapped, I'm assuming, to how much income tax people are paying and therefore their actual income, and if so, is there a move to change that cap given the increased cost of living? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you. So it's not income tested. Just need to be a senior or disabled to be able to access this program. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So this, again, seems like an area perhaps that might be worthwhile to increase amounts of -- even more so, I think, given that seniors are probably going to be some of our hardest hit when it comes to dealing with things like the carbon tax and other such costs of living increases.

So can the Minister speak to is there another area where seniors or people with disabilities are getting an increase in relief? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. Not with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask this if it's not the right spot, is there any savings coming to the department -- or sorry, to seniors around the land leases? But I don't think this is the right spot. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Sorry, no, I don't have that information. It's the lands. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, very aware that probably was not going to be something there that I could ask about here even though I know the chair does give us some latitude at times. I don't have any further questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have two questions. One of them, and the first one is, I'm sure that the municipal funding gap is a major concern not only for all of us in this room but also for all the communities and regional centres. And I'm just wondering is the

formula based on per capita of each community? Madam Chair, I'd like to know if that's the way the calculation of the formula is?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. There's a number of things but per capita is one of them. Actual cost is another. And then for the other ones, we'll have to get back to the other breakdown on it. So it's just there is a number of components to it, just not per capita. Thank you. Community location I think as well.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: So the criteria is not equalized across the territory, Madam Chair?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So the formula is community specific and, again, it's not -- some communities get more money than the others and then again -- like, it's -- per capita is one part of it. Like, where the location of the community is, actual costs are. So, again, depending on location and size and that, then that would be your number. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I know my colleague asked for a list of how much money goes to each community, and that should be public knowledge, Madam Chair. I think that -- I think that the Minister -- that those are public funds, and I'd like to see a copy of how that is allocated according to unequal criteria. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: As I provided to the other Member, we will provide that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Will it be public?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, you know, the municipal funding gap is a major problem for small communities and regional centres. And I want to know what the Minister and his department is doing for innovative and creative solutions to ensure that the municipal funding

gap, at some point in our lifetime, whether it be the next ten years or whatever, that everything is at equal basis? So I'm just wondering what his ideas, his views on ensuring that this happens. You know, you have three -- two out of three staff that are located here in the capital, and it's a large bureaucratic empire and we have very few at the regional level, and yet we're funding that staff to micromanage these small communities and regional centres. Instead, we should be cutting that in half and putting that money to the municipal funding gap. Like, you got to start thinking of creative ideas in a business sense to make sure that this works. More bureaucratic positions doesn't solve the problem for the municipal funding gap. That affects small communities and regional centres. I'd like to know his views on this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So the bureaucracy that the Member's talking about is 109 regional and headquarters staff. So the work that we are doing is -- the Member tells us to think outside the box. We've reached out to the NWTAC, and we're working with them. We're reaching out to the federal government. We're reaching out to our colleagues from the Yukon and Nunavut. I've actually had conversations with the federal minister.

We also have other -- we encourage the communities to get sole sourcing -- or sole source funding. But for other details that the communities are able to do, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, in addition to what the Minister mentioned, we continue to work with community governments on looking at ways they can reduce their cost. You know, if there's no additional funding forthcoming then, you know, where can savings be had.

So, you know, several -- we have several initiatives in place related to that including things like we spoke about earlier, you know, helping them reduce their hazardous waste in their site so they're not spending the money on expensive, you know, maintenance of those sites; transferring lands to them so that they can develop it for their own purposes and contribute to their tax base. And we have several other initiatives in place to help build community capacity so that they can continue to find ways to, you know, manage their affairs within the funding that we do have available. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't have any other questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Questions for regional operations? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just have a couple quick questions. And so -- and this is something that we have talked about, you know, probably every year as we go through the budgeting process. But the government does incremental budgeting and so we don't often see large jumps here and there or -- because we don't do zero based budgeting at the end of the day, which is something that I know that Members have asked for and that hopefully we'll see some of it through government renewal. But one of the things that I'm wondering here in regards to the municipal funding gap is, has MACA sought forced growth for community funding over the life of the 19th Assembly. And if we -- like, we've seen that, for example, in collective agreements -- or in salaries, sorry, in compensation and benefits throughout the main estimates. But I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not that has happened specific to community funding and if not, why not. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So as all processes, there is a process that you go to FMB and decisions are made based on what our needs are. And, again, sometimes we're competing against health and social services, housing. And so sometimes the needs are in other areas. So we have to -- we present, and I can tell you that decisions are made based on what our pressing needs are in the Northwest Territories. So that is the extent I can share with committee on the process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you so much, Madam Chair. And the next question, and I'm sure I could ask this to every single department that comes up here for one reason or another, but we know that the Minister of Finance informed us that there will be a healthy operating surplus at the end of this Assembly. And so what I think members of the public would like to know, especially with what's happening in Yellowknife, is why a greater portion of this operating surplus was not used

to reduce the municipal funding gap. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we made a commitment to have a \$5 million process to it. This operating surplus looks like it's a big thing there. But remember, that operation surplus -- and, again, probably going to have to ask the Finance Minister if I misspoke, but that's where our capital -- that's invest -- that's how we build our capital. So we have to be -- that's the process, and if you need to know more information on how Finance does it, then please reach out to the Finance Minister because she does a great job explaining it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the community of Hay River, we've got a large percentage of seniors there, and one thing I know that a number of them bring up the property tax relief program and every once in a while they get excited because they hear it may be reviewed or might be discontinued. So I ask the Minister is there a review process taking place on the property tax relief program right now, or will there be one? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It's something that we're looking at for the 20th. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And with the relief program, it says they're matching grants to tax-based communities. So I'm assuming that the tax-based community sets the criteria for the amount of relief. And right now I think it's probably a hundred percent in Hay River. Is that correct?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So it is set out in the legislation. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So for that amount it'll be up to this government to -- if we decide to make changes to it, otherwise the town is forced to go along with this relief program; is that correct?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So my understanding is the town of Hay River has a bylaw, and that's the bylaw that they need to follow. Thank you, Madam.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So is that bylaw in line, I guess, with legislation then because I'm assuming that if it's a matching grant and it's in legislation, then the town is forced to have that bylaw in place to make sure that the other half of the grant is included. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: He's correct.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to get some clarification there because, like I say, we have a large community of seniors in Hay River and, you know, with the increase in cost of living, increase in taxes and everything else that's going along and, you know, issues with healthcare in the community and no doctors, you know, we're going to tend to probably start losing people to the south here pretty soon because it's just going to be too costly to live. So I just want to -- I just want to make sure that, you know, the seniors are looked after and they do have disposable income as well, which is required for the community. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I thank the Member for the comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. Any more questions under regional operations? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. This is probably a quick question for me as well. When I take a look at the GNWT mandate when it was first put out in 2019 for the four year period of ending in 2023, one of the statements in here talks about the reduction of cost of power. And so this came

out last year this time when the Minister came out and threw it out there that there's going to be a power increase and the power increase to the communities that I represent of Fort Resolution was 10 percent for the first year and second year. But the utility board made a ruling that what's going to happen now they're down 2.5 percent for increase in power. Even though that we heard a few weeks ago the Finance Minister made a -- in her budget address to the House here and saying that there'd be no new tax increase, I just want to ask this question to the Minister in regards to homeowners in the communities throughout the Northwest Territories. Are you going to be looking at raising any taxes this year on property taxes?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I don't think that this is -- property taxes are related to the communities, municipality governments, so. But I'll -- under taxation. But if you want to -- Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So we do the assessment and if we don't have tax increase, then the -- then we don't have tax increase. If it's the municipality, the taxation is in the tax-based communities, they make their decision on their rates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any follow-up under regional operations?

MR. EDJERICON: Because we already know that the high cost of living already is happening in the Northwest Territories. The fuel prices are going up, and everything else that's happening in our communities. So these assessments are done by the local people and the local governments, but. So I just want to know that as long as that we're on record here to say that there will be no new increases in keeping in line with the Finance Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: That there I cannot speak for the Finance Minister. I can tell you we do an assessment. That's part of the process. And in regards to the taxation part, the Member should ask the finance minister. But I didn't hear it in the budget. So thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So if you conclude your assessment for this fiscal year and then once you go through this whole assessment process and if you feel -- or is there -- if there needs to be an increase

based on that assessment after that, are you going to be increasing the taxes at the local level? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Okay. So I'll ask the deputy minister to explain the assessment process. In regards to taxes, as I explained, that there should be asked to the finance minister. But for the assessment process, I'll ask deputy minister, with your permission, to elaborate. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Madam Chair. So property taxes in the municipal taxation authorities are set by the community government. They're not set by the GNWT. It's the community government that determines the mill rate and the level of taxation. MACA's role is confined just to the assessment side where we -- and with our assessment information, we provide it to either the municipal taxation authority or to the Department of Finance for taxation and the GTA. MACA has no role in setting any property taxes. We just collect the information from the assessment and provide it to those entities that are responsible for taxation and for raising or lowering taxes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions? Seeing none, Members, please return to page 352, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operation, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$100,999,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. \$990,000, sorry. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Almost gave us \$9,000 more. Okay, all right. Thank you. Let's turn to page 354 -- sorry, no. 356, school of community government, with information on page 357 and 358. Are there any questions on the school of community government. Seeing none. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I actually do have a couple questions here if I can. So with COVID, you know, the actuals were down pretty significantly in 2021-2022. The revised estimates are pretty close for 2022-2023. Is this, like, back up to where we

were in pre-pandemic times? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It's pretty close. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. Yeah, I don't think I have any further questions then. Or let me just check my notes. Yeah, okay, thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. So are there any -- Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. This training program, it's 1.7 decrease from 1.8. And I know that -- I just wanted to ask the Minister if there's any plan in place for younger generations to take over, because the reason why I'm saying this is that a few years from now I know there's going to be a lot of people retiring but sometimes we don't have a plan in place; sometimes we -- you know, there's nothing for the young people to do or to -- we don't plan well enough for the younger generation to take over work for providing training for water -- like, for example, water treatment plant. And, or if there is a program in place where to train the trainer. Is there any -- is there any program from this community government that can train more young people so that we have influx, we have more young people with some kind of a certificate in the future?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So we work with the municipal governments. If they bring -- whoever they bring to us that's who we do the training. I agree with the Member, it would be nicer -- nice to have some younger people get the training. These courses are available through school of community government. And, again, the communities are the ones that send the students in. If a community wishes to host an event, we can go into the community with one-offs if we need to, if they have -- you'll have numbers there. In the past of my experience, I have done one-offs in communities through the school of community government. Again, it's about training the youth and the people that are doing the job. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: You know, at high school level, I know that we were talking about SNAP the other time. I think one of my colleague talked -- did a Member's statement on SNAP. So I think this is where -- this is a good opportunity to extend this to the high school program because we're always -- at the high school level, in some communities we don't have much place for the -- to place the students or to -- you know, a lot of them wants to do work experience but there's limited place, you know. And mostly some of the time -- sometimes it's mostly the high school that we can place them at. We can't take them outside because we don't have too many places that, you know -- that they can get some kind of a work experience. So I just wanted to know if this training program can be extended to the high school students as well, especially the grade 12 students, because water treatment plant, you know, that's a good -- that's good for a lot of our young people. And I think it's a good skill to have. So I just wanted to ask if this can be extended to the high school students as well.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So, again, the school of community government is for municipalities. We train the municipal staff there. If the municipality has grade 12 students that they want to train and they want to do that, we're more than willing to work with the municipality. But, again, this is more municipal employees. I know what the Member's talking about. I've had -- in my previous work, I've had done training where the community put a program on for students through their rec program. So I've done training that way. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Yeah, I just wanted to ask about that because it is a good opportunity for a lot of our youth in small communities, especially, like, I'm thinking about a community that's isolated, like community of Wekweeti, you know. And it will be good if we have more of these training at the local level and especially to the high school. So it's incentive for many of these young people that, you know, so that they have something to look forward to. So that's why I'm just saying that, you know, it would be nice if we can have this -- or, you know, if there's an opportunity, I think we should take advantage of it and to extend this training program to the high school level instead of just only to the municipality or to the community government. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No. Thank you for their comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Any questions for school of community government? Seeing none, please return to page 356, Municipal and Community Affairs, school of community government, operations expenditures summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$2,865,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sports and recreation and youth, beginning on page 360 with information items on page 361 and 365. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I've got a couple questions here. And the first I would like to start with is all of the budgetary numbers for this year seem to be the same as they were previous. And so I'm wondering why there's no inflationary increase to these budget line items. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, thank you. So with that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you. I believe the Member's referring to some of the funding -- the inflation increases for NGOs. They were not applied to the programming in MACA because the categorization of the NGOs in MACA did not fall into the category where the funding increases were applied. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you so much. I'm wondering, even right here, like the first line item under contributions, is annual NGO stabilization fund. And so I'm wondering why an NGO stabilization fund would not qualify as to be considered an NGO or dollars for an NGO? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you. Because that funding is short-term funding that is not provided on a core basis. So my understanding is that the funding increases were provided to those NGOs that provide core services. You know, if they were not delivering, the GNWT would need to deliver them whereas, like for example the NGO stabilization fund, the purpose of that funding is to just provide stabilization funding to NGOs and it's application based. So it's a very different type of support being provided by MACA to certain NGOs. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering if MACA went back to FMB or EIA, or whoever kind of came up with the rules around the NGO criteria, to push back on that definition or to try to work with FMB on expanding that definition to include some of the sport recreation and youth organizations? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So, again -- just trying to -- the Member's asking for us to go back to EIA and Finance. Right now these programs here are all application based, and this right now, what we're seeing is we're meeting the needs of our residents with the funding we have in place presently. So we do not need to -- like, if we needed forced growth then we would look at it but right now we don't need to do that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think if we went out and we took a trip around the Northwest Territories, that a lot of communities would say that we're not meeting the needs of the Northwest Territories, especially when it comes to youth and sport and recreation. When the Standing Committee on Social Development spoke with communities and spoke with youth organizations, spoke with residents of the Northwest Territories in regards to child and family services, homelessness prevention, and suicide prevention, one of the main key commonalities that we heard with every single one of those engagements in communities was a need for activities, especially youth activities across the territory.

And I know that I'm speaking the Minister's language here and I'm preaching to the converted, but I think it really is important to repeat that kids and youth across the territory are asking for activities. They're telling the Government of the Northwest Territories that they do not have equitable or accessible access to youth and sport activities to provide healthy safe alternatives to what they are doing and what we are losing them to. And so I think that a lot of people would disagree with that.

I know that I spoke with the Minister earlier on in this sitting about the sport recreation -- or sorry, sport, physical activity, and recreation framework, known as SPAR framework, and that there was a commitment that that would be done in the next few months here in this upcoming fiscal year. And so one of the things I wanted to know was if the SPAR fund has a surplus and if the Minister can let us know what that is? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So there's no surplus. It will be for a multi-sport games within a year. We've had Canada Winter Games, the Arctic Winter Games, the Canada Summer Games, and we are going to be having NAG this July in Halifax. So there is no surplus in that pot. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I appreciate the Minister clarifying that piece because that was going to lead me down another path. And I'm glad that the Minister brought up access to multi-sport games and Arctic Winter Games, Canada Winter Games. One of the comments that was made, and I know that this has been a conversation that has happened now for years, is access for kids outside of our hubs, and especially outside of Yellowknife, to be able to gain the experience so that they too can participate and compete in these sporting events, so that they have kind of the time on the ice; they have the equipment necessary; they have the access to coaches. And I'm wondering, you know, when there's such a deficit of this access outside of especially Yellowknife, why we're not seeing inflationary costs here. Even, you know, the cost of airfare is more expensive so does that mean that less sport is going to be delivered in certain communities or less ability of events to happen and kids to come together and to really be able to work on not only creating relationships but also creating healthy foundations for themselves. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So first and foremost, depending on the sport, if you look at hockey as the Member talked about, you know, ice time, for tax-based communities that got artificial ice, you can start in September, maybe late October whereas in some of the other small communities, we don't see our ice in until maybe November, maybe December, and then our ice is out earlier than the other times. So we see the challenges there. So given two months that a -- just that, two months, for our athletes in the smaller communities is the challenge. So that there is the reality is some sports are very specific to what is available within the municipality, within the community.

The other biggest challenge that people need to understand is the people in the community. So you look at the community that I used to live in in Kugluktuk. Lacrosse was big. There was a national -- a movie about the Grizzlies. You know how much lacrosse is being played in Kugluktuk right now? None. They had an indoor soccer pitch built in the community -- or they had a hockey rink and an indoor soccer pitch. They don't play indoor soccer right now. And the biggest challenge is because it becomes specific to the people in there.

In the communities, some of the smaller communities, we see teachers that can offer great programming and then you see a spike in the development of it. So that's one of the challenges that you're seeing there is the facilities, it's the people and, again, it needs to be driven by the community.

I spent 30 years in the sport and recreation field, and it comes down to people being able to commit to the time in there. So that's where that is. So sometimes it's just not the money but it's also other factors. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I have the privilege of sitting next to colleagues of mine whose communities have experienced this, where you have those highs and lows of activity in the community. But one -- and I had the privilege of speaking with a resident of Tuk actually, a young woman who was talking about all of the activities that they were able to sit down and do at the direction of youth. And one of the things that this person said was that everybody who was sitting and working on this stuff is absolutely exhausted. And so they go to their day job, they do their day job, and then the same exact people every time are doing the activities with the kids. And

so I'm wondering then what can be done as far as the staff that are working here and working within communities. I know it's a small staff cohort, but what kind of relationships can be formed and what support can be provided from MACA in order to place value on the people that are doing this work in communities so that they're not doing a full full-time job, and then another full full-time job trying to create opportunities for youth, because people are tired when it's the same people doing that same work over and over again. Thank you. Sorry, I'm babbling.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I totally agree with the Member. One of the biggest challenges is trying to get people in there. Some of the capacity that MACA can do is have regional staff that can do that. We can provide camps. We can work with the municipality to bring in youth tours in there and that. So we're able to do those things. Is it perfect? No. But we work with the communities to get those things done. So thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, just in regards, we brought this up numerous times in regards to into my riding, you know, sport and recreation in the small coastal communities, travel will be the most impactful to get any child or sport in -- to travel for sport. You know, recreation, our youth, our communities, they do their best in regards to what's provided to the community, local community government, the community. And, you know, people are -- with my youth, I mean, we're already behind the eight ball. The opportunities they have are none almost, other than your -- if you're an elite athlete. I think that we brought this up in the House before that, you know, the Beaufort Delta as a whole, for having youth sport like soccer and different -- and different parts, soccer, basketball in different communities, that not just on the road system. Paulatuk, Sachs, and Ulukhaktok should be invited to those. We're failing those youth. The Minister knows it. I mean, the Minister lived in a small community and still lives in one. But at the end of the day, those youth are not being properly served. Our government, we're failing them in regards to that. We should be increasing travel or giving an increase in the budget for the Beaufort Delta at least by a million dollars for all nine communities to get youth out. Post-pandemic now, we're in a post-pandemic, you know, and we need to get

them out. We need to get them active. We need to bring people in to motivational speak. We need to get coaches brought in for hockey, soccer, you know, even ping-pong, stuff like that. Something easy other than, you know, what -- the biggest thing I find with the communities that I represent, it's the same people doing it for hockey coaching, for volunteering. And people are tired, Madam Chair, in regards to that. People -- there's no recognition. Does our government give recognition for any of our volunteers? None. We say youth and recreation for, you know, children resiliency. A little increase, but we need to put our money where our mouth is. Recreation funding, we need to give that million dollars in increase and cut some of this other stuff off their budget. You know, youth contributions. Youth contributions are a big one for me. Everyone want to say, youth, youth, youth are our future but nothing's backing it up. Nothing. We really need to get -- get serious about this. Our generation coming up now, they're too much on cell phones and too much playing games. They're not out being active half the time because there's nothing happening in the community. We need help. Beaufort Delta, Nunakput needs help. This Minister could make a difference. You know, volunteer contributions, he should be given out awards, getting a list from us as Members to give awards out. A little bit of recognition will go a long way and maybe it'll pull people out to help. The cost of travel, again, we need to get that increase into our travel budget for the Beaufort Delta so all our youth could travel and participate and not just selected communities because they live on the road system. It's not fair. We really need to do this. And I'm really hoping the Minister hears this. And it's a lot of a -- a little bit of a rant, but I'm really -- I'm just tired. I'm tired. I worry about my youth all the time in my communities. We live it. You know, it's not because -- not -- it's just a really worrisome time right now we're in. We have to do something. And I hope this Minister hears me, and I hope our government hears me in regards to this because it's going to come into the budget and if not, we'll just start cutting. Find the money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I didn't really hear any questions. So I'll take that as a comment unless the Minister would like to respond.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I hear the Member's frustration. Sport and rec is my life. When I'm done this, that's where I'm going back to. I'm going to be a coach; I'm going to be a volunteer, because that's where my heart is and that's where it is. Like, it's about our youth. These are some challenges and we are trying

to work with that. Again, we have limited dollars. I can tell this House here when we were at the Canada Games and we had the FPT, one of the conversations we had was about the Truth and Reconciliation section 88 and to 91, and we pushed the federal minister on that as well. We talked about those things. And it's actually part of our process. So you know, we are trying to get this addressed. We are trying to work on it but, again, when we are competing against the health and education, infrastructure and housing, you know, these are our challenges that we have. I mean, I would love to put \$10 million into sport and recreation but where are we going to take it from? But there is things like the youth tours.

There's coaching clinics that we can offer, and those are some of the things that we can work with the constituent on. And we do have recognitions to volunteers. From 2023, I believe, we got a thousand dollars that went to Tuk. And then a thousand dollars went to Paulatuk to recognize the volunteers. And volunteers are our core, our foundation. So, yes, there is funding programs available to recognize volunteers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to that, you know, under Truth and Reconciliation section 88, residential school, as a survivor myself, and other Members in this House, you know, the federal government has to step up in regards to this right across Canada. It's not only us in my riding, it's right across Canada. You're hearing it in Yukon and Nunavut. What we have to do in regards to this is maybe our Minister has to take a bold step and our government has to and throw a million dollars into a sport fund. And not only that, I mean, I know where the Minister's coming from. I did the same thing.

I coached minor hockey for 20 plus years in my community. I did all that volunteering. I still do. My wife, everybody. But people are getting tired and getting burnt out. We need our youth to start -- you know, our youth are so resilient. I have so much good youth in my riding, and across the Beaufort Delta. We need to help them.

I'm working with First Assist to try to get a coach into a community for one year, and they'll help you pay. The Minister should look into that for the communities and getting somebody from the outside to come in to help our youth and train, train a trainer. Being able to do stuff like that, but we have to get serious on it. Can't just lip service it all the time and don't do nothing

and yeah, yeah, yeah. Let us hear what we want to say while we're here then when we go, nothing. Got to stop it. Got to take that step. So, Madam Chair, I mean, I'm just -- wish the Minister would listen; I wish our government would listen and help us. Help us help you. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister stated that, you know, he was in sports and rec for 30 years. The issue is that what -- you know, over the years, things have changed. Back then, probably didn't have cell phones; people weren't, you know, doing drugs like they are nowadays. There's a lot of distractions. And you know, we've got to adapt to those changing times and realizing that the good old days aren't here anymore. And the youth do need our support. And, you know, I think it's up to this government. We've got -- you know, the youth and the communities look to us because we've got basically the resources to help them out. And to be successful, we have to -- we need to get the youth excited and engaged if we expect volunteers to step forward because enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm, and if the youth are engaged and they're enthusiastic, they're going to make sure that the volunteers come out. You know, in the past, I know when I was growing up, it was always the teachers and the RCMP that were the ones that were always out there and, you know, providing that -- you know, that volunteerism that, you know, helped us grow as youth. So I think it's so important, and I know we talk about it and we talk and yet we seem to have to really fight for, you know, the few little dollars that are out there. You know, there's some good things that come out of it. You know, the Kole Crook Fiddle Association, you know, I think they were looking at, you know, hopefully a multiyear agreement as well for, you know, going around to the communities and teaching fiddling. So, you know -- and the youth I think really enjoy that. And I know in Hay River it's successful. It keeps people off the street, kids off the street. I know, you know, parents are proud of the kids.

And, you know, you see residents as well, you know, buying fiddles and guitars and donating them to the association. So there's hope out there. And another one there -- and I promised the Minister I would bring this up, and that's the ski club in Hay River. And you know, when it first started back a few years, it was part of the lottery program and it was -- you know, it received, you know, year to year funding as a legacy retail recipient. But then all of a sudden, the government of the day came and conned

them out of the arrangement with a promise for better times. Well, those better times lasted for -- on a five-year agreement and, you know, we've been lucky here in this last three years, the Minister has coughed up a little bit of money. And I'm trying to get another year or a long term -- or another agreement out of him. But it's pretty tough. But when I look at -- you know, when I look at say the ski club for instance, there is an activity, like, there's ski and snowshoeing. It's something that can be sustained and -- throughout the territory just like the Kole Crook Fiddle Association and taught. And, you know, we've got long winters up north and, you know, kids are outside, youth are outside -- well, hopefully they are, and they're willing to do those type of things. You know, the cost of it isn't too bad but we know that there's been, you know, on the ski side anyway, you know, there's been Olympians that have come out of that. So I think there's an opportunity there. But I'm just hoping that the department and the Minister sees that, looks beyond, you know, kind of what's just in front of their nose and looks at -- and look at what could be. So anyways, so I'm hoping that at the end of the day that, you know, with respect to at least the ski club that we're able to get them some funding this year. I've asked for it. I was kind of hoping the Minister of Finance will promise it but I haven't heard from her. But, you know, it's a little bit, and I think the volunteers are actually getting -- they are getting frustrated and, you know, if we're not backing them, they're going to slowly start to walk away. You know, they've got lives to live and, you know, they're dealing with high costs; they're dealing with all the things that everybody else is dealing with. So, you know, if we want to do something, we've got to -- you know, like my colleague said, you know, we got to put the money in there and we got to put it into areas that we're getting -- you know, that we're getting best bang for the buck. And so we really have to look at it. But anyways, you know, when it comes to -- when it comes to sports, I'm all for it and, you know, the more money we can put into it, the more we can offer the smaller communities because, you know, we see people going in -- we see young kids and young adults going in to, you know, the Canada Winter Games, we see them going to the Arctic Winter Games, but when you look at it, what I see sometimes is -- I don't see as many kids from the communities. I see kids from the regional centres, kids from more affluent families.

So there is that gap there, and we've got to -- you know, we have to fill it, you know and, like, you know, in the communities, smaller communities, it is costly to get out of there. We see what the cost of flying is. So all I ask is that the Minister, you know, take a look at what we

could do, and same with the Cabinet Ministers on the other side is that, you know, give us some thought, and how can we better, you know, make use of some of the money that we do have and maybe put it into the regional and communities -- smaller communities and really support some of the sports initiatives that are out there. So, again, like my colleague, it's more of a rant, I guess, than anything. But I know the Minister's heard me talk about this a number of times, and he probably will for a while. But anyway, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I did not hear any questions for the Minister. So I will move on to Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I echo everything that my colleagues have been saying. As the deputy chair of the social development committee, I would be remiss if I did not also express my disappointment to not see more money here.

A couple points that I just want to add, because I don't want to keep bringing up the same things, but I want to add that while we're giving this amount of money to youth organizations and sport, etcetera, this doesn't factor in all the money that not only the time the volunteers are putting in but the money themselves. So they're paying for their own flights to things. They're paying for some of the youth to go with them. They're paying for food, all of these kinds of things, not to mention all the fundraising that has to be done. So basically the communities and the families and the coaches are subsidizing the sport program in the North yet the North takes the accolades when we win gold, silver, etcetera at games.

So when I hear the Minister say that the problem is people in the communities not wanting to use infrastructure that's been built for them, I ask why we're talking about that in the operations and maintenance budget when that's a capital conversation. It is not the fault of people in the communities around sport funding maybe not being adequate. I do take exception to that comment, especially when I look through this entire area of programming and the contributions are all to community organizations. If I look through, for example, get active NWT, funds to encourage groups to organize, healthy choices initiatives, after school activity programs in communities, youth contributions. All of these things are going to the communities themselves. So if anything -- if this Cabinet truly had a mandate and a want to get money into the communities and to increase employment in communities, this is exactly an area in which they could do so. So it's very

disappointing to see all these numbers remain quite stagnant.

And giving on top of that the alarming rise in youth suicide and suicidal ideation, to me it's actually shameful, again, that we're not putting more money here.

For example, let's look at the youth centres. \$500,000, Madam Chair. That is over, what, 33 communities? That works out to \$15,000 a youth centre. What is a community -- what is an organization -- who even is these people that are organizing and running the youth centre for \$15,000 a year? If they can even get a building. That's the other piece of it. This is not even, you know -- this -- again, I'm just reiterating what my colleagues are saying here, that this is being put on to people in communities to do this work. We all know that increasing funding to sports and youth programming will decrease the amount of mental health issues that we're seeing. It will increase physical wellness. And I also reiterate that it is very Yellowknife and regional centered centric. I heard those same complaints during Arctic Winter Games tryouts, that it was very difficult for small communities to come into Yellowknife and a lot of people were sleeping on beds and such. So even if you just look at that from a purely competitive perspective, those kids that are sleeping on a cot in a gymnasium with no showers are going to do poorly compared to someone who is living in their nice fancy home in Yellowknife. So while I, you know, support my community and my constituency and their athletes, it is very elitist. And I don't have a question. It's another comment. But I want to say this -- having no increases, given the amount of work that our committee has done, is shameful. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the small communities, I know that, okay, we are dealing with lots in small communities. We have mental health issues. We have addiction issues. We have suicide issues, especially among young people. You know, with all these social issues that we have, we have a lot of homelessness too, just like the one that I mentioned and we have a lot of youth that are in care in child welfare system. So I just wanted to ask -- like, I mean this government needs to do more with sports and recreation. And we need to provide more programs and services, especially to small communities. And like my colleagues have said, you know, when Arctic Winter Games comes or Canada Winter Games, who do you see? We see people -- you know, young people. We don't see too many of

the outlying communities or small communities youth. We see same youth every year until they age out or, you know, until they go to university or leave for post-secondary, but it's always the same family, same affluent people, youth, families, or whatever, you know, like, I mean, it's the same. It's the same all around. And there's nobody new.

Just like, for example, in my community, one of the youth that I mentioned is from another community. She participated, attended the Arctic Winter Games because she was going to school in Behchoko at that time. She was attending Chief Jimmy Bruneau. So she had a chance. She had to move away from her community. And a lot of these youth, that's what they do is that if they want to participate or have a chance to live a good life or to have a chance attending, like this high performance athletic, you know, for sport, they have to move to Yellowknife or to other regional centre where there's more opportunity for them. And there's nothing like that in small communities.

For example, in Gameti, you know, they don't have a youth centre. And a lot of these communities, they need programs. And in order to access some of the programs, they're saying there too that to be eligible there's got to be ten youth. And if you go to Wekweeti, there's like -- you know, there's not too many youth there. So a lot of these communities are disadvantaged, you know, and I'm just thinking of a lot of those other small communities like Wekweeti in the NWT. Like, we need to do more and lift some of these barriers so that all these communities can have access where they can send their kids to participate freely so that at the next Arctic Winter Games, I hope we don't see the same youth from the same family. You know, like -- and then, and from one place. I would like to see variety. I would like to see more of our young people from the small communities because they are the -- for us, for me, they are the champion because a lot of them are dealing with mental health issues. A lot of them are dealing with addictions, suicide. A lot of social issues in small communities. And I'm real proud of my two pages that are here that are from small communities, and it is one of their friends that attended our school who made it to Arctic Winter Games. So she had to move away. We shouldn't have young people leaving their community, moving away to participate, to have a chance. So that's why I'm saying that this government is not doing enough. Even for here, you know, like recreation funding, 1.2. And 1.2, that is not enough. And 1.2, and then there's that healthy choice initiative.

We all want our young people to make good choices. Like, all the social issues that I mentioned, how are we going to -- we would all like for our youth to do well, to get -- you know, like to have more access to social programs where they can help themselves too as well and know that a lot of these youth, they don't want to be in that situation. They want to do something good for themselves. They want to succeed in life. But if the way that this budget is, we're not giving them a choice. We're not giving them a chance to succeed. They're just -- they're going to be left behind. We're going to leave them behind just like as within the education system. We have a lot of good teachers, and we have a lot of young -- we have a lot of people -- just like my colleague said, there's a lot of people that would like to volunteer. We have a lot of those in small communities that are willing to help the youth because we know of the social crisis; we know of the social issues that our youth are faced. And crack cocaine is the number one choice because we all know that is cheaply made, and it's cheaper to get, you know, and they're dangerous. And there's lots of that in small communities.

So I just wanted to ask the Minister he's funding healthy choices initiative, is it -- how is this fund allocated? Is it by need or by application?

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So it's not an application. So we provide money according to a formula went to each of the schools in the territories. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay. And even with the recreation funding, in -- I mentioned that last week in my Member's statement, community government, due to the budget -- or due to the gap in funding, community government had to lay off some people, and especially in recreation area. And they had to rent the community government office space so that they can support their programs and services, fund their program and services. So that is -- I mean, we shouldn't have to do that but in a lot of places, we have to. We have no choice. And that's -- that's in order to support to help our youth.

When it comes to fundraising and things like that, our youth, they're happy to do those work. They're happy about it because we see them, you know, like working together. I know that's a part of team building and teamwork. So I mean, that -- you know, it's not just Tlicho youth.

There's youth all over, that's what they do. But when they go out, I know that -- and when they go out for their sport, they are so happy that it really helps with their self-esteem as well. So what I would like to do is -- what I would like to see is more funding or more money put into recreation funding so that we don't have to lay off recreation staff that provide good program and services for our youth to succeed, to live a healthy lifestyle, like, you know, to -- or to make a good healthy choice.

So I just wanted to ask the Minister that will the Minister commit to make some changes to this funding and provide more -- to provide more money to this recreation funding -- to increase the funding? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. So what I can commit is I will have a conversation with my colleagues. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further questions? Seeing none, Members, please turn to page 360. Municipal and Community Affairs, sports, recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$8,459,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. There are additional information items on page 366 and 367. If there's no questions, thank you, Members.

Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 331. Revenue summary information items on page 333. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just curious, MACA only has one ADM, the least of any other department. The Minister's other department has five ADMs. Has there been any consideration to giving yourself another ADM or any reason why that is? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: No. And we have 109 staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. That does kind of lead to my other question, which is that MACA also has the most key -- it's tied for the most key activities for any

department which means the exercise we just went through is exponentially longer. And I know key activities are defined by some sort of finance term. I'm not sure they're actually all that relevant to the operations of the department. I think typically they're grouped by ADMs in other departments. But have we reviewed perhaps whether some of these key activities could be combined? I just kind of think directorate, community operations, community governance, regional operations, all tend to have very, very similar questions over and over again. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: So, yes, that's just the nature of our department. So right now, no. This is our seven key activities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other questions? Seeing none, committee, I will now call the departmental summary. Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditure, total department, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$185,681,000. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 367-19(2):
2023-2023 MAIN ESTIMATES, MUNICIPAL
AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, DEFERRAL OF
DEPARTMENT (PAGE 331),
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs at this time. Mahsi, 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? Motion is carried. Consideration of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, operating expenditures, total department, is deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister. Thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Member for Frame Lake, what is the wish of committee?

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has worked really hard this evening. Your committee has been considering Bill 56, Tabled Document 813-19(2), and would like to report progress, with one motion passed, and that Bill 56 is ready for third reading. And Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 1st, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1343-19(2), Impacts of COVID-19 on Education
 - Oral Question 1404-19(2), Child Care Funding Supports for Teen Parents
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. Notice of Motions
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
 - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act
 - Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
 - Bill 66, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act
 - Committee Report 40-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 61: An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
 - Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
 - Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
 - Tabled Document 694-19(2), Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
 - Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates
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, March 1st, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

