

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Arviat South)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Craig Simailak

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Saturday, March 9, 2024**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Hon. Karen Nutarak, Hon. Daniel Qavvik, Ms. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 9:59*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak): Good morning, everyone. I ask Mr. Anavilok to lead us in prayer this morning.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker: Good morning, Inuit. *Katimajiuqatikkat*, good morning.

I recognize the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Are there any nays? There are none. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 37, 38, 39, and 40 with Mr. Savikataaq in the Chair.

In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 29 – 6(2), the committee will remain in session until it reports itself out.

I ask that all members at their desks so that we can proceed immediately to the Committee of the Whole.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

Item 19: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Good morning. I would like to call our Committee of the Whole meeting back to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 37, 38, 39, and 40. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with the review of the 2024-25 Main Estimates for the Department of Family Services and then return to the

Department of Education. Mr. Chairman, then we will commence the review of the departments of Justice, Finance, and Economic Development and Transportation and, if time permits, we will proceed to Nunavut Arctic College. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 37?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Family Services – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Agreed. I would like to ask Minister Nakashuk: do you have any officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Yes, please.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials to the witness table.

For the record, Minister Nakashuk, please introduce your officials.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning. To my right and your left is my Deputy Minister, Jonathan Ellsworth, and to my left and your right is (interpretation ends) Director of Corporate Services, Dwayton Tonge. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This morning we're going to be going to the Family Services' operations and maintenance budget. We're on the Branch Summary of Income Assistance. Following the names on my list, we will just continue off from where we left yesterday, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to welcome you firstly back in here.

Noting that we were going to come back today, I called my community's income assistance and asked them if they had any concerns and the only concern was that they need support. There is only one individual working right now and she stated that it's very hard to work alone and I asked her, "How many more would you need?" She mentioned three, two other individuals to work there would help. I just wanted to get that out first.

I just have two questions, Mr. Chairman. The funding allocated for income assistance payments was increased in 2023-24 when basic allowance benefits were increased by 34 percent. Will income assistance benefits be increased again in 2024-25? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. (interpretation ends) I'll first just go back to the employee. What we're trying to do for Nunavut communities, we understand there's only one employee in a lot of them, and there's some employees that we have that are casuals who might be working half time. The requests that we are presenting the \$124,000 that's in there is to increase our income assistance workers to become indeterminate employees. If this goes through, that would be 11 new indeterminate income assistance workers throughout Nunavut. I'm not sure in specific to the community that you are representing, but that's something that we are working on.

Also, in terms of the income assistance benefits, that is still under review, that is still fairly new at this time. We will continue to monitor that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the department's priorities for 2024-25 is to implement training and cross-training matrix for income assistance workers. What cross-training does this refer to? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I might have missed some of the question Mr. Anavilok had asked, but with the income assistance database they use, we're trying to ensure that all IA workers understand what programs and services the department provides. It could be career development or other things that could be under the department that income assistance workers may not be familiar with, whether it be senior fuel subsidies.

So that the one we are referring to in terms of training and ensuring that all the income assistance workers are aware of what is available within the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and to your officials. I think I only have a couple of quick questions for clarification. On the senior fuel subsidy, it has been noted over the last number of years that thankfully people are living a lot longer now, longer lives.

Your budget isn't changing for the next few years on senior fuel subsidy. If it should happen where there's an influx of new eligible elders that are now 60 years old that would qualify for this senior fuel subsidy, would the department be able to accommodate them if there's a higher percentage of new applicants for the fuel subsidy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know the minister did talk about the senior fuel subsidy that they're looking at to streamline, make the application process simplified, but this is a little bit different line, so, Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) To the question, yes. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. The other thing too, I would like if the department would consider is perhaps since this is income tested, still on the senior fuel subsidy, it's income tested. If there are some elders that are just a bit over, their income's a bit too high, maybe but not by very much, has the department looked at perhaps a ladder approach instead of 4,000 litres a year they provide, would the department look at maybe 2,000 litres a year, if someone is over the income requirement? If they don't qualify because their income is a little bit too high, would the department look at maybe a ladder approach, like 2,000 litres a year for 60 and over? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know the minister did talk about they're looking at the income threshold, but if the minister can just comment on that portion of a ladder approach? Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. In regard to the fuel subsidy for elders who are homeowners, there is a threshold set on the income. If they're over the limit, they do not qualify, but we're including the fuel subsidy for elders as part of the review with the increased cost of living. We're currently reviewing the fuel subsidy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Just to remind me whether it was mentioned yesterday or not, when would the review be complete and when would we see something in writing based on the review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. The review will be completed this year, possibly this summer, and we'll have a clearer picture at that time. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Good morning, Nunavummiut. (interpretation ends) I'll follow up with the questions I had asked the minister during my oral question period. First of all, I still would like to apologize to the minister for missing her email back in December 15. (interpretation) I do apologize, madam minister.

(interpretation ends) One of the objectives is to identify to review and evaluate policies and procedures surrounding the delivery and administration of income assistance programs in Nunavut.

It is to my understanding two pieces of ID are required to receive your income assistance payments. I was wondering if the department, like say for example, if a client went into the office and did receive income support before, prior to their IDs being expired or to having no birth certificate; I believe you need your ID and your birth certificate to receive income support.

Can there be a policy in place, like say for example, when the client doesn't have their ID or the other way around, like their birth certificate, can the income assistance office give them six months to acquire their ID or their birth certificate? It's a known fact that the documentations are there and they're eligible for income support. That's just my question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know the minister did state that they ask for the IDs just once a year, beginning of the year, but if the minister can elaborate on that. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it's okay with you, I would like to refer this to my deputy minister. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. Ellsworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everybody.

With respect to your enquiries, Sir, we have now instructed income assistance staff to exercise levels of discretion, recognizing that it might have been very long ago that they collect this documentation. I anticipate that as we move forward, the discretion will be exercised more frequently and certainly, policy will follow in terms of if we have this individual's documentation on file, we should be able to ensure that they receive income assistance so that their financial security is maintained. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I asked these questions is for the general public's information and not just my constituents but all of Nunavut, just so that information gets out to the public and so they will know what to do to prevent the barriers and gaps so that they do receive the income assistance payments.

I'll move on, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the department is to provide financial and other supports to satisfy basic needs for shelter, food, and clothing and to assist in the transformation towards employment. Now that being said, I do have a lot of constituents that are homeless. They don't even have a home to call home. My question to the minister: can the assistance office support the homeless with basic needs, let's say for example, for shelter, for clothing? Can they receive extra income to purchase their naphtha and warm clothing due to the fact that they're homeless? That's my question, Mr. Chairman, and that's my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank for that question. (interpretation ends) In terms of the income assistance benefits they do receive, under the assistance, they do qualify for clothing that they could purchase as well from the assistance they get and also, the department does provide naphtha for people who request it that are homeless so they could utilize it in their cabins. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everybody. Minister, in a response to a question regarding the seniors' burial benefit yesterday, you mentioned that some of the funding has been re-profiled to help repatriate elders and seniors who pass away down south, which I commend the department for. I know that this is an issue that many families face. What I'm wondering is: with the knowledge that there are so many Nunavummiut that move down south, is there any thought towards helping other cohorts of age groups in being repatriated after they pass away for burial? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Because this program is specific to elders 60 and over, we haven't considered that, but we could certainly look into it, not that we will promise to say that we will make changes, but it hasn't come to our attention. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Following the names on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just kind of one topic that I wanted to follow up on career development and it is youth trades. Provinces across Canada are ramping up

their youth trades program as an attempt to address the severe labour shortage. This is a matter that I raised a number of years ago with... .

Chairman: Just a moment, Adam. Just a moment, Mr. Lightstone, we're still on income assistance and career development is the next one. Do you have any questions under income assistance? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry; I haven't had enough caffeine yet this morning. I just want to follow up on one issue under income assistance, and that's WE Financial. In the past, I've raised a concern about the exorbitant charges that they charge, and previously I've asked how many income support recipients receive their income support through direct deposit. I wonder if we can get an update on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) We don't have those numbers for clients that have WE cards. Just recently in the last year, a couple of years maybe, we've started depositing into their direct bank accounts instead of a cheque, so that has helped to increase some of the clients to start getting their bank accounts. I think that's been a good step in doing that. We would have to get back to the member in terms of that specific list. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. That won't be necessary, don't need any numbers with regard to how many income support recipients receive direct deposit through WE Financial. I just want to ask the minister to consider focusing on this area, especially in communities that have that in-person banking services to try and encourage them to get away from WE Financial in the communities where it's possible. Just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment. I have no more names on my list. Family Services. Income Assistance. Branch Summary. Family Services. Income Assistance. Total operations and maintenance. \$71,642,000. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: I would like members to go to the next one. L-7. Family Services. Branch Summary. Career Development. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, your department delivers labour market programs with funding support from the federal government. How are different

target groups for these programs identified and what kinds of programs are delivered to each group? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. (interpretation ends) The agreement that we have with the federal government, we do provide reports back to the federal government because they do want to know as well as we do how many Nunavummiut are work-ready or have been working under the agreement.

Specifically, some of the programs that we do offer through that funding is heavy equipment programs that are offered. Their training allowances, their daycare allowance, tuition, and equipment in terms of boots they need to use, or other stuff that could be needed for the specific training. I could definitely get maybe my DM to respond more if you'll allow. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. Ellsworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have several programs that are designed for the targeted labour market program, including assisting Nunavummiut with this skilled trades worker program. We've assisted Economic Development and Transportation as well with the mine training.

We have, of course, the Nunavut Apprenticeship Program, in addition to that support for persons with disabilities, many programs.

As I understand it, Mr. Chairman, in 2022-23, our targeted labour market programming, there were 22 different training providers and we reached 2,390 Nunavut participants who benefitted from that program, Mr. Chairman.

In 2023-24, although we're not quite done with that fiscal period, Mr. Chairman, there have been 19 training providers and we've supported 2,816 Nunavummiut through different training opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for those responses. Those are great numbers. I have a couple of follow-up questions on that.

I think what I heard is that safety gear is provided to the trainees. Are those trainees able to keep that safety gear after the training is completed? I see nodding 'yes.'

My second follow-up question is completely escaping me, and I also haven't had enough caffeine this morning. So I'll move on and come back to that if I remember.

Minister, one of the priorities in the business plan is to support government efforts to expand education and training programs that provide Nunavummiut with the necessary qualifications for professional and paraprofessional work in health care, mental health, and addictions treatment.

We know that, especially with the new treatment centre getting ready to open up, these are extremely important trainings that should be taking place. I am just wondering: what specific initiatives does the department provide to recruit Nunavummiut into these fields? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. If it is all right with you, I will ask the deputy minister to respond. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. Ellsworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have several initiatives, the details of which at the present time I don't have with me, although I can say that generally speaking a number of our initiatives go to, for example, mental health.

We fund various programs to equip Nunavummiut with the tools to enter various levels of trade schools and in addition we are working with the high schools. There is grant money available for the high schools, all through the lens of enhancing mental health.

For the details the member has asked for, I would respectfully request that we make a submission on that at a later time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you/

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I actually started my morning off at the airport seeing the AWG athletes off and ran into a friend of my 18-year-old son, and he just started a casual position that was offered to him after a training program. So we know these things work. I think that's great.

I did recall what one of my follow-up questions was, which is I think germane to both of these questions, and that's whether or not, if a trainee is on income support or receiving income support, do these training programs impact their ability to continue to receive income support? Do they enhance the income support? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. (interpretation) We've been doing a lot of changes or growing up from that as well because there were some programs that were offered or that we funded

through Nunavut Arctic College and that was called the GREAT program. It was more towards upgrading and all of that. It was geared towards income assistance clients. They would get their monthly income assistance benefits on top of training allowance. So we still continue that.

There are some programs that are a bit outside of that program. I don't think we have that program anymore, but we've kind of advanced in terms of providing financial support to income assistance clients when they are in college programs, so that still continues.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. I realize now that I said "income support," not "income assistance," and I appreciate the correction.

I know that often, one of the mental and emotional barriers to accessing and seeking training and education is that mindset of "I'll lose my income assistance" and without foresight about how people's lives could improve in order to have a working income. I appreciate that there is some flexibility there.

Minister, one of the priorities in the business plan is to support government efforts to "Increasing opportunities for pre-employment work experiences for high school and post-secondary students..." We heard a little bit about that in a recent response.

How does Family Services work with Education to provide students with opportunities for pre-trades training and work experience? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Right now, the department is working jointly on three projects to prepare young Nunavummiut for future employment to improve and that's including the Tuliniliara reading series, the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy, and the high school trades training grant. We do provide those three specifically that are geared towards youth.
(interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that workers' safety is extremely important and I mentioned earlier this week that the sooner and the more often that we engage workers in safety training and building knowledge around keeping themselves safe is extremely important.

Minister, to your knowledge, does the department also work with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission to help to educate young workers who are entering the

workforce? Specifically, what we know is that often, trades are more risky work and so it's really important to ensure that we train young workers right from the outset to work safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just to put on the other hat I wear in terms of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, one of the things that are offered there is working with different employers to ensure that young workers getting into the workforce are getting the proper training and safety reviews in any work field. I know that's something that the WSCC offers to employers and they have that specific offer for the youth in employment and training and they work directly with the employers on that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to hammer that point home, I think it's really important for, perhaps, the Department of Education to work within the training that they offer as well as with employers to ensure that every young person and, actually, every worker in Nunavut knows that they have the right to refuse unsafe work. That's just a comment.

Mr. Chairman, Minister Nakashuk, the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act* was amended to provide certification for skilled and experienced workers who did not complete a formal apprenticeship certification. To date, how many Nunavut workers have been certified by attestation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that question. I'll have to get back to you with the response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, minister. The department will be implementing the updated Adult Learning and Training Supports Program or ALTS Program in 2024-25.

How will the revised program differ from the previous program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. (interpretation ends) The Adult Learning and Training Supports Program

that we offer is very similar to the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students funding, except this one is for less than a year program, so up to a year. It's very similar to what Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students offer in terms of training benefits, tuition, books, and tutors. It's very similar to that kind of thing. We do have a good number in terms of it is quite popular and is the most utilized. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a two-part question. With the ALTS program, can individuals take virtual training, and can they combine that ALTS program with other education programs that Family Services supports? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: With this program specifically, we do have to work with a designated registered college or university or whatever. It has to be a recognized training institution. When we're talking about what we could provide for youth that want to get into online courses, it would have to be more of a client-by-client review with the workers. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Following the names on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I only have one topic under this page and that is trades. As I mentioned, provinces across Canada are ramping up these youth trades to address the severe labour shortage.

In 2020 when we passed our amended *Apprenticeship Act*, I pointed out we were the only jurisdiction in Canada that didn't have a youth trades program, and the minister of the day had committed to work with Education to try to create a youth trades program. I would like to start by asking for an update on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: The apprenticeship field has been going slowly, so that's not something we've started yet. I'll know if there are plans to do that, but we can certainly look into it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we passed the *Apprenticeship Act* in 2020, I had to fight hard to get the age requirement reduced from 18 to 17 to allow more space for youth to participate in the trades field. When I looked at the Department of Family Services website under eligibility for apprenticeships, it said individuals must be 18.

Can you confirm if that aspect of the *Act* is coming to force and if that age requirement is actually still at 18? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) I would ask that deputy minister to respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. Ellsworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To answer the member's question, I understand that we're on the cusp of brining in revised regulations for the *Apprenticeship Act*, Bill 65 I believe it was, the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*.

I'll have to double-check on the age requirement. I don't have that in my materials, but I would imagine that the new regulations, as the whole idea behind the *Act* was to make it more efficient and more accessible to Nunavummiut with varying degrees of background, so I don't want to commit and say yes, it is 17 or no, it's 18. I'm happy to return a proper response in due course. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to youth trades program, I'll follow-up with Family Services on that issue on another date as well. The OAG did identify the need for alternative pathways to graduation, identifying careers in trades as an opportunity. As I indicated in 2020, being the only jurisdiction that doesn't have youth trades programs, we are really missing out and not providing adequate support and direction to our youth to open-up that pathway.

In December, Ontario had announced \$63 million to expand their youth trades programs, and now they offered a new program on Ontario STEP, whatever that acronym stands for, but allows for students to enter construction for a semester and open new career pathways in trades.

Throughout the semester, they work with electricians, plumbers, drywallers and painters, really great experience for youth to identify what trade they want before they graduate high school. I think we are really missing out in that area. Just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment. Any more questions, Mr. Lightstone? Okay. Next one on my list, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the targeted labour market aspect of Career Development, first off, the career development officers in each community, I believe they work in this field.

How many vacancies does Family Services have with respect to career development officers and the assistant that works specifically on the trades? I know Baker Lake had two positions working on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just to go back a bit to the career development officers, the regional offices are located in each of the main centres like Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet and Pangnirtung. In each regional office, they do have career development officers that represent the community. We do have career development officers in other communities as well, like Baker Lake.

In recent years, we've also started adding apprenticeship specialists or something like that, I might be wrong in terms of the name of the position, but those are the ones that also work closely with the career development officers to help register clients that might be getting into trades specifically.

In terms of how many career development officers we have, we have six vacancies right now. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'm wondering what the department is doing to address this issue. If they can't hire someone indeterminately soon, what further avenues is the department taking, or going to do, so that our high school students or people that are not in school anymore who want to get into this field have someone to speak to in person to help get going on their new career? We've got Baffinland, Agnico Eagle Mines that need trades workers. We've got Nunavut 3000 that needs skilled workers, but our Nunavummiut can't do this if the point person is not there.

So I am wondering what's the department doing to address this issue of the vacancies? I'm glad it's only six, but it's important to fill these vacancies or come up with a contingency plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When we say there are six vacant positions, that doesn't mean that nobody is in those positions. The majority of them are casual employees and some of the casual employees are there because the person that's in that home position may be an intern or going into a different position, whether it be, not that they're leaving, getting training on educational leave for example. So we do have people in those positions.

When we are able to advertise positions that are vacant, we do advertise them, and those positions are quite popular. I just wanted to explain that they may be considered vacant, but casuals are in there. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list for under career development. Family Services. Branch Summary. Career Development. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$11,567,000. Agreed.

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Okay. I would like members to go to L-8. Poverty Reduction. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the department's priorities has been to support government efforts to enable elders to access more country food. The department has implemented an engagement plan to consult elders on this issue.

How many consultations took place and when will the results be made available? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question (interpretation ends) To date, like I had mentioned before, we are working with different departments in this.

So because that's in our mandate, but in terms of how many community visits our staff have done at this point in time, we have site visits going to Igloolik, Baker Lake, Clyde River, and Iqaluit.

We are also planning more to travel to the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regions to meet and discuss with elders, to discuss some gaps or issues they may see in terms of wanting more supports on that specifically. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm curious to know as to why this wouldn't have been included with the efforts that were made to bring elders together for the elders strategy and what we heard documented. To me, you're speaking to the same audience that would have participated in those consultations. I'm kind of curious to know as to why this wouldn't have been included in those discussions, just to piggyback and save resources. It could have been completed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question (interpretation ends) I can understand your point on that. We've had

meetings here in Iqaluit, Poverty Reduction Roundtables that we've had here. We included a number of community members to attend, whether they be from a society or elders. We've had a number of elders attend that as well. We heard different issues that they face, but that was more of a broad meeting in terms concerns they may have about elder abuse. It's more of a broad discussion on issues they may be facing.

More specifically, with this term of government this was in our mandate, as in the department directive that we get more information about what we can do to better support the elders in terms of food security. In terms of more in-depth information, I think my deputy could provide more information about that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. Ellsworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's safe to say that supporting elders is the primary objective of this government. To the member's question, I think the two departments were working simultaneously but together at the same time, so the other strategy of course the what-we-heard document contains a lot of information in there around what elders want in terms of access to country food and the improvements that are required to support that work. Our work covers specific to elders' food security, and it's now sort of falling into the line of the Elders Strategy as well.

As we work to unroll and implement that strategy, it may become unnecessary to further engage on this specific point, but it may be still required because it is a very specific and important aspect of the Elders Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While I appreciate the response and I do appreciate Mr. Ellsworth's comment that this consultation for the Elders Strategy may have made further consultations redundant. I think that's the point I'm trying to make.

You look at page 35 of the elders strategy and there's a section on ensure elders have access to country food. I know that's not specific to food security itself, but when I look at the department's priorities are to provide elders more access to country food. Again, I don't understand why there would be any further need to waste time and resources and start putting into action some of the commitments that are being made in the elders strategy, that I am just reading in detail still right now. It's an extensive document, so I'm going through it as I can. I'll just leave that as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. That was just a comment. I have no more names on my list under Poverty Reduction. Family Services. Branch Summary. Poverty Reduction. Total operations and maintenance. \$13,059,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members, go to L-3. Details of expenditures to be voted on. Family Services. Total operations and maintenance to be voted. \$195,068,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree we have concluded the review of Family Services?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Brief closing comments from Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for approving this and what we said lastly includes \$2.25 million approved for food security in the communities and \$1.9 million for homeless people shelter funding. We did not talk about those. The income assistance positions can start to be planned now. Our efforts to get more social workers are going to be part of the efforts of us trying to get more staff.

Thank you for approving all these and I would like to thank all our staff who worked real hard, especially the social workers who have worked real hard. We really thank the social workers and all the staff in our office, who all worked together to put together efforts to help people of Nunavut. We don't have a capital planner, but our finance person has worked hard on that file. I know many of our staff are not visible here, I know we still need a lot of improvements to make, and we do real, challenging work but we'll persevere, and we have work to do that comes out of the report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The witness can leave the witness table and we'll take a 10-minute break and continue with our review of Department of Education.

>>Committee recessed at 10:55 and resumed at 11:09

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Education – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Good morning. I would like to call our Committee of the Whole meeting back to order. We're here and you want to go through education's operations and maintenance budget, and I would like to ask Minister Gross, do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, I do. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the committee agree to let the minister's official appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials to the witness table. For the record, Minister Gross, please introduce your officials.

Hon. Pamela Gross (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) To my left, we have Deputy Minister Rebecca Hainnu, and to my right, we have Director of Corporate Services Ibrahim Suleiman. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just before we're going through the Corporate Services, which is G-6, before I go to the names on my list, I will remind everyone. Members, keep your preambles short and to the point, and to the ministers, please answer to the point and only just include relevant information as to the questions being asked. We have many pages to go, so I would like to make the information exchange as informative as possible, but as short as possible.

Branch Summary. Education. Corporate Services. Give members a few minutes. Total operations and maintenance. \$6,255,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Agreed. Okay, members go to G-7. That's the Branch Summary of Early Learning and Childcare. Give members just a few minutes to get to that. G-7. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple questions here. With the Early Learning and Childcare monies through the federal government, the \$10-a-day daycare, and the wage subsidy. Has there been any new spaces created through those initiatives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. As of February 1, 2024, there have been a total of 128 new spaces created for licensed childcare across Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In which communities are those spaces located? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have Cambridge Bay, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, and Igloolik. Those are the communities that have licensed childcare spaces. In January of 2022... Those are the main ones that we have at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Department of Education still supporting the Child Educator Program through Nunavut Arctic College? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So with the recent announcements especially with the wage, increased salary, increases for childcare workers, and spaces; has the department noticed an uptick in registration for those college programs, and if so, is there also any work being done to increase the accessibility of those programs into more communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. The wage scale was implemented in the fall of 2023, so at this point, we haven't seen any changes, but we will report in the future, hopefully within the one-year mark when we do see more progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope in the data collection of that as well they will track turnover across the industry of childcare as well. I think it's very important that these wage subsidies help bring more people into the program as a career choice and the intent is for them to stay longer. I would like to see some stats on that and of how effective it is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Done.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment. I have no more names on my list under Early Learning and Childcare. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning minister and to your officials.

On the early childhood resources, I'm wondering. More and more, I believe, school age children going from primary school are finding that they're having to go down to the general stream from academic. I'm wondering about the early child resources. Is that geared toward ensuring the students can do the academic stream? It's been a concern of

mine for a while now. There are a lot of graduates going through the general stream now. I believe if you can't get to the root cause, it will continue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know this is coming up further in the branches here, but if you can comment to that. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question.

We are working toward the resource development being play-based, but also having the importance of Inuktitut resources available for this sector to prepare students that are in childcare to start their success in school. So the hope is that they will be prepared for the days when they enter the school stream. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question. The Department of Education's Early Learning and Childcare branch provides support for early childhood programs and facilities.

I just want to point out that the one in Kugluktuk, the early learning childhood building leaks every spring. Spring is the worst time when it starts melting. That's when it really leaks, even when it rains.

So I was wondering, can those be priority too for early learning and childcare?
(interpretation) Thank you (interpretation) Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This is connected, in terms of it's an O&M budget and they may need O&M to get it going. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. The Department of Education does not own any buildings that are licensed childcare facilities, other than the ones that are in high schools. So at this point, we can provide assistance to the not-for-profit or hamlet that runs the childcare facility to support renovations.

I would like to note that we also have funding from our Early Learning and Childcare Canada-wide Agreement that pertains to the creation of new licensed childcare spaces, and gives some support, not full support, to the creation of a new licensed childcare facility.

We do have funding available, and we look forward to more communities accessing that funding to create childcare spaces in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted further clarification as it relates to the matter of at-home daycares, where they provide the childcare in their homes, and this is listed in the priorities for 2023-2024, it reads (interpretation ends) “The department engaged with a variety of early learning and childcare partners and stakeholders to inform the development of the action plan.” (interpretation) Further down, no, I apologize, I made a mistake.

(interpretation ends) In the status, first I’ll say that further increase of number of licensed child care spaces in Nunavut, including the licensing home daycares and investigating of the use of community venues, the status as of December 2023, 120 new child care spaces were licensed in November in 2023 and 2024. As of today, (interpretation) I would like more information on what improvements have been made. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. The funding does allow the Department of Education to support the creation of new licensed childcare spaces across Nunavut, and we are looking forward to more daycare facilities opening with the support of the funds that are available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the new funds available, I would like the minister or her deputy to respond. Clyde River does not have a daycare and what can they do to negotiate to open a daycare?

It’s not a question, but in one of your priorities for 2023-24, we would like to see more culturally relevant things in a daycare like posters or Inuit-relevant things placed in the daycares.

You touched up on it a little bit, and also to use the Inuit language at the daycare. My question is: What is the Department of Education doing in providing that at the daycares? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the member’s great question. For the member’s constituency of Clyde River, there’s a licensed after-school program. Right now, the Hamlet and Kakivak are partnering together to determine if the old daycare buildings can be renovated and/or if a new structure is required. The Department of Education is currently involved in these discussions, and we look forward to supporting them in the ways that we can. We have been in direct contact to see how we can best support the needs of that community.

In terms of the creation of relevant resources, the Department of Education has a number of resources available that are in our daycare facilities across the territory, and they're wonderful and amazing resources that are there. It makes one feel so proud to see them being implemented in our spaces for our youngest learners to learn with and enjoy. Some of the examples include syllabics stamps, Nunasoup recipe games, language play programs, traditional wooden vehicle sets, and ice fishing gear. We also have a number of 41 books, we have 24 teacher resources, 29 toys and puzzles, and these resources include CDs, songbooks, videos, puppets, rugs, traditional wooden tools, and indoor camping scenes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have to make sure that those facilities are available. In my other community, there used to be daycare, but it's been closed for quite a number of years now. I would like to see that daycare open again, and to make sure that they have funds available to reopen it. The Department of Family Services, how is that to date? Are they the priority, those who are in care by staff because of the need to have daycare spaces? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask my deputy to capture because there was a loss of translation, but she heard the whole question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. If I understood your question, the daycare board of directors are parents of our clients, and we have funds available. We don't give them direction on who can be in the daycare. It's the daycare society that makes that decision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. I have a concern about the daycare providers. Usually, we have to make sure that the children are protected. The reason why I asked that question is because I'm concerned about the daycares. That's just a comment. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Killiktee, are you done? I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Education. Branch Summary. Early Learning and Childcare. Total operations and maintenance. \$6,130,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to G-8. Advanced Education. I'll give members a few minutes to get ready. Branch Summary. Education. Advanced Education. Total operations and maintenance. \$14 million. Anybody got any questions? \$14,746,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members go to G-10. Under Education. Branch Summary. K-12 School Operations. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier this morning, I mentioned one of the OAG reports, I think it was the supporting students and youth, identified the need for the Department of Education to provide alternative pathways to education such as trades, and that OAG report is a number of years old, so I would like to ask for an update on progress in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. Can the member please explain what aspect of trades? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It should be K-12 on School Operations, but Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under K-12 School Operations, the OAG had identified the need to move away from the traditional university/college-level graduation streams and focus more on trades in our schools, K-12.

Since that OAG report was produced in the previous Assembly, how much work has been conducted or progress made to provide alternative pathways to graduation in the K-12 school operations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question and further explaining. Right now, we do not have programs that are designated as post-secondary programs.

However, we are working to see if we can get dual credits into the high school curriculum, and we're aiming for that work for the dual credits for high school students to access trades programs at the Nunavut Arctic College this coming fall. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. This upcoming fall, just for further clarification, the Department of Education will work with arctic college, I'm assuming specifically in the Rankin Inlet campus with the trades school there, to offer the dual-credit program, just to clarify that. I just want to seek further clarification whether it will just be in Rankin Inlet in the upcoming school year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For now, we are aiming for Rankin Inlet, but we are exploring other schools, and hopefully in the near future, we can expand to other schools across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier I had mentioned Ontario's announcement in December 2023 to expand upon their youth trades programs to address their severe labour shortage in the trades.

They also created the Ontario STEP to Construction program, which allows students to spend a semester working with a number of different trades and in partnership with private and non-profit sector to give teenagers hands-on experience as an opportunity to earn an income while learning. More specifically on that front, where is the department in line with creating a youth trades curriculum? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. At the moment, we are focused on Inuktitut curriculum development from K-12, but with the dual credits we are working on that and we're exploring revamping, sorry for the acronym, the NEAT program, which is the Nunavut Early Apprenticeship Training Program. We're looking to see how we can get that started again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) If we can limit curriculum development, as that's the next page, if we can concentrate K-12 school operations. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last question, since the OAG report on providing support for students and youth, if I correctly recall the Department of Education minister of the day had agreed with the recommendation and committed to providing alternative pathways to Grade 12 graduation. Would the minister commit to providing a written response to the committee updating specifically on progress made to that commitment on the OAG report? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can commit to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the kindergarten to grade 12 school operations, I am wondering how is the department doing with the vacancies as well with teachers and school support staff? I know it's near towards the end of the year already, getting there, but were there any schools in Nunavut on the brink of closure due to staffing challenges? First question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that. For the long-term, no, and for the short-term, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. For the short-term that was almost closed, are you able to say which community or which school it was in? If so, what is being done to ensure that as per your book here, it says you are supposed to ensure high quality instructional assessment and student support practices. So if it was almost closed, how did you ensure that these students were receiving high quality supports? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. In terms of short-term, it's based on illness. So there are times when communities go through waves of illness and that spreads through our schools. We can sometimes come up with a shortage of substitute teachers filling in for teachers that may be ill.

In that term, we have had short-term closure and I believe Igloolik was the community that had experienced that earlier this year. That's the primary reason. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list my list of names. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. (interpretation ends) On page 125 of the business plan, it indicates that community and school staff volunteers support school meal programs.

How will the Department of Education work with community-based entities to ensure that school meals will always be available in all Nunavut schools? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. Every year, we obtain funds from the Department of Health to support the food meal program and we're looking to expand that with our discussion with the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Department of Family Services, and the Department of Health to put in a robust proposal to the Child First Initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for the response. (interpretation) One of the biggest challenges to student's success is poor attendance at school. The 2021-22 annual report indicates that K-12 attendance rates were at 74.5 percent. How do attendance rates differ by grade level and what specific initiatives are underway to address this? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. Currently, we don't track attendance based by grade, we go based by school and region, and some of these attendance rates vary.

However, I can say that our attendance rates have increased since before the COVID pandemic. Before, in the 2018-19 school year, the average attendance rate was 64.8 percent. We've had a remarkable increase and our total now as of January 2024, our attendance rate is an average of 71.74 percent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Since you briefly mentioned COVID, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of virtual education services were established.

Does the department continue to offer support virtually, and if so, for which types of programs? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. Currently, we don't offer any virtual programs, it's face-to-face right now. However, if a student is enrolled in distance learning, they do have that opportunity to take courses from a distance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. This is my last question. (interpretation ends) In addition to the Nunavut Arctic College Teacher Education Program, education staff can participate in the Sivummuakpallirutiksat education leave program to become educators. To date, how many staff have successfully completed their studies under this program to become educators working in Nunavut schools? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. We currently have a total of 16 employees accessing that stream. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) One of the department's ongoing priorities is to support, monitor, and advise on effective school leadership practices and standards within Nunavut schools. What specific challenges do principals, teachers and support staff face in these areas? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, member for that question. I do know that our regional school operations work directly with our school leaders, our principals, and vice principals to support them with their leadership efforts to ensure that they align with the department policies.

We also, in September 2023, had a territory-wide in-person principals conference since this hasn't happened since the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference supported learning, leadership development, and best practice sharing amongst school leaders. We've also implemented the principal report and information that is gathered in there to have a more standardized way to access information across schools. Our regional school operations are able to ensure that *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and the departmental priorities are being met in all schools across the territory through this report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just before I go to the next person on the list, I just want a clarification. Minister, you stated that attendance has gone up. Have there been any changes in how it's calculated, attendance, because I do know there is a difference between absence and excused. So has there been a different way of calculating attendance from before COVID-19 to after COVID-19? Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like my deputy to answer that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a very good question. Just recently we have a directive. We signed an attendance directive in hopes of collecting attendance more in a centered way. So now we've decided in a K-8 is A.M. P.M. attendance, so it's uniform throughout the entirety of Nunavut, not every school collecting data differently. For those courses in high school and junior high where they have course codes assigned, their attendance is specific to the courses they are attending.

By next year, our attendance record will be very, very true to the nitty gritty, detailed minutiae of detail. So we have recently, so recently, like last week signed an attendance directive. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Following the names on my list, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that information from the last response from the deputy minister. When we look at attendance rate and it's less than 75 percent, that's very alarming. I was surprised to hear that it wasn't being tracked by grade.

Under the new formula or the new system that's being utilized, will that information be able to be gathered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it will. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you for that, because I am sure there are drop off points so at certain grade levels where attendance is even more of an issue. I had a question last week and I had my notes here, but I didn't show that I had had a response on it so I can't remember totally.

One of the questions that I was looking for is: how many of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program grads, on a percentage basis, is employed by the Department of Education in the school system? Does the department have that information available?

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. We don't have that level of detail, in terms of how many graduates graduated.

I can say though, Mr. Chairman, that we have hired four new Nunavut Teacher Education Program graduates into our schools this past school year from recently graduated. We have hired a total of 12 Nunavut Teacher Education Program grads altogether. Some of them are from previous years.

Approximately, we hire a total of 200 new teachers a year overall. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: I think I might have been asking the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College that question. It was probably why it was tickling in my brain. It's probably more anecdotal than anything, but we've heard numerous examples that the Nunavut Teacher Education grads, there's still a fair bit of turnover in the school system. Does the department have any tracking or any exit interviews or any information on what some of the challenges are for some of the new teachers and why they're not continuing to teach and taking outside opportunities within other government departments or the private sector?

In addition to that, what I'm looking for; is the department satisfied with the graduates when they come into the school system? What type of support services are available to new grads and are there any indicators on turnover reasons? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for those questions. I think I've captured them all but might have missed one. We do have data available through an exit survey that the Nunavut Teachers' Association produces, and they do provide us the report on the reasons why a teacher may leave.

One of the main reasons I understand is that a teacher might move to another job that pays them more money as in a different field. We're looking to improve that with the work that we're going to be conducting as we go through reviewing the compensation and benefits package for our teachers.

We do have programs for new hires. We also have learning coaches in our schools that support new teachers and help them with the resources and learning the materials that they may need or any type of information they might need to know. We also have an onboarding program for new hires, as well as working directly with the learning coach on any type of information that they may need. We have orientation packages as well, courses that individuals can take either online or self-directed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is one other component to the questions that I posed was the readiness of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program graduates to go directly into the classroom and any challenges or any successes that could be mentioned. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that. We do fully hope that that teacher would be ready coming out of the Bachelor of Education program and be prepared. We do have the availability to work directly with the students on the resources that are being created, the developed curriculum and supporting them more directly with hands-on experience as they are still in school.

If there are any supports that are needed out there, we always welcome that information from the new teachers to bring that forward so that we can work to enhance that experience for them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The member asked if they were ready, I know you said you hope they're ready, but the member asked if they are ready and capable of going straight into the classroom. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification. Yes, they would be ready, and they are evaluated every year by the principal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. The minister just mentioned during the work experience portion of the program itself, the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. What type of reporting or what type of supporting documents or supporting report that a teacher in the classroom that has one of these students working under them or working with them or observing them, what type of back and forth does that have with the program director, I guess, or whatever with Nunavut Arctic College? Is there a grade component to it? How is that evaluation done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct that to our deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, member, for that question. (interpretation ends) I do apologize; wrong language. You asked in English, so I'm going to respond in English.

The Nunavut Teacher Education Program's practicum portion that occurs in the school is supported by the Department of Education through additional pay for the practicum teacher. The conduct of the student at the Nunavut Teacher Education Program is through NAC, so the instructor who is teaching the Nunavut Teacher Education Program oversees their practicum and the evaluation is stipulated through that program. The practicum teacher or the teacher who is supporting the NTEP is just following what's stipulated through NAC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Nunavut Arctic College, NAC. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just finally and it's more anecdotal, but I have spoken to a few teachers over the years that during this practicum portion, some students are a little bit more engaged than others, where some students attendance even during the practicum portion is a concern, yet there doesn't seem to be any ramifications or any accountability, I guess, maybe is the word I'm looking for, from the student side of things to make sure that when they go through these practicum experiences and the monies that are invested with the teachers and the time that's invested to make sure that these students get that exposure in the classroom is very important.

To hear, even if it's only a few, instances of students not attending and not taking it seriously, yet still graduating, to me, is a bit of a concern. I'll just leave that as a comment or maybe if the minister has some experience of that herself, then maybe a comment back might be appreciated. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Gross, if you can comment on what used to be called social passing. Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that. We can definitely have further discussion with Nunavut Arctic College on that topic. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I will recognize the clock now and break for lunch and we will commence our committee meeting at 1:30.

>>Committee recessed at 11:58 and resumed at 13:29

Chairman (Mr. Hickes): Thank you and good afternoon. I would like to call the meeting back to order. We're on page G-10. Department of Education. K-12 School Operations. Total operations and maintenance requested. \$209,586,000.

Ms. Brewster. Sorry, my apologies. Before we go to Ms. Brewster, I did notice there was a change of the guard at the witness table. Minister, I will give you an opportunity to introduce your new official. Thank you.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have, to my left, Deputy Minister Rebecca Hainnu, and to my right we have Assistant Deputy Minister Martine St. Louis, Director for Support Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Welcome Madame St. Louis. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, as a parent I am very happy to be using the Edsby program. I am wondering if the Edsby program is available to all Nunavummiut, or is it just the Inuksuk High School. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Edsby is available to all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it possible for you to know how many parents have logged on and created accounts and how many parents are interacting with their student's progress? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be something we would have to look into and get back to the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am also interested in knowing how educators are using Edsby along with their students.

I know that students and educators can set up specific Google classrooms for homework and class news. There are opportunities for educators to launch polls every day that are emotional check-ins. That gives teachers a chance to poll students at the beginning of the day. That portion of Edsby also allows students to avail of information that can help them to address any emotions that they have.

I wonder how the department is tracking that kind of use? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. Edsby is used in a number of different ways throughout our schools. It's a great tool for our schools to utilize because it's able to support remote learning and supplement learning with online tools. It also is a great way to communicate with students, parents, and teachers. It also gives students the opportunity to complete electronic assignments or submit assignments online. It can also be used to track attendance.

Maybe I will ask our deputy minister to supplement the latter half of the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. We have 885 teachers whose ability levels on using technology vary from teacher to teacher. Although we are supporting the use of Edsby in enhancing education engagement with

parents and students, it's very difficult to say if it's very standard. It's very new to Nunavut and we have plans to keep supporting teachers on engaging with parents and students through Edsby. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It looked like you were going to weigh in there for a second. Just looking at the Edsby website, one of the themes is to enable educators and policy makers to take action managing care for students at risk or that might benefit from extra care can be grouped together for special educator attention. Edsby monitor groups, a long established and appreciated featured of Edsby, can be set up as desired by educators.

Hearing the response to my previous question, I guess there are two things. Number one, is there specific training that's offered to educators in order to make the best use of this asset? Are there any instances of educators using it to its fullest advantage that can be shared amongst peers? Can they teach each other how to use it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the member for those questions. Yes to both of them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder as well: the principal's reports are being standardized and are the principals making use of the data, the very useful data, that comes from the use of Edsby? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point, we are not gathering data from the principals' reports on Edsby. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: I would highly encourage the use of the data that's contained within Edsby for every school and every principal. It seems like a great program. I know that it's a great program for parents and guardians who want to engage and there are so many possibilities in tracking trends, kind of across the board about students and student behaviour, and about how well students are reaching standard achievement goals.

It just strikes me as really odd that it wouldn't be used to its full value. Can I get just a little bit more explanation about why that's not happening? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are into, I guess, phases. The principal's report is in the pilot program, and we are looking to see if we can integrate it into Edsby. So at this point in time we are just using the information and we are going on collecting the most robust amount of information that's available and pertinent to the school operations and collecting that in a Word document and using it, but we can further explore other avenues and see if it can be integrated into Edsby at this point in time. We're not there yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a parental user, or guardian user, I know what's available to me and I don't know what's available to educators and specifically to principals and school leaders.

However, I would assume with any kind of program like this, one must be able to run queries and create reports out of the program. To me, starting from scratch creating the principals reports without using every single tool at hand is counterintuitive.

However, I will move on. There were some questions earlier today about attendance levels. I would just like to know whether or not every school has access to attendance officers. They used to be called truant officers way back when I was in school. I wonder if there is that kind of support to encourage student attendance and to gain an understanding of why a student may be missing school. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. We have had district education authorities avail of the funds that get annually to put towards attendance officers.

We don't currently have any district education authorities using their funds this year to have an attendance officer, but I believe last year or the year before, we had one or two communities that were using the funds that they had to hire an attendance officer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How does the Department of Education work with the district education authorities in that regard, in terms of encouraging? Is there an attendance threshold that department officials might become aware of in terms of how many students are missing school, and is there a prompt to reach out the local district education authority to encourage them to consider making use of those funds to hire an attendance officer? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for those questions. The Department of Education gives each district education authority funds to administer for their attendance policy, so those are incentives for areas where schools can celebrate or work to reward good attendance, perfect attendance, most improved attendance, whatever they see as an area they want to celebrate. They can do those monthly and they can also do them at the end of the school year.

The department has also worked to create the registration and attendance toolkit for the district education authorities and French school board to address student attendance and registration.

So there are a few different areas where we are working to ensure that attendance is improving and that it's a joint effort, not only between our departments, but also with the community and the schools to ensure that our attendance rates are going up and that we have increased attendance and have various ways to support and engage as well with our family engagement strategy and our on-the-land program.

We are working with our elders and having activities to increase attendance and learning that comes from other types of learning, not just in the school, but out on the land, for example. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Here, if I may, what Ms. Brewster is asking is if there is a threshold or something that triggers the DEA to get more involved with the school if the school notifies the DEA. Thank you. Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you too, for that clarification. Though the district education authorities report to the principals every month and those are reported back to the regional school operations and then to the department. I can ask our deputy minister to further elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The Department of Education has, through the *Education Act*, with district education authorities having designated authority to have an attendance bylaw, which is enforced by the district education authorities.

Under the Act, the principal must report monthly to the district education authority attendance. That report is also shared with the superintendents and executive director, and we've been very mindful of how we can use that data to improve attendance, especially this year and this coming fall. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I'm sorry, but it's still not answering the question on whether there is a benchmark or a threshold or some type of a number or something actually

which would trigger the DEAs to get more involvement from the principal. Thank you. I'll go back to Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Every district education authority, under their authority, has an attendance bylaw, so it's based on the different bylaws that each district education authority have.

That threshold would be different for each district education authority. We can work to standardize it, but for the Education department it's 0 to 100. We're interested in whether their attendance rate is 0 or 100 and everything in between. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did hear the deputy minister state that we can work to standardize it. I think it's really important to have a minimum threshold of attendance. When your truancy rate starts to climb, it's extremely important for the entire community to know that the district education authorities are working to ensure that children and youth are in school.

The long-term impact of that is that we will have more people who are employable. So I would very much encourage that work to happen as soon as possible, and to also, of course, use the data that comes from the use of Edsby because I know that attendance is tracked in there. I'll end at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can look into to see what we can do for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster. (interpretation) Finished? (interpretation ends) Sorry.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have very many, but my first question is: How many teachers in this school year are teaching our students under a letter of authority? Nunavut-wide. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that number is 67. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) How many of that 67 are outside of Iqaluit? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: I don't have that number at the moment, Mr. Chairman, but we can look into how many are based... not from outside Iqaluit. For the 2023-24 school year, we have had 74 teachers on letter of authority. The regional breakdown is: For the Baffin 41, Kitikmeot 12, Kivalliq 21. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the minister have the breakdown for the three schools in Arviat; the Levi Angmak Elementary School, the Qitiqliq Middle School, and the John Arnalukjuak High School, the break down of how many are teaching under the letter of authority? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. We don't have that level of detail in front of us, but we can get back to the member with that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The education of our youth and students is critical, and I find it disturbing that there are so many teaching under authority. These in general, are people teaching with no, to the best of my knowledge, no background in teaching. They don't have certification for teaching, and they're expected to teach our children. It's critical in their learning stages that our students are taught by professional teachers. Are there any letters of authority teachers teaching in any of the high schools in Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. Again, that's high level of detail that we don't have in front of us, but we can commit to getting back with that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I think this is under here too, about occupancy levels, but if it's not, then you can disregard it. What is occupancy level or the usage level of the three schools in Arviat? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: For the John Arnalukjuak High School, it's 77 percent, the Levi Angmak Elementary School is 93 percent, and the Qitiqliq Middle School, it's 110 percent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have teachers teaching under letters of authority, and we also have substitute teachers. I don't think the minister would have that information too, but what's the level of substitute teachers that are used on average within Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That level varies day to day, so we would have to gather that information and get back to the member, but there are various instances for teachers needing substitutes for illness or for extracurricular activities such as coaching or other means. The numbers do vary, but we can look into that information and also get back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated earlier, our youth are just like a sponge, and they absorb whatever they are taught. It's so critical that they are taught by professional teachers. The number of letter of authority teachers is bothersome. Is there a number one reason why there are teachers teaching on letters of authority? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. There are I think maybe a few factors that relay into this point. There is a national teacher shortage across the country, and we do our very best to recruit as many teachers as we can, and we do go to many different events for the recruiting process.

Given that we also have a shortage of housing in our territory, but with Nunavut 3000 and the different types of housing that will be built and constructed, we did play a factor for some of the communities that we do know have a shortage of staff housing. The department has worked with the Housing Corporation to relay that information.

There were a couple communities identified over the past several years that have a teacher housing shortage. I would also like to say that our teachers do have to share housing and they are often times when sharing with their colleagues, there can be hardships in some cases. Another area is also the cost of travel for holidays. I know that that can also play an area that is burdensome.

Mr. Chairman, to get back to the member's previous comments about how many letters of authority in Arviat, there are currently seven.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess you didn't see my hand signal. That was my last question. I'd encourage the minister to try to get away from teaching our valuable students with a letter of authority. In their early years, whatever they are taught, it sticks with them. If they are taught by a professional teacher, they will be way more professional, and I believe they will have a better likelihood of graduating and going on to post-secondary. That's it. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard some very interesting questions from my colleagues. I don't know if I forgot to ask this question, but from kindergarten to grade 12, the School Operations Branch is projected to receive an increase for funding for 2024-25. What specific initiatives account for the increase in division budgets? What are the specific initiatives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: My apologies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the member for the question. So our department increase for K-12 school operations projected increased funding for busing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is \$2.5 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Which communities are going to be receiving those buses? Are you getting new buses, or are those replacement buses? That's my second question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the question. The cost of buses has gone up as well. It is hard for us to receive contracts for busing services, and those have also increased. The new buses that are expected to arrive this coming sealift are for the communities of Igloolik, Sanikiluaq, Sanirajak, and Pangnirtung. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While we're on this subject, those buses are for the students. Do you go by the size of the population or what are factors for a community to receive buses and when do they qualify to get a bus in their community? Is it by the population or how do you decide? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. We typically receive bus requests from the district education authorities that send a letter to the department requesting a new bus attached with a motion from a meeting that they had that indicates that they do a new bus or an extra bus in their community to service the needs for the school or the schools that are within the community. We do have a factor that we gather all of the applications together and go on a number of different factors.

It depends on the number of students in the community that require bussing services and the proportion of the number of bus seats that are available. We also look at the presence of wildlife in and around the community which poses risk to a student's safety. There is also the number of hours of daylight that is experienced in the community which also plays a factor, there's also the average temperature in the community is also looked at and the presence of uneven terrain in the community. There may be lots of hills or mountains that make it difficult for students to travel across their community to the school. We also look at the previous years of when the last buses were in the community and the age of the bus that is in the community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your response to this, the rationale that you put together, we don't really get a response whether it's based on population or not, I'm not clear there. I would like to move on to another item. For K-12 school in its operations in Nunavut is an area where I would like to ask what here the most difficult area is and what is commonly the obstruction while we're here? If it's an appropriate question, that is my question, and this is for all Nunavut schools. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, I didn't catch the question, if the member can please repeat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Correct me if I'm wrong, Ms. Killiktee, but I believe you're just asking what are some of the biggest outstanding challenges that the department has? Ms. Killiktee, you want to clarify?

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, the biggest challenges in your department with education, do they face under the Nunavut school operation? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question and rephrasing it. With K-12 school operations, it's a huge span of population in terms of the age from infancy all the way through to working to support the students and I think just the overall aspect of... . Maybe I'll ask the deputy minister to further elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question on this issue. The Nunavut government for a long time has not really been visible. On our 25 anniversary this year since the advent of government in 1999, the curriculum and everything in the school as the Department of Education, what we are responsible for when you see outside support across Canada. We try and put together on our own with help of Inuit organizations, but we have a very huge responsibility and on top of that, bilingual Inuit teachers are not sufficient in numbers.

We want to encourage people who want to get into a teaching profession. Those are some of the biggest hurdles, the amount of work required, and lack of preferred teachers. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page G-10. K-12 School Operations. Total Operations and Maintenance, \$209,586,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page G-11. Curriculum Resources and French Education. Amount of Total Operations and Maintenance requested, \$8,712,000. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The best of my understanding, the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories no longer use the Alberta curriculum and I believe we still do here.

Can the minister elaborate on the advantage or disadvantage or whether it's been looking at to whether the department is thinking about switching to the BC curriculum? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the question, we are working to develop a made-in-Nunavut curriculum which we're expending a lot of our energy and time into creating that with the projected timeframe that will be coming in the future, but I would like to ask our assistant deputy minister to elaborate on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Madam St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you (interpretation ends) to the member for his question. We did look at following the two other territories and transitioning to the B.C. curriculum, but even though the B.C. curriculum is based on Indigenous education and knowledge, and we still decided because we heard what the

population was telling us that we needed our made-in-Nunavut curriculum to solely reflect the Inuit culture and also the language of the territory.

That is why we're working on the made-in-Nunavut curriculum in the first year of implementation will be in September-August or September 2025-26 for kindergarten and grade 1. Thank you.

Chairman: *Merci.* Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Since this new made-in-Nunavut is going to be implemented or start to be used in the year 2025-26, which is just around the bend for kindergarten and grade 1. Is this curriculum being made in phases for certain grades at a time or the curriculum will come out so it's K-12 curriculum? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. It is done one grade at a time and one also we're implementing them based on the levels, so next August 2025, kindergarten and grade 1 will be Inuktitut first language, Inuktitut second language that will be implemented, and then in August 2026, we will be implementing Inuktitut second language Inuinnaqtun. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. Just for clarity then, the minister stated it would be one grade at a time? Will this take 12 years to implement the new curriculum? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for the question. Just a snapshot for Inuktitut first language, kindergarten and grade 1 next August 2025, grade 2 will be August 2026 and all the way subsequent and complete grade 6 in 2030.

That is also the same for Inuktitut second language and Inuinnaqtun will be a year behind starting in August 2026. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just from listening to the minister, it appears that this curriculum will only go to grade 6, correct? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. To further clarify, we are working on kindergarten to grade 6, and the approval for that, we're expecting to come out this July. Next year we will be starting the creation of grade 7 to grade 9, followed in their first and second draft. We will also be starting the grade 10 to grade 12.

We're at different stages for each different section of grades, and maybe I'll ask our assistant deputy minister to further elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Madame St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you (interpretation ends) to the member for his question. As Minister Gross said, we are currently at the K-6 curriculum, which is completely done. Now we are developing resources and preparing the training plan. This being said, now we're working on the 7-9 and 10-12. The implementation time for grade 7-12 is between 2031 and 2036.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When this made-in-Nunavut curriculum is being used by all schools including the high schools, will all the schools be completely bilingual? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they will. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask the minister; if a student is not bilingual at grade 12, will that student graduate? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. Graduation passing would allow them to graduate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure what the minister meant by graduation passing will allow them to graduate. This is going to be a bilingual education, so I would assume that students have to be bilingual in Inuktitut and English in order to graduate, so I'll ask again; will the student have to be able to speak Inuktitut and English to graduate grade 12 when this curriculum is fully implemented? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. I would like to ask our assistant deputy minister to elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu. Sorry, Ms. St. Louis.

Ms. St. Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you (interpretation ends) to the member for his question. Our goal is not to prevent the students from graduating. We hope that the plan we're putting in place is to make sure that the students develop knowledge of the language and go from grade to grade until he or she graduates.

However, if a student for any reason didn't get the language skills at the grade 12 level, it wouldn't prevent him from graduating, we would offer support to grade 8 to make sure that the language skills are updated on a yearly basis and progress from year to year.

However, all this together, the skills and the competency that are required to graduate is of the utmost importance. Along with the competencies, acquired, we hope that the language level will follow, if not, we are lifelong learners so the language acquisition will continue past grade 12. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This new curriculum that will be fully implemented in the near future, the goal is to immerse or familiarize the students with Inuktitut, but the goal is not really to make them bilingual as they will not have to be bilingual in order to graduate, correct? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're currently working with the district education authorities and the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities are travelling to our communities to look at the language of instruction models that are out there.

We're on our first phase of the review to look at those language models. We have three more communities to wrap up this month. We'll be done with the first official phase of looking at each community to see if those language of instruction models are going to change or if they like where they are.

Once those assessments and interviews and the work is complete this round, we'll be reviewing that work and then planning to go back to each community again before July 2025 and at that time, we'll have a better understanding of which community is at what level, or if we're going to be creating new models or where we are for the language of instruction implementation following the Nunavut curriculum and the language of

instruction implementation plan. I can ask our deputy minister to further explain. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question, important question to address here with the Department of Education. With our history in Nunavut, loss of language in our communities was immense, in some cases like Kitikmeot, they lost much of their language, and we need to help them to rebuild it by revitalization and building instructional models that work for them. In communities like Grise Fiord or Clyde River, Inuktitut is very much still the prevalent language, so our work and to your question, you're asking two questions.

We have on the one hand: the graduation requirements of a Nunavut student doesn't pertain to the requirement for Inuktitut, French, or English. There is a graduation path that will allow unilingual English-speaking-only graduate to occur.

With the Nunavut-made curriculum, there will be better opportunities to teach Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun in communities where it's not currently offered.

In the future, language of instruction models will be informed, and we will be able to individualize them to the degree of language loss that has happened or the degree of language richness a community has.

Every community has been different because in the 2008 *Education Act*, it was a very political and contentious subject to discuss, and whether we cave in to the political discussion and said yes, every community will choose their language of instruction model, that's been in my opinion a detriment to some successes in academics. We are doing our due diligence to review them through Bill 7 and our deadline is July 2025. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask the minister then, this curriculum that is being developed made-in-Nunavut will teach Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, but it's not a requirement to graduate, and in the *Education Act*, it clearly states that it will be a bilingual education.

Can I be enlightened on how you can have a bilingual education system that has to be met by a certain date, but it's not a requirement to be bilingual to graduate high school? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. There will be some level of bilingualism that will be required in order to graduate, and we don't

know that percentage yet, but we are working to gather that information. I think, maybe I can ask our deputy minister to give us that timeframe. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hainnu.

Ms. Hainnu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Right now, when we implement K-1 next year, we know they will have a level of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, so when they are about to graduate, we can impose language to the graduation requirement.

Right now, if we implemented, it would be to the detriment of those who have not had the language opportunity to acquire the language if that makes sense. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman. It makes sense right now because the new made-in-Nunavut curriculum is not being implemented to the whole class right now, but my question was when the new curriculum is being implemented, and I believe the minister stated that no, you will not have to be bilingual to graduate with the new curriculum system; there will be a path to graduation where you can graduate even if you're not bilingual, even though the *Education Act* requires that it has to be bilingual? Just clarity on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for that question. I may ask the deputy to further elaborate on this, but at the moment there are the variances of language in our communities and when the models for the language of implementation will be looked at and reviewed, right now we have the Qulliq model, immersion model, and dual model.

If there are communities, and I will say we do know that the Inuinnaqtun speaking communities of Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay don't have full immersion, as was stated in some of our communities with high levels of Inuktitut-speaking population, different models currently.

We may have communities with language loss, there may be communities in our territory that graduate from an English stream and have some levels of second language, but it won't be as strong as our other communities, to be fully bilingual. I would like to ask our deputy minister to further elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just very briefly before I go to Ms. Hainnu, and I understand the work is being done on the language of instruction model, so I think it's difficult for you to answer the question that Mr. Savikataaq is posing right now. I'm not sure how valuable it is to go down this path when we don't even know what those language of

instruction models is going to be like for another year or two likely. I'll go back to Mr. Savikataaq to see if there's any other questions he has.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How does that affect the French school? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to defer that to our assistant deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Madame St-Louis.

Ms. St-Louis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you (interpretation ends) to the member for his questions. Even though under the previous *Education Act*, Inuktitut language was not mandatory for the francophone school. With the new revised *Act*, it is now mandatory, so the CSFN will have to teach Inuktitut language at the level of comfort. They will have to promote fluency and the culture of the territory in their programming. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on Curriculum Resources and French Education. Amount being appropriated. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering if the department is keeping track of how many grade 12 graduates are graduating through with this curriculum that are either academic, general, or individualized education plans with this curriculum that they have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do have that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering if it's either actual numbers or percentages, if the minister has the breakdown of the three; academic, general, and individualized education plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. Each student has a validation statement, and we did implement that we are working. This past June we have with each report card the students received, their number of credits and which classes they have completed. We're doing those validation statements as a

requirement twice a school year, starting from grade 9 to grade 12. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I think what the member is looking for is a breakdown of the graduates, those that have graduated through the academic stream, the general stream, and the individual learning stream. Minister.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification. That's a high level of detail that I don't have in front of me, but we can look into that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope that the minister can get back to us pretty soon with that because, over the years, I have been noticing more and more students graduating either under an individualized education plan or the general stream, which in the end is failing some students that want to go to college or university and they're spending the first year upgrading. It's disheartening to see when you hear about it and I fear we're failing the students. That's where I was getting at with my line of questioning for that.

Moving along, some work is being done, it's page 126, under the third bullet, it says, "To support the efforts of District Education Authorities...to develop local programs that modify the School Program to meet local needs." I believe that some communities didn't even have an election because there was no interest to sit on district education authorities or some that barely have a board. If one member can't attend a meeting, then there is no meeting that month. I'm wondering what the department is doing to address that issue with meeting the needs of conditions or requirements that require consultations with district education authorities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member. We do have interim quorum orders that are out there for district education authorities that maybe don't have quorum and we give them the opportunity to establish quorum through those interim quorum orders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on Curriculum, Resources, and French Education. Page G-11. Total Operations and Maintenance being appropriated. \$8,712,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page G-12. Student Achievement. Total Operations and Maintenance requested. \$11,565,000. Any questions? Again, page G-12. Student Achievement. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$11,565,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page G-13. Educator Development. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$12,262,000. Any questions? Once again, page G-13. Educator Development. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$12,262,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go back to page G-3. Detail of Expenditures, to be Voted. Department of Education. \$279,705,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have concluded with the review of the Department of Education?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Any brief closing comments, minister?

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the members. I thank them for all their questions and for advocating for their schools and communities.

I thank everybody that works within the Department of Education, from our staff here that are here with us to the staff that are in our schools, and everyone that plays a supporting role, from the parents, teachers, and our communities for supporting our students through their education.

I look forward to getting back to our colleagues with the information that we said we would get back to them on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. The witnesses can be excused. We will take a 10-minute break and prepare for the next department. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 14:34 and resumed at 14:48

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Justice – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to welcome the committee back. I would like to ask Minister Akeeagok: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to allow the minister's witnesses to appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in.

Minister, when you're ready, you can introduce the officials and then proceed with your opening comments. Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Stephen Mansell, Deputy Minister, and to my right is Christine Ellsworth, Associate Deputy Minister, and in case we need him, Stephen Shaddock is here too, and colleagues, so we all know, David Lawson, Associate Deputy Minister, lost his mother suddenly and he won't be able to be here. He is in our thoughts and we send our condolences to him. He is our big helper with policing and corrections. I will try my best to answer questions, but if I am not able to respond, we will consider them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to appear before the committee to present the 2024-25 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice. The department requests \$172,043,000 for operations and maintenance in the 2024-25 fiscal year, which represents an increase of \$4,860,000, or 3 percent, from the 2023-24 fiscal year. (interpretation ends) The requested expenditure includes the following increases:

As a result of the new collective bargaining agreement between the Government of Nunavut with the Nunavut Employees Union, there is an increase of \$695,000 in compensation and benefits across the department.

An increase of \$3,063,000 is requested for the Law Enforcement Branch, which includes the following unapproved item:

- Increased funding due to the collective agreement completed between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the National Police Federation and to address inflation on an ongoing basis.

The increase in law enforcement expenditures also includes the following previously approved items:

- Five regular members to increase the Royal Canadian Mounted Police staffing.
- Funding to address inflation and divisional administration costs; and
- Eight new regular members for the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program, a partnership between the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut.

Law enforcement expenditures also include the following reductions for funds expired in 2024-25:

- One-time start-up costs for the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program; and
- One-time engine overhaul costs for RCMP's Air Services Division.

Under the Corrections Division, \$310,000 in additional funding that was approved in 2022-23 is requested for the Aqqigiarvik Correctional Healing Facility.

In grants and contributions, the department is requesting \$160,000 in additional funds previously approved in 2022-23 for the Nunavut Legal Services Board and \$90,000 in new funding for an office administrator position for the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal.

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee is asking for an additional \$150,000 to retain professional paralegal services to provide legal and investigative support services.

For the Legal Registries Division, the department requests \$109,000 for the new position of senior legal registries officer. This position will help the division address the growing transaction volume and provide advancement opportunities for staff, particularly Inuit staff.

Lastly, we are requesting \$241,000 for the new position of legislative counsel-Inuktitut in the Legislation Division. This position will be responsible for the Inuktitut versions of Nunavut's legislation, developing Inuktitut-specific drafting standards, and providing advice on the integration of Inuit legal traditions into legislation.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening comments. I would be pleased to answer questions from the committee members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am happy to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness on its review of the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Justice. The department's proposed 2024-25 operations and maintenance budget is \$172,043,000. This represents a 2.9 percent increase from the 2023-24 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is increasing from 473.0 to 477.0 PYs, or person years. This increase is accounted for by new positions in the department's Directorate Division, Legislation Division, Community Justice Division, and the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal.

On October 27, 2023 the Premier of Nunavut tabled *Updated Ministerial Mandate Letters* in the Legislative Assembly. One of the department's priorities is to "provide broad support for *Katujjiluta* through legislative review and legislative development aimed at implementing mandate objectives." During the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee, members had a broad discussion about what specific actions the department has been undertaking to support this priority.

The department's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include \$3,353,000 for the operations of the Office of the Public Trustee and Guardian. The Office of the Public Trustee and Guardian administers trusts and estates on behalf of minors and Nunavummiut who die without a will. This office also supports people with disabilities and assists with personal affairs in collaboration with clients and their families. Members raised a number of concerns regarding the status of this office and the role that it plays in supporting vulnerable clients and their families.

The department's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include \$908,000 for the operations of the Office of the Chief Coroner. Members raised a number of questions regarding how this office fills its vacancies and what supports the department provides to community coroners. The standing committee recognizes that the *Coroners Act* does not require the tabling of an annual report from this office. However, the standing committee continues to strongly encourage the minister to resume the practice of tabling this office's annual reports so that all Members of the Legislative Assembly have the opportunity to review its important work, including recommendations made following such proceedings as coroner's inquests. Recent communication from the minister indicates that the Office of the Chief Coroner is "considering the impact of this request on the office's capacity." The standing committee looks forward to receiving further updates regarding the status of this important work.

The standing committee notes that in June 2023 the department undertook a Nunavut minimum wage survey and invited businesses and residents to participate. On November 6, 2023 the department announced that the territorial minimum wage would be increasing from \$16 to \$19 per hour starting on January 1, 2024. During the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee, members asked a number of questions regarding the number of businesses that participated in the survey and how many businesses supported the minimum wage increase.

The standing committee notes that the department currently has a number of outstanding statutory tabling requirements under the *Labour Standards Act*, the *Legal Profession Act*, and the *Legal Services Act*.

The department's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include \$70,252,000 for the Law Enforcement Branch operations. The standing committee strongly supports initiatives to recruit more Inuit into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. One of the department's priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year is to "Support the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in recruiting Inuit regular members, civilian members and public service employees."

On May 31, 2023 the Minister of Justice tabled the 2022-25 *Government of Nunavut-Royal Canadian Mounted Police "V" Division Shared Directional Statement* in the Legislative Assembly. The 2022-25 Shared Directional Statement outlines five priorities "identified by Nunavummiut, the Government of Nunavut and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police." Members asked a number of questions regarding specific actions that the department and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are undertaking to achieve the priorities of the new shared directional statement. Members encourage the minister to

report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of the shared directional statement.

The department's *Five-Year Nunavut Crime Prevention Strategy* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 14, 2017 and expired in 2022. The standing committee notes that one of the department's priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year is to "work in partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to create and implement a crime prevention strategy." Members of the standing committee look forward to receiving further updates on this important work and to its tabling in the House.

On November 8, 2022 the federal Minister of Public Safety and the territorial Minister of Justice released a joint statement regarding the expansion of the First Nation and Inuit Policing Program into Nunavut. The standing committee notes that the Law Enforcement Branch includes "one-time, start-up costs for the First Nation and Inuit Policing Program." Members asked a number of questions on the status of this program in Nunavut, including how many positions have been created, and for a financial breakdown of the program. Members look forward to receiving further updates on this important initiative.

The department's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include \$3,935,000 for the Community Corrections Division. Community correction officers provide "supervision, support and programming to adult and youth offenders on probation or under conditional sentences." Members raised a number of concerns regarding this division, including the extent to which it is able to fulfill its mandate in communities that do not have resident community correction officers or where the positions are vacant.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Justice. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Any committee members have general comments to the opening comments? Bobby? My apologies. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to go to page 2 in the paragraph that says, "The increase in law enforcement" and first bullet, "Five new regular members to increase RCMP staffing." I'm wondering if that is going to let the communities have 24-hour police service. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Anavilok. This is just general comments to the opening comments. It's not a time for questions just yet. Did you have any general comments to the opening comments? Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Yes. The reason why I said that is there were some issues in Kugluktuk. When the constituents come to be, it's about the RCMP service. Sometimes they take about an hour, two hours, and sometimes they wait 'til the next and then they go see them. That's my comment. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. On page E-5, you will be able to ask specific law enforcement questions. Seeing no names, first name I have on my list for page E-4, Directorate, Total Operations and Maintenance being requested, \$27,690,000, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to let you know that I might be having a little bit of an allergic reaction to those nuts that were in the break room. Actually, my tongue is swelling up, so I'm going to try to keep this brief and if the answers could be brief as well, I'd like to go and get some Benadryl.

Minister I'll go to your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year is to undertake the necessary legislated work to improve Nunavut's family violence laws, and I would like to know what specific actions or changes will your department undertake to improve the family violence law? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope my colleague does get that Benadryl, I've experienced that before and it's not good, so I hope she gets that.

In terms of the *Family Intervention Act*, our community consultations have been completed. We're tallying up all the discussions that have taken place. The next steps now are that we'll be in a position to start preparing for legislative proposal. That's going to be our next step. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Does that review include a review of the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* and the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* implementation plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's the full review of the *Act*. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So it's part of that review, is there a review of the implementation plan for the implementation of the *Act*, and if so, what important lessons have been learned and what changes are under consideration to improve the action towards the impact of family violence? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Through you, Mr. Chairman, could I ask that deputy minister Mansell respond to this? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Part of our consultation was to, one of the main groups we spoke with was our staff on the ground, CGS, community justice supervisors, JPs, and RCMP to talk about implementation and how we can do better rolling out a new *Act*. Some of the things that we learned was that community intervention orders aren't fully understood, and we need to do better to make sure that victims are aware of the options under the *Family Abuse Intervention Act*, and we need to make sure that the applications are easy to fill out and accessible.

That's some of the stuff we heard, but the new *Act* is going to be based on a lot of the advice of our frontline staff who have worked with this *Act* daily and have told us how it can be more user-friendly and more accessible to Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same issue, have important stakeholders been engaged in that, including community members who have availed of those orders and are best able to give advice on the utility or efficacy of the orders? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: As it's still a follow-up from the previous question, I'll go directly to Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Yes, when we chose where to go, we looked at communities where the services under the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* were accessed regularly, and we visited those communities and we made sure to get feedback from clients. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to the implementation of these Acts and of the programming related to the Acts, what I recall is that the implementation plan didn't fully engage every partner who was a part of the implementation, and importantly, there wasn't enough funding tied towards helping those partners implement those Acts and there are issues such as if there's a protection order to remove a person who is being abusive from a family, there aren't any places for that person who is the subject of that order to leave the household.

Often what happens we know is that the person who initiated those orders is under a lot of pressure to take the subject of the orders back, so it just continues the cycle without giving the ability for the time away or the treatment options for the person who is

abusing, so will that be under consideration in the implementation along with the funding to ensure that programs and services are available? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. As the detailed question is still part of the same line of question, I'll go again directly to Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Our implementation and rollout will definitely be based on lessons learned over time. On that specific issue, I can't say that we have already made some changes within our Community Justice Division and that our CJOWs [community justice outreach workers] really focus on assisting the subject of the family abuse intervention order to find somewhere to go. They sit down with them, look at all options and the last option that we do now have available is for the department to fund, very short-term, somewhere to go.

As of now, we've been able to find other alternatives without having to go to that, but it is something that's available right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Just for the record, I believe CJOW is a community justice outreach worker and I have heard anecdotally that the new initiative has been working to find a short-term place for the subject to be at.

On a recent correspondence from the minister indicated that the Department of Justice and the Office of the Chief Coroner continue to explore the possibility of establishing a committee to review deaths involving domestic and intimate partner violence in Nunavut.

As we know, this is an issue that I've brought up. I'm wondering if I can get an update on that, and if minister, if I could hear what specific actions is your department undertaking to establish this committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working with them, and we are currently looking for a chair for that committee. I also wanted to point out that we were going to have a presentation with the coroner's office, which includes a lot of these. I'm looking forward to doing a presentation in June in terms of having the coroner report directly to our colleagues here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am really happy to hear that update. Minister, what is the expected timeline to establish a domestic and intimate partner violence review committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am really hoping it will be this year. We are in the process of getting that committee up and running and they are the ones that are going to determine that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: The next name I have on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one topic I'd like to cover under this branch and it's in regard to legislation. I do note that the priorities include undertaking that legislative work to improve Nunavut's family law regime and Nunavut's family violence laws.

When we had Nunavut Housing Corporation before us, I did note that the *Residential Tenancies Act* is quite out of date, dating back to 1988. The legislation is 36 years old.

Has the department identified the *Residential Tenancies Act* as needing updating? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for bringing this to our attention, too. We have done the policy work. In terms of when we will update the legislation and how we will be able to do it.

Just looking at the sheer volume of it, I don't think we will be able to do it within this government, but it is something that the policy intentions paper portion of it has been completed and is going through our government process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I am glad that the department has identified this and begun the process of completing that policy intentions paper.

I'd like to ask, what has been identified as some of the more major issues within the *Residential Tenancies Act* that needs to be repealed or replaced? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, could I ask my deputy minister who has been intimately involved in the policy intentions paper, to respond on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. As the member mentioned, the *Act* needs an overhaul, so I don't have everything we'd like to do, but off the top of my head, some of the provisions related to staff housing need to be

updated, there are certain tenant rights that have been put in legislation in other jurisdictions that we need to update on, and there are some protections with respect when you can do an eviction and how, that we are also falling behind on. There is a lot to update in that *Act*, but those are some of the things that we've been looking at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. One matter that I'd like to touch upon specifically is rent control. I believe rent control was first introduced in Canada in 1944. That's quite a long time ago. I know that there are both pros and cons to rent control, protecting renters from rent increases, but also the negative is the potential disincentive to invest in construction.

However, looking at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's most recent annual report on northern housing, it identifies that rent increases over a two-year period were as high as eight percent and that was the bachelor class apartments, and also six percent in larger four-bedroom units.

Those are steep increases, far above inflation, far above anybody's ability to see salary increases keep up with that significant cost of living. Has the department considered that aspect in the policy intentions paper? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have. That's one of the things that are on the list as far as the policy intentions paper.

Chairman: Thank you. We are one page E-4. Directorate. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your department currently has a number of outstanding statutory tabling requirements under the *Labour Standards Act*, *Legal Profession Act*, and *Legal Services Act*. A number of these reports are prepared by arms-length entities.

The question is, Mr. Chairman, what accounts for the delay in the preparation and tabling of these annual reports? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just tabled the *Labour Standards Act* on February 28, 2024. As for the other two, both are in progress, and we are trying to work towards the spring sitting to put both of those reports into tabling. I want to assure my colleagues that we are working on both of those outstanding tabling items. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. I had a lot of issues and concerns from constituents regarding labour standards, so I'll be happy to look at that report and take it from there.

I'll now move on, Mr. Chairman. The updated ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of October 27, 2023. Your mandate letter indicates that one of your department's priorities is to, "Provide broad support for Katujjiluta through legislative review and legislative development aimed at implementing mandate objectives."

The question is, Mr. Chairman: what specific actions will your department undertake to achieve this objective? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Justice plays a very crucial role in terms of ensuring that all the legislation, regulations, and policies are adhered to for any of our Katujjiluta mandate.

I think one of the examples that I want to use and one that I'm asking for additional dollars is under registry. In terms of that, because with Nunavut 3000, we want to ensure that those houses and those homes go into Nunavut and that there are no barriers towards it. I want to make sure the Department of Justice is not part of that barrier. That's one example that we do provide.

We provide the legal services that we do in the Legislative Assembly if there is any legislation towards any of our Katujjiluta mandate. So we have a very supportive role, and our department is quite busy on helping implement the Katujjiluta mandate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. I have been talking a lot about community morgues and this chief coroner ties to that, to the community morgues. It's very important that we do have coroners.

The 2011 *Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Coroner* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 19, 2014. Recent correspondence from the minister indicated that the Office of the Chief Coroner is "Considering the impact on the office's capacity and operational requirements to resume producing annual report."

The question is, Mr. Chairman: when will the Office of the Chief Coroner be in a position to produce these reports to be tabled in the House? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our coroner is almost like an arms-length organization, and we have been working very closely with our coroner, as he agreed to provide a report and something we'll continue to work towards. I don't have that specific timeline, but I am hoping we do this sooner than later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll continue on the same topic. On February 2, 2023, your department issued a public service announcement seeking community coroners. My question is: How many applications did your department receive as a response to this call-out and how many were hired? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have that detail with me, but I will commit to providing that to the committee. It is sort of, live, in terms of those applications and the calls that our coroner's office received. I will commit to provide, in detail, the questions he just raised. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that commitment. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you minister for your response. Also, can the minister provide detailed information of how many community coroner positions are filled and how many are vacant? I would like to see that detailed information once the minister is able to provide that. That will be my last question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok, do you have that information?

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. There are 17 coroners throughout the territory and there are nine communities that do have coroners. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: On page E-4. Directorate. Department of Justice. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$27,690,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please got to page E-5. Law Enforcement. Total Operations and Maintenance requested. \$70,252,000. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated earlier, I just want to go back to your comments on page 2, increase law enforcement with five new regular members and increase RCMP staff.

Is that going to give us 24-hour police service in the communities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the RCMP are on a 24-hour operations for every community. They get triaged in terms of what the calls are and if there are missed calls that are being done, I really want to hear about it. It is something that we thrive to make sure that the RCMP do go to every call if they need to be, especially the emergency ones. If there have been any missed calls, I want to hear about it and look into it because we strive on it in terms of having the RCMP respond to all the calls.

In terms of the five additional regular members, I want to assure the member from Kugluktuk that Kugluktuk is one of the those getting an additional regular member as part of these five. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I wanted to ask that is that there were some constituents that had a concern. They called the RCMP and sometimes it was closed and sometimes they didn't come at all. They went to see them the next day, so that is one of the reasons why I'm asking.

I just have two more questions. On May 31, 2023 the Nunavut Minister of Justice and the Nunavut RCMP Commanding Officer had their Shared Directional Statement 2022-25, tabled in the Legislative Assembly. This shared directional statement outlines five priorities, including crime prevention and reduction. The document indicates that "The Government of Nunavut and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police commit to addressing the harmful effects and crimes associated with bootlegging and substance abuse." What specific actions will your department take to assist the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with this priority? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you very much for that question, Mr. Chairman. Our Department of Justice and the RCMP have been very proactive in trying to get the right tools to combat bootlegging.

One of the tools that we really want to see is that Canada Post, in our southern mail sorting places, that they get the right tools to look for in terms of any illegal alcohol trying to enter into our communities.

Canada Post has been a good partner in the X0A part, which is the Montreal facility. They've done pilot projects on it, and they've also had follow-up on it. What I've asked Canada Post and the RCMP "V" Division Commanding Officer, along with my deputy, at all levels, we are asking Canada Post if they can do that to all the three mailing facilities. I am still waiting for a response on that. I will continue to press that.

Also, part of this, as Minister of Justice, I have been having discussions with the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation in terms of seeing if we can use the tools that the airports use like southern facilities where they have scanning systems. I don't know, it's an acronym, CATSA, the agency that is doing the screening for all major airports is one avenue that we are also trying to explore and see if we can stop the bootlegging at that level.

Some good work has undergone and the RCMP has done some seizures in Nunavut. In 2023 we made 12 notable alcohol seizures through the RCMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one last question. The Nunavut Minister of Justice and the Nunavut RCMP's 2022-25 Shared Directional Statement was tabled on May 31, 2023. This document indicates five shared priorities to help promote healthy and safe communities. One of the priority areas is to "Actively undertake and encourage the recruitment of Inuit officers and employees on an ongoing basis." What specific actions is your department currently undertaking to achieve this goal? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The RCMP has gone a long way in terms of trying to recruit Inuit. I think are starting to see some progress in terms of getting some cadets into the RCMP recruitments. They've attended career fairs and I've seen them at the Kitikmeot Trade Show where the RCMP members that were trying to recruit, in fact they were trying to recruit me.

In terms of trying to get more Inuit interested, so far for this year, I'm knocking on wood that there be at least four Nunavummiut growing and entering into that.

I want to also mention that although he's not from Nunavut, an Inuk has made it to the depot this year and we're very proud that he, on his own efforts, has entered into that. I look forward to seeing that graduation because it is over 20 years now since we have seen an Inuk pass the depot.

I am working very closely with the "V" Division Commander on this and trying to promote more Inuit in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to follow up on Member Anavilok's question with regard to one of the priorities being to support the RCMP in the recruitment of Inuit regular members, civilian members, and public service employees.

I do recognize the amount of initiative that has been taking place over the years, especially focusing on the recruitment of RCMP cadets. I would like to recognize the Department of Justice's role in that as well as the previous Chief Superintendent Amanda Jones. The difference between her and the previous commander and their Inuit employment initiatives was night and day. So I would like to recognize her role in that as well. I hope that our current chief superintendent will continue that.

As I indicated, a lot of the emphasis has been on the recruitment of regular members, Inuit RCMP officers. The priorities for the current fiscal year 2023-24 as well as the upcoming year for 2024-25, goes beyond recruiting RCMP officers, but also civilian members and public service employees.

I would like to ask the minister if he would be able to provide an update on the current year's status of the Inuit civilian members and Inuit public services employees within the RCMP, so that we can get a gauge on their targets for the upcoming fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As of February 2024 there are 23 public service employees and 9 civilian members with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In terms of how many are Inuit, I don't have that specifically, but I would commit to providing that for the member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I've asked committee members and witnesses to make sure that their notifications are turned off on their phones. Even on vibrate, it comes through very sensitively on the microphone. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, minister, I do appreciate that commitment. In addition to providing the number of Inuit employees, would you also identify the number of employees who are hired locally? That's just a final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak is the next name I have on my list.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, ministers, and to your officials. On the minister's opening comments, on page two in the middle there, he mentions there is five new regular members to increase Royal Canadian Mounted Police staffing and eight new regular members for the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program.

I am wondering which communities are getting these members and is it one per community? Or is there multiple going to one community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Other than Kugluktuk I am assuming you are asking, Mr. Simailak. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, since 2023 a total of 14 positions were approved to go to various communities.

For this fiscal year, the five regular members that are planned for will be for Kugluktuk, that I mentioned, Iqaluit, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet, and Taloyoak.

Also, for the First Nations and Inuit policing, for 2023-24 the plan was Iqaluit, Kinngait, Arctic Bay, Qikiqtarjuaq, Sanirajak, Naujaat, and Kugaaruk.

For 2024-25, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Pangnirtung, Whale Cove, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and Kugluktuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I didn't hear Baker Lake in there anywhere. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yeah, I didn't hear Baker Lake either, which is unfortunate with the amount of activity happening in the detachment in Baker Lake, I was actually hoping to hear that. I did hear a couple communities mentioned a couple times at least in the minister's response.

I am wondering what parameters the Royal Canadian Mounted Police used to allocate both of these groups, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and First Nations and Inuit Policing Program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I didn't mention Baker Lake was Baker Lake already had theirs first. They were one of the first ones to receive it 2022.

In terms of the parameters in how the communities are selected, if I may ask my deputy minister to elaborate. There are various criteria. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. “V” division, in consultation with the department, makes the recommendation. It’s based a number of factors. The primary factor is caseload per member. They have a target that they don’t like to go ahead of. So, they’ll identify communities based on how many members, how many calls and caseload per member.

They also look at issues like do we have housing available for a new member to go into. We were prioritizing two-member detachments for some time, because in two-member detachments it’s very difficult for anyone to get any time off with two-member detachments.

I would say caseload per member, availability of housing, availability of office space, and whether or not the detachment was two-member were some of the primary issues that are looked at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister and deputy minister, for your responses. I am wondering now with the issue of burn out with the members that could be happening with the caseloads and number of call-outs happening across the territory.

How is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or Justice handling recruitment on short term? I believe they are sometimes fill-ins from the south. How often is that happening and is it across the territory or how many communities would get temporary fill-ins from the south? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is across the country, not just our territory. They’re using a lot of their reserves to bring the regular members in to some of communities, but that’s happening across the country. Our “V” division commander was to a point where usually, each “V” division shares some of their members, and some of those divisions within our different provinces but were so short-staffed too that they weren’t willing to provide their reservists, but thanks to the intervention from our Canadian commissioner that was prevented, and we continued to strive on making sure that there be regular members into the communities.

It’s an ever-changing landscape in terms of where those reserves are. I don’t have that detail with me, and I don’t know if we keep that, but it’s one that our “V” division is working hard to ensure that there are adequate members in each of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With these reserves that are coming in, are there perhaps cultural sensitivity training done to help integrate these reserves into our Nunavut communities? I do know that city police in the provinces are a lot stricter, a lot more abrupt; I guess would be a nice way to say it, whereas veteran Royal Canadian Mounted Police members in Nunavut know how to handle different call-outs. I am wondering if there is cultural sensitivity training of some sort done with these reserves coming in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the reservists, it is not as comprehensive as what the regular members do get. The reservists are flown in as an immediate. They do get portions of that, but not to the same intent as the regular members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One last question about law enforcement, is the department looking at perhaps working with the hamlets or the city bylaw officers to perhaps incorporate a new patrolling system? Or giving them more responsibilities so that it may ease the workload for Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments using *Qanuqtuurniq*? Is something like that being worked on or thought of? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police do have a good, strong working relationship with each of our hamlets. They report to the hamlet council on a monthly basis and if there are ways of helping each other, that is always an option.

As we mentioned in this, the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program is designed to do that very thing, which is to provide what the community wants to see more of, in terms of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This First Nations and Inuit Policing is before any of the members get in there, there has to be a memorandum of understanding between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Department of Justice, and our hamlets. That work is going well underway.

We were hoping that we would make that announcement this session, in terms of reaching those agreements, but that work is still going, and I am really hoping that we roll this out soon and get the community buy in in terms of what they would like to see the Royal Canadian Mounted Police focus on community initiatives. That's very near and dear to each community because each community is unique. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the minister did not answer my question. I was referring to each hamlet. They have bylaw officers. The City of Iqaluit has bylaw officers, and instead of just like in Baker Laker for example, instead of driving around going after loose dogs or curfew, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police work with these hamlets and the City of Iqaluit to look at putting together a program and give these bylaw officers more responsibility and perhaps ease the burden of Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment, with actual officers.

I am not talking about giving these bylaw officers side arms, but perhaps there is some work they could help out with that Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers do. Has that been thought of or is it being worked on now or, if not, is the minister willing to entertain that idea? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is always as part of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police work that they do within each of the communities. They find ways to work together. I can't speak for other communities, but a prime example is when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police want to do spot checks. The bylaw from the city also is very active in terms of participating in that. There is some work that community bylaws or the city bylaw will work together. That's one that I will continue that they foster that and do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq, next name on my list.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I am interested in is crime prevention strategy. So I'll go on. Your department's five year Nunavut Crime Prevention Strategy was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 14, 2017. The strategy expired in 2022 and the question is, Mr. Chairman: how has your department measured the effectiveness of the strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Through you, could I ask my deputy minister Mansell to respond to that?

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the good question. So we're in the middle right now of doing a review report of the impact of the last Crime Prevention Strategy. What we learned from it and how we can do better on a Crime Prevention Strategy going forward and if it should look like the last one.

We've made headway on that. We're working with a consulting partner and that review will inform what future Crime Prevention Strategy looks like for Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mansell, for your response. I'll just follow up another one. This will be my last one, Mr. Chairman.

Your department's five-year Nunavut Crime Prevention Strategy expired in 2022. What is the expected timeline for tabling of a new five-year Nunavut Crime Prevention Strategy? To what extent will the new strategy differ from the old strategy? To my understanding it won't differ much, but I would like to know if there will be any difference from the old strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What my deputy minister just mentioned is that that's currently under review. We're hoping that review gets done by this summer. Then the drafting of the new strategy would then start to take place.

I'm committed if there are any regular members that are interested in terms of providing that input, my door is always open into that. I'll put out that for my regular members in terms of, what successful strategies have always had, is great input from our regular members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I would like to ask is in the communities with policing, they work with the local alcohol education committees, and they review alcohol orders. Maybe I should ask first, are you kept informed of the work that the alcohol committees do? Do they give you any reports on these matters? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The local alcohol education committees are given a list of people who are not permitted to order alcohol. The reports from the committee are sent to the minister's office, but we provide a copy to the RCMP. This is just a list of the people who are not permitted to drink alcohol. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really understand if you get the reports.

There are some problems when some people are just approved. Even though they did something wrong, they allow the person to order more alcohol. If the person had been violent or been very destructive, and even though a person does that, they are still allowed to order alcohol. They get rated to see if they will be allowed to order alcohol or not. Because that is done, does this run not just verbally? Is there anything written back and forth? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We cannot tell the alcohol committees what to do. They put together a list of people who are allowed to order and the local police give a list of people who cause problems, and these are the people that we are worried about. They recommend that it's better if these people do not be allowed to order alcohol. That is what the RCMP provides to the local alcohol committee and it's up to the local alcohol education committee to approve or disapprove the requests. The police cannot tell the committee that this person is not allowed to order alcohol. They can't tell them that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So while that's the case, the community local education committees who handled the requests for orders; those people who are allowed to order even though they break the law: who makes it so that people are not allowed to order anymore? Is it the hamlets? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The alcohol education committee has directions from the Department of Finance and they put together their own by-laws and they are elected by the local community and they decide what is allowed. The Department of Finance are the administrators for the elected alcohol committee, but the local committees handle that. I hope I'm making sense. The local alcohol education committee makes that list. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for that. It's going to be clearer now when people are talking about it.

I'd like to move onto something else. I'd like to know if this has been included. There are civilian officers, they have people who have to stay at the RCMP cells, usually in the middle of the night, and they usually don't need them during the daytime.

Do all communities have proper guards for the local jail cells so the police will nit get burnt out. How does that work for guards in the community jails.. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a good job in all communities and the RCMP looks for people to be guards who can watch over people in jails middle of the night. They do have guards in all the communities and when they can't find a guard, the RCMP officers have to stay there all night.

Each community is different in this regard, it is part of what the RCMP is responsible for, I don't know which communities have guards and which don't have guards. There are supposed to be positions available in all the communities for overnight duties of inmates. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question and I have brought it up in the House. Has there been an improvement in working together with the community so the staff in all communities? I would like to get some information or more details about the permission of interpreters in the office.

Mr. Chairman, how many staff do you have in the communities or are there some communities that don't have interpreter/translators in some of the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I indicated that I will be bringing this; I will be getting the information to see how many staff the RCMP has and how many interpreter/translators are available. Once we have the information we'll get back to the member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name that I have my list, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is just more like a comment or suggestion, I'm just being nosey.

As you know most of the communities in Nunavut are small and pretty much everybody knows everybody where everybody lives. Most of the communities are small and have the highest number of unemployment.

When there are calls made, the RCMP staff, they don't know where everybody lives especially when they are getting into town; they don't know where anybody lives. Half the time when they're looking for that house number. Sometimes it's dangerous when some people associated where they're intoxicated and sometimes there are firearms involved and that can be very dangerous.

My suggestion is if the RCMP if they could hire two locals, night and day shifts. I think it's better to get the house right away, concerned with a call in the incident; it could be dangerous that's why. Better to get there right away instead looking around driving around really slow.

Plus some of those calls involve elders and some of them have hard time communicating with the RCMP trying to tell them but that individual that they hire could show them where the house is concerning elders so they can translate. You need detailed information for some incidents that happened.

So, that's just a suggestion I can say, I know it will help some communities that are smaller. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for that suggestion. We hold a monthly meeting with our Commanding Officers and the senior staff. I will definitely bring that forward too. I know that their using every tool to try and get to their calls as soon as possible but as you say, some new Officers are just arriving. They go right into the scene without knowing where they're going. We really take your suggest to heart. Definitely bring that forward to the "V" division. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. From Law Enforcement to page E-5. Total Operations and Maintenance \$70,262,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you, please turn to page E-6. Lawyer Support Services. Total Operations and Maintenance being requested, \$5,139,000. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have two questions to the minister. First one is: Your department's draft 2024-26 indicates that when for each priority 2024-25 fiscal year is to "This department requesting the incorporation of Inuit societal values into their legislation to do so in a precise manner so that they can ensure that their programs and services are more relevant and so that the Inuit societal values statements are more fulsome." How will your department assist in the incorporation of Inuit societal values into their legislation, and can you provide a specific example of how this has been done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are numerous ways that we're trying to combat this in terms of getting this through.

In my opening comments, one of the key things is that I'm looking for your support to get money towards our Legislative Division, in terms getting an Inuktitut director that's going to help pave through to ensure that Inuit societal values are incorporated.

Also, if we start hoping that the Inuktitut language is recognized as equal as English and French.

Those are very fundamental things that I want to see, and I'm trying to thrive, in terms of ensuring that Inuit and the Inuktitut language is enshrined in our legislation. I'm just giving that one example. There are many that we are trying to do in terms of ensuring that all legislation to our government is enshrined in Inuit societal values. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for your response. I want you to know that you have my full support.

I'll move onto the next one. In January of 2021 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced its partnership with the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation. This initiatives' goal was to increase the number of Inuit working within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force.

Your predecessor indicated that none of the participants successfully completed the program. However, one participant did start working with the Iqaluit Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment.

Is your department actively considering initiating another partnership with Makigiaqta with the goal of encouraging and training Inuit to join the Royal Canadian Mounted Police? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a good effort, in terms of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In lieu of that, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is doing a number of things to try and get Inuit into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, such as the depot youth camp, the career fairs, as I mentioned earlier, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Recruiting Evaluation Centre, and that's to see how the application can be more relevant to Indigenous people.

Those are the good work that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is doing. There are more that they are doing, and if we need to go back to Makigiaqta, that door is definitely open. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for your response. You have my full support. I encourage your department to recruit more Inuit into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, so that every Nunavut community, if possible, have an Inuk working as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

This will be my last one, Mr. Chairman. What other initiatives is your department actively considering to continue to encourage Inuit to work with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That will be my last one.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The ones that are mentioned are the big ones. The ongoing work in trying to recruit people, all the members in the communities are actively looking for anyone that's eager. I think that's thorough that cadet program is one of the good things. Through a number of things, we've got at least four Nunavut Inuit that are interested in going to the depot. I know there are barriers for some and we're looking at the barriers that are before us.

One of the keys things is that you need very good eyesight, and when you don't have that, when someone needs to do corrective eyes, it doesn't get covered by the Non-Insured Health Benefits. It falls on, if a young person is trying to get into RCMP and to that, they have to pay that by themselves. We're trying to find ways of how can we take that barrier and reduce that.

We're actively looking for these different things and also, I as I mentioned, as the members are very engaged in the communities, and try to attract Inuit into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page E-6. Lawyer Support Services. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$5,139,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page E-7. Registries and Court Services. Total Operations and Maintenance being requested. \$14,896,000. Any questions? Again, we're on page E-7. Registries and Court Services. Total Operations and Maintenance, \$14,896,000. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I honestly believe it's really important to have Justice of the Peace positions in every community, so I'll go on to ask the possible lines of questioning.

Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that due to the current vacancies in the Justice of the Peace positions, the implementation of the regional Justice of the Peace programs will be carried over to the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The question is: As of today, how many Justice of the Peace positions are filled and how many are vacant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are 32 active Justices of the Peace in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I failed to answer his second question, which is how many were vacant? There are two that are vacant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you minister, for the clarification. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for your clarification. I'll move on to the next one. Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year is to "Continue to implement the regional Justice of the Peace programs." The question is: can you clarify the scope of this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our chief justice Mr. Sharkey is very adamant that this really needs to get explored and done so we are doing some work on it. We have a consultant in terms of trying to figure out what the feasibility is and I'm looking forward to that report and hopefully, we'll be able to sort of move forward towards it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last one. Your department's draft 2024-26 indicates that one of its priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year is to "Work to develop a corporate online registration system that is compatible with the Multi-Jurisdictional Registry Access Service." This will be my last question. What is the projected timeline to achieve this priority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're going to try and figure out what will be needed, so, that part will be this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although my colleague had asked this question in regard to Justice of the Peace, is that what we call them in Inuktitut, *Iqqaqtuijiralaat*, Justices of the Peace? Is that what we're talking about? I have a question in regard to that to follow up on your response to the question that was posed.

You said there were 32 positions in the communities. There are some communities that have more Justices of the Peace than any other community. During the Northwest Territories government, I believe there were two Justices of Peace per community. Is it more like one Justice of the Peace in the community, even when the community has a small population? They used to have two Justices of the Peace. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We always want to have more than one Justice of the Peace. We do want to see that occur in the communities. We can provide training. We make that training available. We advertise the Justice of the Peace positions. If you're interested, come and apply. It would be better to have more Justices of the Peace, especially in the smaller communities. Due to family members in the community, that's where the problem lies. Therefore, they would have to train the individual. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your answer was very clear, and I understand. I agree with you, as well, that in regard to; I know that having close family relatives, and I have seen individuals leave because of close connection with family in the system.

In my constituency, I believe that they have one Justice of the Peace. It's been quite some years, or more, that I looked into it, that there has been one Justice of the Peace. I did not check the other communities, but I'm asking the department to send a letter to Uqummiut to note, encourage, and advertise the Justice of the Peace position in the community.

If you write a letter of correspondence to the community asking them for support to make sure there is more applications for Justice of the Peace, because this is important in my constituency. I'll just leave it at that. I just wanted to comment on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. I totally agree with your assessment thereby I will send out a letter to you outlining the issue you brought up, and if we can receive more support from the communities as we request this information from them, if members can encourage their constituency communities, due to the importance of this process and we want to see the best iteration benefitting our people who deal with this important local function. They provide a lot of assistance in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on page E-7. Registries and Court Services. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$14,896,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page E-8. Corrections. Total Operations and Maintenance being requested. \$47,244,000. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to touch upon community corrections and more specifically, the role that community corrections officers play in ensuring public safety through compliance and enforcement of parole, probation, and other court orders. Specifically, can the minister elaborate a bit more upon the compliance aspect? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As this is operational, I would like my Deputy Minister Mansell to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. Just one quick clarification, parole is when you get out of a federal facility, so you would be the responsibility of a parole officer. Probation is when you come out of our facility and you would be the responsibility of a probation officer.

Before the client even gets out of the facility, we have a plan and restrictions that they will need to comply with. They have regular check-ins. In most communities, we have a community corrections officer there and the check-ins are in an office and they will make sure that they're abiding by their conditions, they're taking whatever programming they need to take, and they will help them with things like applying to college or doing a résumé and that kind of thing.

We do have some communities that there is no full-time person there and they travel to the community and there are also regular phone check-ins. If the phone check-in doesn't happen, it obviously tweaks the community corrections officer that "I have to go to the community." Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. I raised this matter in question period and one of the concerns that have been brought up in the past, of course, is recidivism, but before people are incarcerated for reoffending, there is the other related matter of people being convicted of crimes, which include breaking either parole, probation, or other court orders. That is quite a serious matter which comes up quite frequently. I would like to ask if the Department of Justice actually does monitor the [number] of individuals who are either charged or convicted with breaking their orders or requirements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do and we don't have the data with us. If need be, we would be happy to provide that to the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'm glad that the Department of Justice does monitor individuals who are charged or convicted for non-compliance.

Once it reaches the media and comes to the public attention and our attention, of course, it is the reactive aspect of it. When I raised this matter in question period, it was more along the lines of Community Corrections' role in ensuring public safety through proactive measures. Another matter that I would like to ask about is whether or not the Department of Justice is monitoring the rate at which Community Corrections is identifying individuals who are non-compliant with their requirements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, if I can ask Deputy Minister Mansell to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. If a probation client doesn't meet their check-in or meet their programming or fulfill their requirement, what happens is they are breached and they can result in charged. It would be our staff that initiate the breach, so we would be able to tell you how many we initiate. I don't have that now, but we can get that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. I'm very much interested in seeing that information. Like I said, with the rate at which people on probation orders not to drink or not to be in contact with individuals and how often and frequent those restrictions and orders are broken is of significant concern.

When the department is coming up with this information, would you be able to highlight initiatives or other direction given to community corrections officers to ensure those very strict requirements, such as not drinking or not being in contact with individuals, is being given? Just to straighten that out, it's great that the minister can provide that information, but can you also provide other information, such as enhancements to those proactive measures? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Your department's 2024-26 business plan indicates that the budget for the Aaqqigiarvik Correctional Healing Facility and correctional camps is increasing by \$421,000, from \$21,441,000 in the 2023-24 fiscal year to \$21,862,000 in the 2024-25 fiscal year. How was the amount of this increase determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is one of our biggest compensation and benefits section in our department, so a lot of this is as a result of the collective agreement. That's the bulk of the increase and the increase that is identified in here is from that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) On February 23, 2023 the Minister of Finance delivered the 2023-24 Budget Address in the House. During the delivery of the Budget Address, the Minister of Finance indicated that there is "\$2 million to continue staffing the Aaqqigiarvik Correctional Healing Facility, which will provide a range of treatment and healing interventions based on Inuit cultural practices and values."

What specific new treatments and healing interventions will the Aaqqigiarvik Correctional Healing Facility provide to support its clients? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are quite a few people that have posed interest in working with Aaqqigiarvik and we're very glad about that. They're going to be able to have an Inuit cultural skills program and restorative community and for elders, counselling by elders, where elders will be available for counselling.

We just created a room for that purpose and it's a very nice room and it's the Uqi Williams room where the Inuit cultural practices and they will be doing healing by talking as well and some education programs and how to not drink programs.

With the *Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit*, there will be learning material available there and also for carving purposes and artwork that has started there, so that the rooms will look nicer. They are doing some good different things because they have a very good facility now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the minister. That is good news. I hope it runs very well. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that "The new Corrections Act and regulations are expected to be in force early in 2024."

What is the current expected timeline for your department to bring this Act into force? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. On January 2024, it was supposed to start and if I have the opportunity, I will be talking about this in my minister's statement later on this week. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. (interpretation ends) I hope I didn't ruin your announcement. Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for October 2025 is to expand the Restorative Justice Diversion Program, Therapeutic Justice Program, and Spousal Abuse Counselling Program, to provide additional community-based justice initiatives as alternatives to the criminal justice system.

What communities is your department considering to expand these programs? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have not identified a community yet in terms of expanding our therapeutic restorative program. That work is still ongoing, and I hope that we will be able to do that, to expand it, and I also want to give a huge shout-out to our community justice division. They continue to look for different programs and they've been successful in finding third-party programs to use.

When I'm talking to my staff regarding any of these programs that are coming up and that they're looking for funding, it's always interesting and very exciting, the wonderful work that our staff are continuing to do, and getting support from this House, has been very much appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the minister. I would like that to be set up properly, because it can help Inuit a great deal and help Inuit progress. I know the minister stated that it's being worked on.

Do you have an idea of when it might be finished? What is the timeline for the completion of this priority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm done.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): The fiscal year is almost over, and my staff are working very hard to produce these programs. They are looking at the communities that have been affected or touched by people that are coming out of prisons.

At the end of this fiscal year, we should be able to tell you which community it will be expanded to. That is being worked on. In the new fiscal year, we want to bring that program out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am curious about you have institutions here in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Kugluktuk, and also an alternative home in Baker Lake.

Are all four places are filled with clients? If not, which ones don't have clients? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the institutions, the three that are here, the one in Rankin Inlet, and the one in Kugluktuk all have clients. Every one of them each has clients. The ones in the outskirts, as the member just mentioned in Baker Lake, for the outskirts, I don't have that information right in front of me, whether there are filled. We do have as-and-when-needed contracts with those that want to do on-the-

land programs that the community of Baker Lake also participates in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There used to be a few other outpost camps in Nunavut. Are they still operational? Or are we down to the institutions here in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Kugluktuk, and the alternative home in Baker Lake? Are there any others? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. There are currently two right now. We do try to promote for more. Also, I just want to state that it's up to the client where they want to go.

With Kugluktuk having a low security rating, there are high, medium, and low security ratings. For those that are low, Kugluktuk has one of them, and is being offered. For the communities, you have to be in that low category.

When they are in that low category, we do give the clients an option of whether they want to go into a community or into our facilities. That's the ongoing work that we continue to work with our clients, and our institutions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the minister said that there are two on-the-land camps. Are they active, because he also mentioned there is more than one contract? I am a bit confused here. Are these on-the-land camps active if they don't have any clients, if the department is still paying a fee to operators without having any clients? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do want to clarify, there is one operating outpost camp and that one in Baker Lake and they do currently have two participants there and the other one not active and for Outpost Camp Program, those are as and when needed.

If there are no participants, then there's no payment. When there are more participants, there's payment added to that. That's how our Outpost Camp Program works. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In having some discussions with alternative home that's operating out of Baker Lake. They've mentioned before they had issues with getting clients, perhaps being referred to their alternative home. If it's the way it's set-up in these institutions we have here in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Kugluktuk some of the clients in these institutions are not necessarily are made aware of this alternative in home in Baker Lake is very low security, I do know it's very low security.

It sounds like even the minister mentioned only two clients at the alternative home right now and it sounds to me like we're not, the department is not getting more bang for their buck with these alternative homes.

What's the department doing to look at utilizing more of these facilities we have on hand, especially the alternative home in Baker Lake? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going to be putting out a public service announcement to try and attract more outpost camps for the program to for the territory.

In terms of the low number of clients, as part of our restorative justice, we work the clients very closely for those that are deemed as low security. Often the discussions are, do you want to go to an outpost camp or do you want to go to Kugluktuk or do you want to go to Rankin Inlet?

Those options are our clients have, in terms of which way they want go and working with our case workers, they try to identify what is the best program for our clients. With that that's where some of our... . Its very low in the outpost camps now.

A lot, I think, and thanks to this legislature for supporting our institutions and I think that's a real call that we are doing, a good service for our clients in terms of making sure that they do have a safe home while they're incarcerated. We will continue to try and promote that outpost camp in terms of an alternative for our clients. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going back into the alternative home in Baker Lake, the minister mentioned two clients right now and yet there going to do a public service announcement to try to get on the land camps.

The department's not fully utilizing what we already have on hand and yet they're going try to do a public service announcement to create on-the-land camps?

Would that be justified from Department of Justice to create more of these programs that may not be fully utilized? If I can get a statement or something from the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there's a lot more in terms of client trying to stay closer their home or to the area they are comfortable, that they grow up and be comfortable with. So, we like to offer is to find various places that our clients be able to get into.

We continue to try and balance that and something that will continue fight for in terms of providing good care for our clients. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I'll start here. For 2023-24, there were estimated, believe it was Corrections Division. There is going to be an increase for 257.0 PYs in the 2022-23 fiscal year (interpretation ends) to 268 PYs in 2023-24 fiscal year. (interpretation) Can you indicate how many PYs you'll place or how many are still vacant positions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the Aaqqigiarvik from 2021 to 2024, there were 52 employees that were approved and we're making adjustments. There are currently 20 indeterminate positions, 20 out of the 52, that are filled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I'm very pleased that it's going good. This was brought up earlier but I would like to return to it regarding the Akausisarvik and counselling.

When we talk about the Inuit counsellors and having a room that will be provided to provide traditional counselling and *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit*, I think they started last year and I believe it's to the Department of Health that program for men was established.

Do the various departments work together on providing those services or if you have thought about it? That's my first question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Yes, thank you. Maybe I'll answer your question in two parts if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, the Inuit culture and traditions and providing traditional counselling, at this time, we have employees who are in Inuit cultural positions, and we also invite elders to provide counselling to our clients.

For mental health issues, there are a lot of our clients who have mental health issues. We work closely with the Department of Health to provide those services when we know that there are clients that need those types of services. We also have an in-house nurse that provides the services and he/she too, provides those services for clients with mental health issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I'm asking too early, but since that program was established at Akausisarvik, has it lessened the number of people who keep going back, or maybe I'm asking too early. I would like to know if there's less recidivism after that service has been provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a little early, but I can tell you we are preparing to provide you some information on recidivism. We can include it in the annual report. Thank you for bringing out this question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I might be a little early, but those types of services and programs are for the whole of Nunavut and you work quite hard to make sure that those programs and services are made available to our clients.

My next question: In your business plan, on page 74, and it's regarding the young people that are housed at the Isumaqsunngittukkuvik Youth Centre and for people in remand. While they are on remand, some stay at the youth centre and some are sent home. They are provided some programs regarding *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, going out on the land, and so on. How is it doing? Is there a person in the community who provides those services for your clients? I believe there are quite a number of communities with no corrections officers, including Qikiqtarjuaq. Have you thought of how it is set up? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some coming from the Department of Justice. We have corrections officers in the communities and we also provide them funding to take the clients out on the land or put them in a sewing program. We provide those funds. There are different types of funds that are

being made available all under community justice. Those services are provided for people in remand or people who have returned to their community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that clarification. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates "Community Corrections Officers provide supervision, support and programming to adult and youth offenders on probation, or under conditional sentences." As of today, how many community corrections officer positions are filled and how many are vacant? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As of January 31, 2024, we have 21 community corrections officers currently employed, four of whom are also filled as regional supervisors, two community corrections officer positions are vacant, which are in Arviat and Sanikiluaq. The community corrections officers serve the communities and there is a list of communities that they are currently in. In terms of the vacancies that are within the community, the one in Qikiqtarjuaq is, I believe, vacant and is serviced by somebody from Iqaluit at the moment, and Grise Fiord does not have a position and that is served by someone from Arctic Bay. The rest are there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that clarification. Even though they were remote communities and they usually use a 1-800 toll-free number to provide the service, it would be ideal to see this implemented. I know the reason why it's not filled is due to lack of office, but moving on, you answered that.

(interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that "Community Corrections Officers provide supervision, support and programming to adult and youth offenders on probation, or under conditional sentences." What types of programming does your Community Corrections Division provide to adult and youth offenders? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I do want to apologize for my response previously. I just looked at a very small table. There was another table at the back, but I want to give notice to my colleagues that on February 19, I wrote to Madam Chair Brewster for the Standing Committee on Social Wellness and the Legislative Assembly and I would refer it for a more in-depth response as they are by community, if the committee can refer to that.

In terms of the actual programming, could I ask Deputy Minister Mansell to respond to that? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Mansell, go ahead.

Mr. Mansell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. When a client is a community corrections client, it means that they're not in one of our facilities. We have the ability to refer them to other care providers. We do a lot of referrals to mental health and to counselling services.

In communities where we do have a correctional facility, we're able to provide in-house care. As well, the probation client would come into one of our facilities for counselling or services like that. We put people in touch with Alcoholics Anonymous or addictions treatment, but in addition to sort of mental health and that sort of thing, we also do quite a lot of transitioning back into communities, so programs like the Better Father program, anger management, career building, résumé building, and we work with Arctic College to help our clients put their applications in.

Our community corrections officers do really great work to identify specifically the needs of the client and then find out where they can get that and refer it to them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page E-8. Corrections. Total Operations and Maintenance being appropriated. \$47,244,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$6,822,000. Any questions? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel it's very important to have justice committees in all communities as well as community justice outreach workers, so I'll be asking the questions.

Your department's 2023-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2023-24 fiscal year was to "Continue to assist Justice Committees to provide community-based justice and healing programs in order to address family violence and to divert cases from the formal criminal justice system." The question is: as of today, which communities do not have a functioning community justice committee in place? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are four communities in Nunavut and they are Kimmirut, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet, and Taloyoak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for that information. What would be great if my constituent community of Taloyoak, as it was mentioned and I wonder if the justice department could help to assist to get the justice committees going in my community and/or how can we create a justice committee going in my community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could get help from my colleague if we can try and work with the Hamlet of Taloyoak, we need a contribution agreement with them in order for the committees to get active. If you and I can work together on this, I'd really appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for your response. I'll be happy to work with you and the local government in Taloyoak, the Hamlet of Taloyoak. I'll move on to the next one, it's in regard to justice outreach workers.

Your department's 2023-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2023-24 fiscal year was to "Continue training and development of community justice outreach workers in all communities."

The question is, Mr. Chairman: As of today, which communities do not have a resident community justice outreach worker? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll go through the list of which don't have community justice outreach workers right now. They are Iqaluit, Kimmirut, and Nauyasat. That is all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for your response. This will be my last question. Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the April to October 2025 is to "Expand the Restorative Justice Diversion Program, Therapeutic Justice Program, and Spousal Abuse Counselling Programs to provide additional community-based justice initiatives as alternatives to the criminal justice system." This is my last question. In which communities will your department expand and deliver these programs, and what is the expected timeline for this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our expansion should be the ones that currently don't have the community justice outreach workers. That's one of our plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one quick question in regard to the community justice. I've read and skimmed through them, but I do want to get clarification and I believe it's better to ask a question. The team's representatives, they are called the Crown prosecutors. During Justice of the Peace before the court, circuit arrives to the community for the individual who is going to court. How is the process, and what stage is it at? Where is the representative for Justice of the Peace? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The crown prosecution is under the federal government, and they work in the community. They have to work with an individual in the community. They also work with the justice of peace. They have been mandated to do so, and I know that. I cannot respond for them. I urge them to work closely together with the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very important issue. I know that it's very beneficial that the Crown has to work with the Justice of the Peace. This can really help and reduce the amount of work that they have to do.

The community can get more work positions for the Justice of the Peace called *iniqtirijiit*. They deal with the people who commit light criminalities. Just to remind you that this could be very beneficial and helpful. This is just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for providing me with an opportunity. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Killiktee. We're on page E-9. Community Justice. Total Operations and Maintenance appropriated. \$6,822,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go back to page E-3. Details of Expenditures to be Voted. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$172,043,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that we have completed with the Department of Justice?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Brief closing comments. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): My colleagues, I thank you so very much for very good questions and it is evident that you care for this department. I thank you, and also the members for appearing before the committee. We'll work diligently. I do thank my officials in all the communities. Thank you for supporting our staff, and also I would like to thank my officials here, who are outside. They are working very well. Thank you, my colleagues, for this. I want to continue working closely with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman: Thank you, minister. You and your witnesses can be excused. I'll ask members to remain in their seats. We'll proceed directly to the Department of Finance. Thank you.

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Finance – Consideration in Committee

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Good afternoon. I would like to commence our Committee of the Whole meeting again. We have the Minister of Finance here in front of us. I would like to ask Minister Kusugak: do you have any officials that you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If they ever show up, yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Okay, we will start with the minister's opening comments then. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I am here to discuss the Department of Finance's 2024-25 main estimates and business plan.

The Department of Finance plays a central role in the government and supports core financial governance and administrative functions so that other departments and public agencies can deliver programs and services to Nunavummiut.

In 2024-25 we are seeking and appropriation of \$108,831,000 for our operations, an increase of \$545,000 over the previous year.

Of our total budget, about one-third relates to the department's core operations. The remaining two-thirds are allocated to centrally administered funds. These are expenses that the Department of Finance manages on behalf of the wider government.

After setting aside the centrally administered funds, 79 percent of Finance's budget is used to pay our staff. We have not added any new positions this year.

The department requires \$7.7 million for other operations and maintenance costs. More than half of this is for software and licensing used by all government departments.

Through this budget, we are seeking \$72.9 million for the following central expenses:

- \$25.1 million for employee medical travel. This is in line with last year's budget.
- \$16.5 million for energy subsidies, including \$6.5 million for the Nunavut Electricity Subsidy Program and \$10 million for the Nunavut Carbon Credit.
- \$11.6 million to pay for the government's insurance premiums.
- \$9.4 million for the costs we pay as an employer to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.
- \$8.2 million for accounting expenses related to post-retirement employee benefits; and
- \$2.1 million for the Nunavut Child Benefit, a grant paid to low-income families with children through the income tax system.

Most of our budget is consistent with last year. The temporary carbon tax exemption on home heating fuel has significantly reduced the amount of carbon tax that Nunavummiut pay. Because of this, we have reduced the budget for the Nunavut Carbon Credit slightly. More work will be done before setting the credit's rate for the new benefit year which begins in July.

Mr. Chairman, this completes my comments. I am available to take questions about this bill, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the chair of the standing committee have any opening comments? Mr. Hickes, please proceed.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Finance.

Mr. Chairman and members, the department's proposed 2024-25 operations and maintenance budget is \$108,831,000. This represents a 0.5 percent increase from the 2023-24 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is unchanged at 233.0.

Mr. Chairman, members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

The Department of Finance provides support to the Financial Management Board. A government-wide issue for which the Financial Management Board has responsibility is the size of the public service. The total number of positions in the government continues to increase. The government's proposed 2024-25 main estimates indicate that there are approximately 5,506 positions in the government's departments and major public agencies and territorial corporations, excluding the Qulliq Energy Corporation. This represents an increase of approximately 75 positions over the number accounted for in the 2023-24 main estimates, and an increase of approximately 517 positions from the 2020-21 main estimates.

It is important for the Financial Management Board to be mindful of the need to control the growth in the number of government positions being added to organizational charts at a time when departments, public agencies, and territorial corporations continue to face significant challenges in filling their existing vacancies. Mr. Chairman and members, it is also important to note that approximately one-third of the government's total operations and maintenance spending is now allocated to compensation and benefits for its own workforce. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, this amounts to over a half a billion dollars.

Ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Finance's Mandate Letter indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "work closely with the departments of Community and Government Services, Economic Development and Transportation and Human Resources to develop options, a work plan and a timeline for the realignment of the departments of Economic Development and Transportation and Community and Government Services." Mr. Chairman, the standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the status of this work.

The 2023-24 *Ministerial Letters of Expectation* to the boards of directors of the government's major public agencies and territorial corporations were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2023. However, the responses to the letters of expectation have not yet been tabled. Mr. Chairman, the department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that it has been "working with territorial corporations on developing Memoranda of Understanding through the Territorial Corporations Committee." Mr. Chairman, the standing committee will be monitoring progress in this area.

On November 8, 2016, *Taking Steps to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harm in Nunavut* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The department's 2023-26 business plan indicated that the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission was currently "researching and developing agency store models that can be used to serve smaller communities that choose to have local access to lower-alcohol content products." Mr. Chairman, the standing committee notes that this initiative is not referenced in the department's draft 2024-26 business plan. Mr. Chairman, members emphasize the importance of ensuring

that any decision to allow in-person, over-the-counter retail sales of alcohol in a Nunavut community is based on the results of a formal plebiscite, as have been held in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay, and Rankin Inlet.

The territorial *Cannabis Act* received assent on June 13, 2018. Section 64 of the legislation requires that a review of the Act be undertaken every five years. The department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that "a legislative review of the federal *Cannabis Act* is currently underway and expected to conclude in early April 2024." Mr. Chairman, the standing committee anticipates that the results of the federal review will inform our jurisdiction's work in this area.

The department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that the Financial Reporting and Controls Division is "accountable for the preparation and publication of the annual Public Accounts, as required by the *Financial Administration Act*." Mr. Chairman, the standing committee held a televised hearing in September 2023 on the most recently tabled territorial Public Accounts. It is the standing committee's understanding that the 2022-23 Public Accounts have been delayed as a consequence of the Department of Community and Government Services' ongoing audit of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund. Mr. Chairman, the standing committee looks forward to its next televised hearing on the Public Accounts.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do members have any general comments before we proceed to the detailed questions? I would like to ask Minister Kusugak if you have any officials that you would like to appear before the committee.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I do, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Do members agree to let the officials appear before the Committee?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials to the witness table.

(interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) As I had no names for general comments there, we'll proceed on to page-by-page review of the capital estimates for Finance starting on C-4. Branch Summary. Finance. Corporate Management. Just give members a few minutes here. Mr. Kusugak, if you could introduce your officials, sorry about that. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While we wait for the colleagues to get to get to the right page, to my right is Dan Young, Deputy Minister of Finance, and to my left is Hillary Casey, Director of Corporate Policy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Branch Summary. Finance. Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$5,309,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Okay. Members, go to C-5, the next page. Finance. Fiscal Management. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. I have a few different topics that I would like to touch up on today, and I would like to return to some oral questions that I've asked this sitting and the fall sitting with regard to Finance's role in offsetting the increasing cost of living.

The most recent question I asked was with regard to the gas tax that the Department of Finance sets, and the reason why I asked specifically about the non-motive diesel, which is 3 cents a litre.

I had asked whether or not that specific tax is applicable to the fuel purchased by the Qulliq Energy Corporation. I just want to seek some clarification on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A simple answer to that is yes, but note that it accounts for less than one percent of their budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. The Qulliq Energy Corporation has seen a number of different cost pressures over the years as seen with the fuel subsidization rider adjustments since the last general rate application. I'm quite concerned that come the next general rate application, we're going to see Qulliq Energy Corporation's revenue requirements increase steadily due to inflationary pressures, which is why I had asked about this specific gas tax and whether or not QEC is paying it.

I do recognize that the minister had indicated that it's only one percent of QEC's expenditures, but come the next general rate application, I'm worried we're going to see significant increase, hopefully it'll only be in the single digits, but again, I'm quite concerned.

With that being said, I would like to ask if the minister will consider amending the gas tax specifically for the non-motive diesel in order to offset the increase at the next general rate application? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your need to concern. I think that's a concern of everybody in Nunavut. It is just the rising cost of living. We have to do whatever we can to play our part in having less impact.

Mr. Chairman, it requires a little more than a stroke of a pen to deal with this. It would require legislative change. It's something we could look at and take a look at the benefit of doing it, or not. Definitely, we could look at it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up on the minister's response. It is my understanding that when the Minister of Finance sets the tax rates for January 1, for the fiscal year, it's not a legislative amendment. I just assumed it was a regulatory regime that sets those tax rates. Can I just get clarification on that? Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: That's true, Mr. Chairman. That only applies to property tax. The others require legislative change. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just leave that as comment and recommendation with regard to gas tax and the implications it has on the cost of living for all of Nunavummiut, with regard to that QEC aspect, Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Another tax matter that I rose during the fall sitting was the child tax benefit. During the fall sitting, I had noted that Nunavut has one of the lowest annual amounts for the child tax benefit, and it also has one of the lowest income thresholds to be eligible to receive that child tax benefit. I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide an update on any progress on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Young. Sorry. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: No problem, Mr. Chairman. Just to elaborate a little bit further before my colleague asks the question we are talking about legislative change. It is something that we are working on, on the tax issue. I look forward to bringing something forward because we are going to bring some changes to that legislation in the spring sitting. I'll make sure we'll discuss it, and if there is anything to include, it will be then.

In terms of this, yes, we are working with Family Services to see if we could take it out of our regulations and become one of Family Service's programs and in through there. If you'll allow, Mr. Chairman, I'll get my deputy to elaborate a bit on that. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Young.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. There are a couple of parts to this. After your question, just a week or two ago, we haven't had a lot of time yet, but we have had preliminary meetings with the Department of Family Services about possibly moving this out of our legislation and giving them money for that program which do get updated more regularly. They are certainly the experts in child benefits and family benefits and Finance is not. That's ongoing, but we're in the very early stages.

The other part of your question about indexing to inflation, I can confirm that this is indexed to inflation already. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Young. You had indicated that you plan on introducing some legislative amendments in the spring sitting. Is that in relation to the gas tax, or the child tax benefits? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be with the fuel tax issue that my colleague was raising. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question will be in relation to the federal carbon tax, and I've got a question and a comment. I'll start off with a comment.

The federal carbon tax as we all know is set to increase April 1 of every year, and again, with the rate of inflation and the rate at which the cost of living in Nunavut has increased over the years, I would just like to ask the minister to pass on my recommendation to his federal counterparts; please defer the increase for the federal carbon tax that is set for April 1, 2024. That 3 cents per litre from 14-17 cents, that doesn't seem like much but in the long run, it will make a difference and just please pass on that request to your federal counterparts.

My question with regard to the federal carbon tax and the Government of Nunavut's carbon revenue recycling program; does the minister have any plans in the works on how to utilize those carbon revenues for the upcoming fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Yes, Mr. Chairman, for sure I will pass those on and I know my colleagues from across the country have the very same concerns of constantly increasing prices.

In terms of after the comment, to the question, yes, we are taking a look at the carbon tax program and over the next little while, we will have to take a good look at it and see what

kind of amendments and changes we will need to make before the carbon credit goes out in July. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize, I'm quite tired, it's just been a very long sitting and I didn't get much sleep last night.

I just want to rephrase my question. Are there any new initiatives above and beyond the current utilization of the carbon tax revenues or anything being considered on how to utilize the carbon tax revenues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister, I know you just stated but you're looking at it, but if you could just elaborate a little more for Mr. Lightstone. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer is no, there are no changes at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just following the list of names on my list, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've just got a few questions; I'll try to keep them short. I know that within the budget development process, there has been work done in the last four or five years, especially on trying to create more accurate budgets from the forecast to the actuals and to develop the budgets more around actuals than just traditionally carrying over forecasts.

I would like to get the minister's perspective on how successful those endeavours have been to date and are there any other improvements that are going to be coming down the pike?

I know some departments are better than others at having accurate numbers, and I know there are some cost pressures or timing pressures in public uses and it's on demand for some budgets, but just the accuracy of the budgets that are being requested to the actuals, is there any more work that's being done in that matter? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a very good question. It's something that we continue to try to improve upon. We continue to be vigilant and ask the departments about the budgets and try to make them as accurate and real forecasting as we can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. I appreciate the response and I know has been and I'm sure they'll continue to be. It is a very important category because when we're approving dollars in this House and then the monies get transferred around. It's hard to keep track sometimes. It's just a lot easier if it stays within their budget line.

The Fiscal Management Division also looks at negotiations, monitors and manages fiscal arrangements with the federal government. Are there any programs or agreements with the federal government that habitually, we have to return money for, and if so, what are they? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The simple answer is no, not at this time.

While I have the floor, I just wanted to say that I had mentioned that we're taking a look at the *Fuel Tax Act* this spring. I misspoke; they will be taking a look at it for the fall. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry for any confusion if I had created any. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the other components of the Fiscal Management is the analytical support to Financial Management Board so that, as it's stated in the business plan, so that Financial Management Board can make informed decisions about best use of public resources.

Capacity has been an ongoing issue for many different departments, and I can only imagine the Fiscal Management and the responsibility from departments to provide some guidance and a good product for the Fiscal Management team to be able to analyze financial management board submissions. I do know from experience that sometimes things can come fast and furious.

My first question is: Is the minister comfortable, I know that they're called walk-ins at the Financial Management Board, which a department is requesting funding through the Financial Management Board sometimes on a very quick basis.

Is the minister comfortable with the current process and the timeliness of receiving walk-ins from departments? His team has the ability to make sure that public dollars are being expended appropriately and with the fiscal oversight? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate my colleague's question. It bodes very well with situations ministers get and especially the chairman of the financial management board when walk-ins sometimes do come fast and furious to

ensure that what is before us is accurate as it can be and being done with best of care as it's all public funds we are using.

At this time, I know we are short staffed across most departments, I believe. It's something we have to be very careful with and I have a very strong team, as my colleague knows, within the Finance department. Often, we are tasked with very tight schedules, but with the hard work of the people sitting with me and those in the offices, I'm confident at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's good to know, I imagine there are some challenges as I'm sure we can all appreciate that with capacity issues across the territory and the civil service. I'll just leave it at that, and I would like to thank the minister for some of the responses that he's been providing me recently within this House on granting further access to Government of Nunavut employees to some of the programs that we put together to help alleviate some of the costs of homeownership or the market renting. I look forward to future positive announcements from the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment. I Have no more names on my list under fiscal management. Finance. Branch Summary. Fiscal Management. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$6,569,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members, go to the next page there. Comptrollership. Just give the members a few minutes. Branch Summary. Finance. Comptrollership. Total Operations and Maintenance, \$24,038,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members, go to C-7. Finance. Branch Summary. Centrally Administered Funds. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to return again to the line of questioning that I posed to the minister during question period in the fall sitting with regard to the Nunavut Electricity Subsidy Program, and more specifically, about the commercial aspect of it. At the time, I had indicated that very few small businesses are utilizing this program. I believe it's because they're not aware of it.

I asked the minister to work with the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation to try and promote the program by, possibly, inserting pamphlets, or applications in the bills that are sent out by the Qulliq Energy Corporation to corporate customers.

Over the last six months, has there been any development in increasing awareness of this Commercial Electricity Subsidy Program? Thank you, Chair.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that front, I believe that there hasn't been any increase from the current program advertisement and access. I was really hopeful that as people become more of it, there will be an uptake in the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the fall sitting, I had made the connection between the increased cost of living as well as electricity costs that small and medium businesses pass on to all Nunavummiut. As this program is quite under-utilized, I think there are only 14 or 17 small to medium businesses that have utilized it in the last grants and contributions report.

I would just like to ask the minister if he would commit to working with the Qulliq Energy Corporation to try and increase awareness and utilization of the Corporate Electricity Subsidy Program. Final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A good idea, Mr. Chairman. I think both our department and Qulliq Energy could do a better job of advertising through public service announcements, or maybe, inserting into some of their utility bills, and whatnot, for the programs we do have for small and medium, or all businesses, Mr. Chairman. I think that's a good idea, and it's something we'll look into. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list. Centrally Administrated Funds. Finance. Branch Summary. Centrally Administered Funds. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$72,915,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Okay. Members go back to C-3. Details of Expenditures to be Voted. Finance. Details of Expenditures to be Voted. Total Operations and Maintenance to be Voted. \$108,831,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have completed the review of Finance?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Brief closing comments, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly. Thank you so much. We will keep you informed of where we go from here. We get some really good ideas during these sessions and I appreciate your input.

Lastly, I want to thank my staff for the incredible work that they do. Our offices are very busy, and it couldn't run as smoothly as it does without the staff that are sitting beside me today. Let's have a good day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We'll take a five-minute break.

>>Committee recessed at 17:54 and resumed at 17:59

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Economic Development and Transportation – Consideration in Committee

Chairman (Mr. Hickes): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. I would like to ask Minister Akeeagok: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee with you? Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to allow the witnesses to appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

When you're prepared, minister, you can introduce your officials and then proceed directly into your opening comments when you're ready. Thank you.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is David Kunuk, Deputy Minister, and to my left is John Hawkins, Assistant Deputy Minister.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to be here to present the 2024-2025 operations and maintenance budget and the 2024-26 (interpretation ends) Business Plan (interpretation) for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

(interpretation ends) In 2023 we continued to normalize business-as-usual operations and advanced departmental programming to meet our commitments under the *Katujjiluta* mandate to diversify local economies.

Looking ahead, 2024 will be another important year for the department. We will progress existing projects and improve operations and the delivery of key services. We have made meaningful advances towards our mandate to ensure economic opportunities for Nunavummiut. This year we look forward to maintaining this momentum as we foster the development of our programs and services.

Mr. Chairman, I now turn to the details of the proposed budget. For 2024-25, the proposed budget is \$100,161,000, an increase of \$2,020,000, or in financial terms, 2.02 percent more than the budget for 2023-24. Unlike other years, the year-over-year change is not due to new business cases for additional programming. The significant increase in the department's proposed operations and maintenance budget stems from newly negotiated service contracts for management of community airports.

Beyond this administrative increase, the remaining budget variances represent minor changes from previous years. Compensation and benefits for department staff will see a slight growth resulting from salary increases in the collective agreement.

As we move into the 2024-25 fiscal year, the department looks forward to continuing to advance work on initiatives that support our commitments under the *Katujjiluta* mandate.

A major accomplishment from 2023 was the opening of the Iqaluit Deep Sea Port in July. The port's first year of operations has been extremely successful, with several sealift vessels, fuel tankers, and Coast Guard vessels making use of the facility. The department completed an operations plan for the facility and provided it to users of the port. We look forward to another successful year in the season 2024.

Additionally, the department continues to make progress towards goals set out in the *Katujjiluta* mandate. In particular, the department was tasked with updating its sector-specific economic development strategies and providing increased training for employment in sectors such as mining, arts and crafts, and tourism.

Towards these goals, the Fisheries and Sealing Strategy was tabled during the fall 2023 session and outlines a number of actions to foster the growth of these traditional sectors and pursue partnerships in the circumpolar world, particularly with Greenland. We anticipate and we did present the Mine Training Strategy during this winter 2024 legislative session, with new documents covering the arts, cultural industries and tourism sectors to be submitted for consideration in the 2024-25 fiscal year. These plans, once approved, will further guide the development of our budgets and business plans for the remainder of this government.

Mr. Chairman, before I conclude, I would like to mention a minor discrepancy between the main estimates and our business plan. On page 232 of the business plan, there is a

change that did not make it to your books in time but has been sent to Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs for correction prior to final publishing. The department has increased the Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship from \$30,000 to \$105,000, which will increase the number of total potential applicants receiving the full scholarship from 4 to 14 individuals. As a result, we have decreased the division operations by \$75,000 and the 2024-25 line, including the out years, should read \$22,158,000. These numbers are correctly captured in the main estimates.

Mr. Chairman, the past several years have seen dramatic increases in the cost of living as inflation has spread across the world. I'm sure I speak for my colleagues when I say I look forward to finding solutions to these complex problems so we can move past the inflationary and economic pressures of previous years. With this proposed budget, we can continue to excel in our department's mission to develop and diversify our economy and transportation systems in ways that support a positive, self-reliant future for Nunavummiut, our communities, and our land.

(interpretation) That concludes my opening comments. I am happy to answer any questions the members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Akeeagok. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments to provide? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. The department's proposed 2024-25 operations and maintenance budget is \$100,161,000. This represents a 2.1 percent increase from the 2023-24 main estimates. The number of departmental positions has decreased from 160.0 to 159.0.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee. Ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Economic Development and Transportation's mandate letter indicates that one of the department's priorities has been to "Work closely with the departments of Community and Government Services, Human Resources and Finance to develop options, a work plan and a timeline for the realignment of Economic Development and Transportation and Community and Government Services." The standing committee looks forward to being updated on an ongoing basis on the status of this work.

The standing committee notes that a number of the department's policies, including the Strategic Investments Program Policy and the Country Food Distribution Policy, have expired or sunsetted.

The Nunavut Economic Development Strategy was released in June 2003 and reached the end of its ten-year life in the spring of 2013, over a decade ago. The ministerial mandate

letter also indicates that one of the department's priorities has been to "Finalize the Mine Training Strategy" and "Refresh strategic plans for sustainable economic development and diversification in all sectors, including the Fisheries and Sealing Strategy, Parnautit, the Arts and Cultural Industries Strategy and the Tourism Strategy." The standing committee notes that the 2023-28 *Fisheries and Sealing Division Strategic Plan* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2023.

On June 8, 2016 the Government of Nunavut's *Report on the Review and Reform of Income Assistance and Economic Development* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The report indicated that the Department of Economic Development and Transportation will "place a greater focus on job creation when reviewing departmental programs."

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include a total of approximately \$22.9 million in grants and contributions expenditures for economic development. The standing committee notes that the department has made a number of significant changes in recent years to the administration of its grants and contributions programs. The standing committee supports the department placing a greater emphasis on job creation in smaller communities, especially in relation to funding that is provided to for-profit businesses. The standing committee also emphasizes the importance of funding recipients being in compliance with the terms and conditions of their contribution agreements with the department.

The department's 2023-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities has been to "explore opportunities to improve monitoring and reporting on economic development programs delivered by the department." A number of policies administered by the Department of Economic Development and Transportation contain specific annual reporting and tabling requirements regarding the administration of these programs. However, these reporting and tabling requirements are not currently being met in all cases. The standing committee applauds the department for having begun the practice of preparing and tabling comprehensive annual reports under its Strategic Investments Program Policy, its Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy, and its Country Food Distribution Program Policy.

The proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation include \$3,358,000 in core funding for the Nunavut Development Corporation and \$900,000 in core funding for the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation. The 2023-24 *Ministerial Letters of Expectation* to the Chairs of the Boards of Directors of the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation and the Nunavut Development Corporation were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2023. The responses to the letters of expectation have not yet been tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Division is "leading the internal review of the Recommended Nunavut Land Use Plan for the department and supporting the Government of Nunavut in their evaluation of the Plan." The standing committee looks forward to being updated on an ongoing basis on the status of this work.

Members of the Legislative Assembly have been raising concerns for a number of years regarding the significant delays that residents of smaller communities experience in obtaining driver's licences and general identification cards. The department's 2023-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities has been to "review the effectiveness of the Motor Vehicles Information System in advance of the contract expiration in November 2024." The standing committee will be closely monitoring progress in this area.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2024-25 main estimates and 2024-26 business plan of the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Before we proceed to detailed questions, do any members have any general comments to the opening comments? Seeing none, please go to page K-4. Economic Development and Transportation. Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$6,727,000. Any questions?

Page K-4. Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance \$6,727,000. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe this would be under here but its to do with the minister's opening comments but its on page 4.

The second last paragraph, I'm sure I state for my colleagues when I say I look forward to finding solutions to these complex problems so we could move past the inflationary and economic pressures of previous years stating that the price of everything just keeps going up.

I'd like to hear some of the minister's solutions to inflation and the fact that most projects in their department have been going up. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a very complex... . Trying to plastering what is it beyond our control, especially with the world as it is. It's one that we will continue to advocate to ensure that and try and work with our federal and provincial/territorial colleagues in terms of how to try and battle the inflationary cost that's impacting the country. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's the reason I asked is he looking for finding solutions so I asked the minister what solutions is the minister looking at currently right now? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: I think one of the solutions is to try and work those these out with those who are in control in terms of like Canada and trying to reduce the interest rates and that and trying to move towards that's going to help us in that front. And to try to prioritize where we can in terms of provide some of our funding that can help with our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister clarify on his comments of those in control? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I ask the member to repeat his question, I just missed it. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll rephrase it, I'll try again. The minister talked about finding solutions and when I asked him, he said one of the solutions to talk to those people who are the ones in control and I'd just like to get a clarification on the minister's comments of those who are in control, is it the federal government, is it the companies, just clarification of who's in control. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was referring to the federal government in particular but also the ones that would be within our control is your talking to a retailers themselves in terms of how we can better help each other and I think those are things that we should be able to try to assist each other. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I encourage the minister to do what he can. I am all for him to find solutions for these complex problems because Nunavut's having its biggest deficit in Nunavut's history. I hope the minister is successful in lowering the costs of projects that the government has done. That was just a comment. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list. We're on page K-4. Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance being appropriated. \$6,727,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page K-5. Transportation. Total Operations and Maintenance to be voted. \$56,084,000. Questions? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe this will be under transportation. The renewing of driver's licences in the small communities was mentioned in my reply to opening comments. I would just like to get the minister's position on what can be done to speed up the process of people renewing or applying for a driver's licence in the smaller communities? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for the questions. The improvements that are to be done for about every community, except for one community left, which we're working very closely on, is to get our systems in line, so that the communities can do them directly.

We're also putting the point of sales into each of those communities, so the payments for those can be done right at site. There are some improvements from that perspective.

With the government liaison officers now trained in terms of getting these up and running, from our perspective, it has, drastically improved in the communities. If there are any of your constituents are waiting for more than three weeks, please let us know, because that really shouldn't be the case right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like the minister to elaborate on part of my opening comments, too, that the vehicle information system is going to be evaluated before the end of the contract, which was November 2024. That is coming up fairly soon. It seems far away, but things seem to creep up on us, before you know it, it's there.

If I can just get the steps that would be taken on the evaluation, whether to renew the contract or go a different system? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our preliminary evaluation is that we're very pleased with the system. That system seems to be working. We're working toward getting that evaluation done, and hopefully, extending the term. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad the minister stated that it's working very well.

Can the minister remind us of when the system was first started, and the year and how long it's taken to get to a satisfactory state? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have the exact year when we switched the Motor Vehicles Information System on. When it got on, that's the backbone of the system for all the work that needs to get done, in terms to getting the drivers' licence, and getting the information to be available. That portion has been in operation, and has been working well, from our perspective. The complaints that we have seen have been the slowness of our ability to provide driver's licence and general IDs. These past couple years, there have been some huge advancements towards that what used to go back and forth with our USB keys, which is no longer in existence. Where the communities spend, the ability is for them to be able to send that information directly to the licensed manufacturer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the system started two Assemblies ago, but I could be wrong, but I believe that's how long.

One of the priorities that were for 2023 was to review the demerit point assignment, including the addition of automatic letters to clients at 8, 12 and 15 points. Can I just get an update on that? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm being advised that we have not made any progress on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another topic I would like to bring up under this is the mandatory requirement for ATVs, all-terrain vehicles to be insured, licensed, and registered.

I would just like to know the rationale behind that because in the small communities, it does create a burden for some of our elders and long-time users of all-terrain vehicles to do that process. I would like to get an explanation of why it's required when it's not required for snowmobiles that use the same roads in town and our roads are covered with snow more often than they're not. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has to do with the road systems. Wherever our roads are recognized as roads, they require insurance. That's something that I'll commit to reviewing.

As for the skidoos, they typically should not be driving on the roads. I know they cross roads, but not necessarily go through the road system unless there's a lot of snow within some communities that are out there. Those are the two differences between the snowmobile and the ATV. The ATV can and is often used on our road systems. That's something that I know the member has raised since I have been in this portfolio and something that I'll continue to review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm kind of taken aback on the comment that snowmobiles cross the roads, but they generally don't go on the roads. I think the minister has been to many of the smaller communities, the statement that the minister stated might be true here in Iqaluit, but it certainly isn't true in all the other communities in Nunavut, and there are another 24 communities. The last time, just before I came here at home, there were a whole lot of snowmobiles using the roads in town, so I don't think that is a true statement what the minister said.

I'm not for snowmobiles getting insurance and registration and I think that all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles should be treated the same. I don't think all-terrain vehicles should have that requirement. It is an undue financial stress on our elders and this government has stated that they were going to do many things for their elders.

I would like the minister to make a commitment here to look at eliminating the requirement to have all-terrain vehicles that need to be registered, insured and licensed. Maybe an amendment to the Act or the regulations so that the municipalities can be in control of that and control their community how they want. Can I ask for that commitment from the minister? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do apologize. Yes, the snowmobiles do get used and in other communities, it's the transportation mode that they use for the roads, but it's not authorized in the eyes of the insurance companies and in terms of the licence requirements to use within that road. That's one that is in a grey area, but it's something that, as the member asked me if I can commit to it and definitely, I will commit to providing that. I just got reminded that under our *Traffic Safety Act*, snowmobiles are excluded from that, so that's where the difference is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. Will the minister commit to excluding ATVs in that Act too? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll definitely look into that. It's something that we can look into in terms of the review of the Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad that the minister will look at it. Now I need to know: when will he report back to the committee in writing on the minister's recommendations or findings about excluding ATVs in the Traffic Act? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Mr. Chairman, I don't have an answer for now. It's whenever our legislations are being reviewed or is being amended, we go through our legislative process through our government and that's one that I'm going to commit to having my officials start that process. Once I get a better time frame related to this to see if it's going to be a major review or a small amendment, all that will have different timelines. I'll definitely report to the committee if there is any progress that I have committed to right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, there is nothing before the legislative committee even for June, but I think it would be a minor amendment to the Traffic Act to exclude... . If snowmobiles are excluded, I think it would be a minor addition to exclude all-terrain vehicles and Nunavummiut would be very happy and make a whole lot of Nunavummiut non-criminals. "Criminal" is not the right word, I guess. A lot of people that do not insure or register their ATVs, which are used a lot or mainly for going out on the land to hunt and get food for their family, and at times, it just puts undue stress. That's just a comment.

I hope that the minister will deal with this in a timely manner. It has been too long now where we're punishing the elderly, the unilinguals that can't speak English, to get to contact an insurance company to get insurance and then do the registration process. That's all I have for now. Thank you.

Chairman: We will use another "C" word: compliant. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you very much for those comments. I'll take those words and take that into factor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, minister and to your officials.

On page 229, priorities for 2024-25, the second bullet, “Based on the outcome of the Kivalliq inter-community road study, identify the project’s next steps.” Do you have an idea of when the department will realize the next steps? Is it going to be in May? June? August? December? A year from now? If I can get a bit of a clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our aim is for the end of this summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. On the previous page under Objectives on page 228, the second-last bullet, “Work with the federal government to advance projects to build or improve roads, airports, and marine infrastructure.” That’s pretty broad. I’m wondering if the department has a priority listing that the minister can speak to or list out on what that encompasses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: My apologies. I’m just trying to find that wording right now, if you can spare me a few seconds.

Mr. Chairman, for the interest of time, can I ask the member to ask that question again. My page numbers are not aligning with the same page numbers in the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On what I have on page 228, the Objectives under Transportation Policy and Planning, the second-last bullet, it states, “Work with the federal government to advance projects to build or improve roads, airports, and marine infrastructure.” I’m wondering if there is a priority listing of what those projects are and actually, where. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This one is a very broad statement under Objectives and there are a number of initiatives that we have been trying to do.

If I can use the Kivalliq road study as an example, that one is going to help us put a submission in to the federal government's major capital in terms of trying to build the roads.

On the road side of things, the Grays Bay port is also an important initiative that the Kitikmeot Inuit Association is trying to spearhead and that we're in support of and they're currently asking the federal government for some assistance on their funding as they move forward.

On the marine side, we did our scoping and we've got those and what we are waiting for is for the federal government's Oceans Protection Plan to out with a call letter and those would be prioritized in terms of those in there.

Also, one of the things I stated when I was being questioned is on the [Airports] Capital Assistance Program, the federal program, 100 percent federal program. Right now, we have been receiving funds for one per community, but there are way more communities that can benefit from that, so we're advocating for that.

This one is broad and I just wanted to highlight some of those, but there is more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the minister can commit to getting back to us with a list, I did mention that it's a broad statement, but if the minister can commit to getting back to the committee in writing what they plan to work on, I would appreciate that.

Moving on, on page 230, the second bullet from the top, it says, "Monitor the delivery of approved and funded sealift improvement projects," and the one that sticks out, of course, is Baker Lake. I'm sure everyone will agree with me on that. I am wondering how the department is doing with this project, specifically, to my interest. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could ask my assistant deputy minister to, I believe, these are approved ones, so if there is any progress my assistant deputy minister, Mr. Hawkins, will be able to elaborate more than I would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Please proceed, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you could just give me one moment, I will see what we've got on the briefing note on that particular project.

I believe that project is being actually managed by the municipality. It's almost a \$3.1 million project. I think we're expecting that it will be substantially complete this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one last statement about that project, in speaking with the mayor and the senior administrative officer a few months ago now, it's kind of dated now, maybe. They were waiting to hear back from the department, actually the Department of Economic Development and Transportation, on the next steps. It's a good project. It should go ahead. I was hoping the department doesn't have any operation issues in capacity to get that project going, or if they need anything further. Just a quick statement, that's all. I'm done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same page, 229 in the business plan, I'd like to get clarification. In your priorities for 2023-24, it indicates at the bottom, the notices for community airports, it states in middle of the paragraph, it states, I just want some clarification. (interpretation ends) "An engineering and design contract for the Qikiqtarjuaq port has been awarded."

(interpretation) I just want to get clarification on whether this has gone ahead. If you can let us know who the contract is for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We approved and provided funding to the Qikiqtarjuaq project. They are now starting the work on that. I know that this upcoming month, that they will be going back to your community to give you a report on the plans, and how it will be set up. They'll be consulting with the community. This is moving forward, and I know that there will be people coming into your community to make a report on finances. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for moving ahead with this project. It's very good that they will be making a report. It's going to be a huge project in Qikiqtarjuaq. We would be very interested to see that, and you come and visit our community as well. I'm inviting you to my constituency.

Going to my next question in regard to motor vehicles, the third bullet under your objectives, it states to improve the safety of the roads and to construct the roads or work on them to make sure that they're less dangerous. Perhaps the foremen of the municipalities do report.

I am requesting that they do more training and consult with the communities because there are some improvements that are required and made in the community. Do they go to the community and do a scanning of what requires work at the community to make sure that there is safety on the roads? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time, we don't have a plan right now for the people who work on this, but they have been making their reports on the safety aspects. They do training on the licensed application. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under priorities 2023-24, is to monitor and design procurement and delivery of airport and marine infrastructure projects. I see Taloyoak and Kugaaruk for equipment shelters.

When will my constituent communities see the equipment shelters in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk, because they do not have equipment shelters for their airports? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under our capital plan that is going as planned and the design stage will be done this year for the shelters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the priorities 2024-25, is to monitor the delivery of approved and funded sealift improvement projects, and I see Taloyoak and Kugaaruk are listed.

When should we see sealift improvements in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are community-driven projects that we have helped supporting and facilitating to getting their funding approved. I can follow up with my officials to see what progress has been taken in each of those communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I heard the minister talking about the Grays Bay Road and Port Project, it's to my understanding that the Kitikmeot Inuit Association is applying for funding from the federal government. Is the Government of Nunavut in support of the Grays Bay Road and Port Project? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our government has been in support for the Grace Bay project and for the environmental assessments that have been taken place. The Kitikmeot Inuit Association has handed that over to the West Kitikmeot Gold Resources. They're the ones that are taking the work and are starting to move forward. Just recently, they were applying for funding from the federal government, and they've asked for my letter of support, and I have provided that letter of support to the Kitikmeot Gold Resources. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your great response. I am in support for this Grays Bay Road and Port Project. It's to my understanding that critical minerals are in high demand, and we have two mines in the Kitikmeot, those being Hope Bay and the B2 Gold in Goose Lake, if I'm not mistaken.

What I see is a potential for fibre optics for the Kitikmeot following the port project. I see it as a potential for economic development and growth for the region. It's just a statement that I'll be in full support of this project, and I'll be following it.

My hope is that anytime soon that project goes ahead, because for many, many years it's been in the works by our current president, the previous KIA president, and the president before him. It's been a long time in the process, it's nice to see that it's getting support from this government, as well as the federal government for critical mineral purposes. That's more of a statement and information to constituents and Kitikmeot residents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have to say.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Yes, for the purpose of *Hansard*, I just want to clarify myself, it is the West Kitikmeot Resources that is overseeing that provides that project. I just wanted to make that clarification, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before we move on from transportation, I would just like to get an update from the minister of something that has been raised a few times on drivers' licencing, on how a restricted drivers' licence here in Nunavut, where somebody can drive anywhere they want, with whomever they want, isn't even valued as a beginner's in other jurisdictions. Has there been any movement on that file?

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to assure the members that we are working on it. That's the progress that we do have right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: K-5. Transportation. Total Operations and Maintenance \$56,084,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Please go to page K-6. Economic Development. Total Operations and Maintenance to be appropriated. \$37,350,000. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Chairman. There is a preamble that I would like to touch up on. I'll try to be as brief as possible. The first issue that I would like to bring up is the Country Food Distribution Program. A few times the community freezers have come up during oral question period, more specifically the costs to municipalities associated with power consumption and the costs of the electricity.

I would like to ask if the minister has had any discussion with the Minister of Environment, utilized, or partnered with the Climate Change Secretariat similar to, the Housing Corporation, which has partnered with the Climate Change Secretariat for the Renewable Energy Grant Program, with the goal of utilizing the Climate Change Secretariat's expertise in utilizing alternative energy to offset the electricity costs of these community freezers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, could I switch my witness before I respond to our member's request? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: The committee members agree to allow the minister to exchange witnesses. Please proceed, minister.

Welcome, just for the record minister, if you could just introduce your new official, minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is now Adam Fisher, he's our Acting Assistant Deputy Minister on Economic Development. To the member's question related the Country Food Distribution Program, whenever we're doing that project, those are the very things we are taking into consideration and I believe there are discussions in terms of using renewable energy to help offset some of the cost that are being done.

That's from what I understand is in that preliminary discussions and I now want to thank the member for raising that in the previous times that has allowed for discussions to start with Department of Environment on these projects. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I just want to follow up question and move on. Welcome, Mr. Fisher. Thank for collaborating on that, minister.

Has the minister had any discussions with the Minister of Finance on putting forward a formal submission utilize carbon tax revenues to offset cost of this potential project? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not at this time but I really like that suggestion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'd like to move on to my line of questioning. In the past I've followed up on an oral question I put forward to the minister with regards to the direction given to Nunavut Development Corporation and Nunavut Business Credit Corporation on strategic investment.

The federal government had legalized cannabis for three reasons. One, to regulate it, ensure that harmful substances such as fentanyl do not get put in. As well, to keep legal cannabis sales off the black market, out of the hands of the black market. Finally, probably the most importantly, to make more difficult for youth to access or have access to cannabis and right now I think we only have cannabis store in Nunavut and we are failing to meet those three objectives.

A while ago, I asked the minister can consider giving directions to our economic development corporations to assist communities with creating more cannabis outlets.

I'd like to ask if there have been any discussions or project in that area and/or if there have been any submissions from potential proponents to use these development corporations to open cannabis stores? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not that I'm aware of that those discussions have taken place. Our regional offices do look to business opportunities, a cannabis store is one of the opportunities that can be considered for any of our communities and I think we can start promoting that and other economic opportunities that are out there. We'll continue to do that and continue to refine that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for the update. I do hope that some direction can be given to try and alleviate the cannabis situation and really get it out of the black market. I'm assuming the majority of cannabis sales end up with millions of dollars leaving the territory.

The second part of the question was whether or not the economic development corporations have received any applications to open up cannabis stores? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know of that if there is any but I'll commit to go looking into that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, the next name I have on list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask a question about,, its got to do with fisheries. This has been a continuous planning and the plan for 2023-28 strategic plan and that plan was supposed to be submitted to the Legislative Assembly and I believe it has been tabled.

Question I'd like to ask about is: (interpretation ends) It's stated that ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. Your mandate letter indicates that one of your department's priorities is to initiate and maintain a working group for Nunavut stakeholders and representative for advancing Nunavut access to it's fair share of adjacent water allocation.

As of today, who are the members of the working group? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're working mainly with Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the fishing companies like Baffin Fisheries Coalition, Qikiqtaaluk Corporation and Arctic Fisheries Alliance.

So we have been working with those companies and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association is working hard on this matter and we support them. I have attended meetings with Department of Fisheries and Oceans on the matter because we have to return what has been taken by southern companies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for explaining that further and people who run businesses and others things really need help and their objectives are the same as ours, which is getting more positive. There are Inuit that

haven't really gone school or university or college and especially men because it's one of their big responsibilities of men and I really support it.

(interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that "The working group of stakeholders has been maintained and very active in advocating for adjacency and allocation, along with fair quotas that are determined by evidence-based decisions." What specific changes to the existing allocations and quotas have been achieved? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We work very closely with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the fisheries associations on this topic and it's an ongoing and evolving file. The sad part is that the federal research that they have been doing had to stop because of the aging of their fleet, which put a real dent in our quota because, in order for it to be sustainable, they need to have sustained research. Five years is one that they set and they put a stop to that. As a result, we have some quota reductions that all of us from Nunavut have been very upset about, but it's one that we continue to advocate the federal government to get the research up and running again because it is critical that our fishery is sustainable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's very true and it has some challenges, but there is very high potential and you have been a great support. I have another question. (interpretation ends) Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association commenced an action in the Federal Court of Canada in September 2021 against the federal Minister of Fisheries in relation to the issuing of turbot and shrimp fishing licences. To what extent is the Government of Nunavut involved in this matter? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're very near in having a partnership agreement with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in terms of fighting and advocating for our Nunavut fisheries on that front. Although that is there, the ongoing discussions whenever the federal minister is about to be discussed about this, we have a very united voice with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and ourselves.

Just the last two months ago, we had a tripartite meeting with the federal minister to talk of and emphasize the real importance that Nunavut really needs these quotas. That work is well underway and I like the progress, and I hope that I will be able to report further progress once this is done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. You didn't answer the member's question on what the Government of Nunavut involvement with the legal action commenced by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Nunavut Tunngavik and the Federal Court of Canada. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're not involved in the legal aspects of it. The legal court that's taking place between Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, but as part of that, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association has a working group that's trying to go outside of the legal, but to try to get the same result, and those discussions are very alive and happening right now. I continue to advocate as part of our government to see those licences come to Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for elaborating on that. It truly helps when you give your support to the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Nunavut Tunngavik.

I have another question regarding (interpretation ends) the Country Food Distribution Program. (interpretation) In your annual report for 2019-2020 on (interpretation ends) your department's administration of the Country Food Distribution Program was tabled here in the legislature on March 15, 2021. When will the 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports be ready for tabling at legislature? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. We are looking at tabling the annual reports in the spring session. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We look forward to that. (interpretation ends) The last question that I want to ask is the Country Food Distribution Program Policy sunsetted on March 31, 2022. Your department's 2024-26 business plan indicates that "A formal review of the Country Food Program Policy was completed in June 2023." What specific changes to the policy are being actively considered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an evolving review that we currently have and something that I don't want to get into the specifics of, but I will definitely commit to providing that information. This one is getting through as part of our review and I think it was just recently mentioned in the Elders Strategy that we need to

work together as different departments and that sort of steered our discussions. It's something that I'm definitely trying to work as fast as possible in terms of getting this updated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't want to see a delay. I am sure that people are looking forward to seeing the changes. Because of the importance of the situation, I just want to say that there should be no further delay. I don't have any further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the fall mid-term mandate review, I was questioning the minister with regard to diversifying the economy and I made a few statements. In Baker Lake, for example, there is the Jessie Oonark Centre that is being underutilized. They are sticking to pretty much Monday to Friday, 9 to 4 type business hours when more could be done out of it; evenings or weekends, maybe. I believe the minister, if I remember correctly, was going to check with the development corporation as it is owned by one of the development corporations. I'm wondering if the minister has an update for me on that specifically and, if not, why not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did raise it with the Nunavut Development Corporation about it and it is something that they were going to look into.

I will follow up with them in terms of what the progress has been to date, but I will definitely find that answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering if I can get the minister's position on that idea. Does he support that and will he advocate for the development corporations to run with that idea? If I can get the minister's position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me say this, when the Nunavut Development Corporation held their last board meeting, I appeared virtually via phone and I encouraged them that they need to do more with what they currently have and also to look beyond. I mentioned to them that with our government, we are looking sector specific and, if there are any economic development opportunities, we should try to take them and use the development corporation as the one that is capable of doing that. If they need assistance from us, I am very open to providing that.

I stand by my words to the board and I hope that the board does make some sound decisions in terms of doing more for this territory because there is so much opportunity. I thank the member for raising this because he sees this opportunity, especially in his community, that can be pursued and that is something that I will continue to echo as minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'll take it as you agree with me on that. The reason why I keep bringing this up, especially for the Kivalliq region, since 2008, the new level of disposable income that has come from the mining sector is unprecedented. There is a lot of money out there now in the region and more could be done with businesses. Maybe new small businesses can be sprung out of that and the Jessie Oonark Centre as well.

A lot more needs to be done. I do hope the minister will stay on top of the development corporation and, if the development corporation won't do it, then something else needs to be done. We've got to start while the iron is hot and the iron has been hot since 2008. Look at us in 2024 now and there is still not much going on in there and it is very frustrating, so I am glad that the minister agrees with me.

I mentioned mining and if I can move on now to the next thing here, the Nunavut Prospectors Program, I wonder if there is an uptick in new prospectors and is it across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is one program that is much underutilized. We do provide the training and we encourage those that are trained to apply and to prospect. We will continue to advocate for that, but we can't physically tell people or force them to go prospecting. If we could continue to advocate for that and continue that program to our communities, it is something that we are definitely growing. There is funding available for prospectors and if you are trained through that program, you do have that opportunity and I want to stress that to our citizens of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'm wondering if I can get an update on, I believe, there were studies being done on inshore fisheries. Are those going to be looked at? What is the latest on that and is there any interest in the territory with that project with some fishers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recently tabled the Fisheries and Sealing Strategy. Through that strategy, we are hoping to see more and more of that in all communities. I think inshore fisheries are an untapped area that I think we really need to tap and I thank the member for continuing to advocate for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq, next name on my list.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have too many here, but the minister talked earlier about adjacent fisheries quota and that it's very important for Nunavut to get it. I agree with that statement. Is the government willing to put any monies into purchasing the adjacent quota if it were to come up? I am aware that it would be a substantial amount. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not in our budget at the moment, so we don't have any funds. If that ever rises, then that is something worth exploring.

With Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, we have been advocating that the federal government talks about this reconciliation for the indigenous people and that's something that we are trying to get them to commit to that. I think that is where the funds should come from and that is the position that we have been advocating for. Until it changes, then I don't have the authority nor the budget to take that into consideration at this point, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like the minister's position on these adjacent quotas. Would these adjacent quotas be an Inuit organization quota, a Baffin quota, or a Nunavut quota? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That hasn't been determined yet, whether it is going to be through the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, or the fisheries themselves, because the current licences that are being held are held by a private entity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, right now, the fisheries that are happening there employ Inuit and I am aware that they are a private entity also fishing on behalf of Nunavut. Does the Nunavut government get any financial benefits from the fisheries quota that is currently being fished? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. At this point, without fish ever being landed in Nunavut, we don't collect taxes, but what does happen is Nunavummiut work for those fisheries and that is a benefit that we are going through. I am hoping that when the Qikiqtarjuaq deep sea port does open, those fish will be landed here and that's the lost opportunities that we have in terms of tax or royalties that we are missing out on and that is something that I am really advocating for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister explain to the committee, when the fish get to Qikiqtarjuaq, what taxes and what royalties from those fish will be had by the Nunavut government? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it lands to Nunavut, for those that are sailing under the Nunavut sails, those payroll taxes would be there. In terms of royalties, that is yet to be worked through. If you follow what Nuuk and St. John's do, they do have fees for ships to land and offload and those are the benefits that we currently don't have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Going on a different topic, the current draft land use plan has been around for about nine months and one of the priorities of Economic Development was to "Continue to actively participate in the land use planning process supporting the government of Nunavut and partners during the decision phase after the final [Nunavut] Land Use Plan is submitted for decision to the signatories." It has been almost nine months now and I would just like to get the minister's view on the current land use plan as it sits right now. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Environment is the lead on this particular one. He has asked all the departments to see if there are any concerns or any comments that each department has. Our department has submitted a list of concerns that we do have and there are concerns that we do have as the draft land use plan is written the way it is. I trust that our government will work with the signatories in terms of coming to a solution.

Right now, from the Department of Economic Development's perspective, there are areas that I think will need some work done before the land use plan is approved. Internal discussions are continuing to take place and I believe that, either in this session or in the last session, both the minister and I have concluded that we will make that determination

sometime in spring, but right now, the work is well underway in terms of departmental comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm jumping around all over the place a bit here, but under the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation, I think it has been a while since we have seen any doubtful accounts or delinquent accounts from the monies that had been used by there. Can we get a current update on the number of delinquent or probably not going to be collectable accounts that are currently there? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Delinquent and doubtful accounts, minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. If I recall, in our last session, we had the Department of Finance forgiveness or write-offs. The Nunavut Business Credit Corporation did have one or a few in that, so that's an ongoing process that if there are write-offs that are required, we go through that process. I don't have the delinquents list at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am aware that those write-offs were present, but I was asking about the possibly non-collectables or delinquent accounts and if the minister can get that to the committee here so that we can see how well the collection portion of the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation is doing. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Agreed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page K-6. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to report progress.

Chairman: There's a motion on the floor to report progress and it's not subject to debate. All those in favour. Against. Motion denied. We're on page K-6. Economic Development. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be appropriated. \$37,350,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page K-3. Detail of Expenditures, to be Voted. Economic Development and Transportation. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$100,161,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that we have concluded with the review of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Some very brief closing comments, minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you very much, my colleagues. Thank you for approving the main estimates. I know that we have a lot of work to do in order for Nunavut to develop more and we will continually work hard to improve this.

I would also like to thank my officials and the officials that are not in the House. We will work hard to make sure that we move ahead with these. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Witnesses can be excused from the table and I will rise to report progress to the Speaker.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been reviewing Bill 37 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. David Akeeagok. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for March 11:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions

7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 37
 - Bill 38
 - Bill 39
 - Bill 40
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 29 – 6(2), this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 11, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 19:34*

