

NUNAVUT HANSARD
UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT
TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2021
IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Paul Quassa
(Aggu)

Hon. David Akecagok
(Quttiktuq)

*Deputy Premier; Minister of Economic
Development and Transportation; Minister
of Human Resources*

Joelie Kaernerik
(Amittuq)

Pauloosie Keyootak
(Uqqummiut)

David Qamaniq
(Tununiq)

Emiliano Qirngnuq
(Netsilik)

Tony Akoak
(Gjoa Haven)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Lorne Kusugak
(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Health; Minister
responsible for Seniors; Minister
responsible for Suicide Prevention*

Allan Rumbolt
(Hudson Bay)

*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the
Committee of the Whole*

Pat Angnakak
(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak
(Cambridge Bay)
*Minister of Community and Government
Services; Minister responsible for the Qulliq
Energy Corporation*

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(Pangnirtung)
*Minister of Culture and Heritage;
Minister of Languages; Minister
responsible for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation*

Hon. Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)
*Premier; Minister of Executive and
Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of
Energy; Minister of Environment;
Minister responsible for Immigration;
Minister responsible for Indigenous
Affairs; Minister responsible for the
Utility Rates Review Council*

Hon. George Hickey
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)
*Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial
Management Board; Minister of Justice;
Minister responsible for Labour; Minister
responsible for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission*

Patterk Netser
(Aivilik)

Calvin Pedersen
(Kugluktuk)

Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapiik
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)
*Government House Leader; Minister
of Family Services; Minister
responsible for Homelessness; Minister
responsible for the Status of Women*

Hon. David Joanasi
(South Baffin)
*Minister of Education; Minister responsible
for Nunavut Arctic College*

Cathy Towtongie
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield
Inlet)

Officers

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Stephen Innuksuk

Law Clerk
Michael Chandler

Sergeant-at-Arms
Michel Albert

Hansard Production
Innirvik Support Services

Box 1200

Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0

Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266

Website: www.assembly.nu.ca

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday, June 1, 2021**

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. Patterk Netser, Mr. Calvin Pedersen, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik, Mr. Craig Simailak, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 13:29*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa)(interpretation): Good day. Mr. Keyootak, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good day. Thank you, Mr. Keyootak. Continuing on. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 633 – 5(2): Staff Appreciation

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good day, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I must recognize the tremendous work Department of Health staff have done in Nunavut over the past 14 months. From coordinating the pandemic response and controlling outbreaks, to supporting mental health, to testing and vaccinating, this has been an effort that all our staff have been engaged in.

Mr. Speaker, health staff have gone above and beyond the call of duty, foregoing vacation time, working long hours, and putting themselves in harm's way to meet the demands. They have done all this selflessly to ensure the health and safety of Nunavummiut as well as the continuation of vital government services. I am truly proud of their commitment to the health of all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, often the work health staff do every day is thankless. They face criticism and sometimes abuse from people who are frustrated over the difficulties caused by the pandemic. Frustration is understandable. No one has been spared the hardships of COVID-19. However, I encourage everyone to be patient with our health staff; they are working hard for you and for the benefit of all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the work that all Nunavummiut have done to protect each other and our communities. Through community outbreaks, most have done their part to follow the public health restrictions and helped us contain the spread of the virus.

Mr. Speaker, we are all in this together and we will get through this together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are very proud of them for working tirelessly without giving up. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Minister's Statement 634 – 5(2): CSSW Services in COVID-19 Isolation Hubs

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I also want to express my appreciation to Annie Joannie, who celebrated her birthday yesterday. Up at the office, when my executive secretary is not here, I do miss her terribly and I thank her for the work that she does.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the department's community social service workers that have been providing supports and assistance to Nunavummiut within the isolation hubs. Currently there are five hub locations: Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Yellowknife, and most recently in Iqaluit.

My department collaborated with the Department of Health to develop a model of support to ensure that Nunavummiut within the isolation hubs are supported during their stay. The hub support service is a critical component of the government's response to COVID-19 related social issues and contributes to balancing health, safety, and well-being of each individual while having to isolate, based on their specific needs.

Mr. Speaker, the government created the isolation hubs to limit COVID-19 exposure in the territory and I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking our community social service workers, who work hard to ensure that Nunavummiut in isolation receive the proper supports needed and to limit the spread of COVID-19. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Ehaloak.

Minister's Statement 635 – 5(2): Qulliq Energy Corporation's 20th Birthday

Hon. Jeannie Ehloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)
Good afternoon to my colleagues and those who are watching, especially for Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Speaker, April 1 marked 20 years that the Qulliq Energy Corporation has been powering Nunavut homes, businesses, and institutions. To celebrate and to be respectful of COVID-19 public health measures, the corporation held an online prize draw as a token of appreciation for Nunavummiut's support across the territory.

Ariel Ell of Coral Harbour won the grand, territory-wide prize, a solar energy package for a cabin or camp. Purchased from a Kivalliq business, this modern and renewable technology further promotes a cleaner energy future for our land. Second and third place winners were also randomly drawn for each region. Gift baskets filled with locally sourced items and gift certificates for Co-op or Northern stores were awarded to second and third place prize winners respectively.

I am also pleased to inform you that the corporation has been slowly rebranding their communication leading up to the birthday celebration in efforts to better highlight the Qulliq Energy Corporation's employees and Nunavut communities. Unfortunately some internal celebration activities to thank Qulliq Energy Corporation staff for their hard work and dedication over the last two decades must be rescheduled due to the corporation's focus on safety during the COVID-19 outbreak response.

Mr. Speaker, acknowledging milestones and celebrating achievements is important. Since its conception in 2001, the Qulliq Energy Corporation has taken on a variety of major projects to keep supplying energy to Nunavut homes. Power plants have been replaced in Baker Lake, Qikiqtarjuaq, Taloyoak, Pangnirtung, Kinngait, and Grise Fiord and significant upgrades have been made to Iqaluit's generation system.

As we continue to move forward, the Qulliq Energy Corporation has a number of projects planned and currently under construction. Upcoming work in Arctic Bay, Kugluktuk, Baker Lake, Sanikiluaq, and Taloyoak is a reflection of the Qulliq Energy Corporation's commitment to meeting our communities' energy needs as they continue to grow in the future.

Mr. Speaker and my fellow members, please join me in wishing the Qulliq Energy Corporation a very happy birthday as we look forward to the next 20 years.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Minister's Statement 636 – 5(2): Recognizing Justice Beverley Browne

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Justice Beverley Browne on March 24 of this year.

In 1990, Justice Browne left a thriving legal practice in Alberta to move to Iqaluit with her family to become the Northwest Territories' Territorial Court judge for the Baffin region. In 1999, with the creation of Nunavut, Justice Browne went on to become the first Chief Justice of the Nunavut Court of Justice, a role she served in for 10 years. Mr. Speaker and members, as chief justice, she took the lead in building Nunavut's court system from the ground up, and was successful at establishing Canada's only single-level trial court.

Mr. Speaker and members, Justice Browne believed in an accessible justice system that was responsive to the needs of Inuit. She spearheaded our travelling circuit court to ensure Nunavummiut did not have to leave home to attend court and she involved Inuit elders in the sentencing process.

Justice Browne left her mark in other ways as well, through her involvement in the construction of the new courthouse in Iqaluit and in establishing Nunavut's first law school, the Akitsiraq Law School.

Mr. Speaker and members, Nunavut's justice system would not be as strong as it is today without the vision and hard work of Justice Browne. Her commitment and dedication to justice in Nunavut and Canada was exemplary and admirable.

Mr. Speaker and members, I am happy to announce today that in honour of her time as Chief Justice and the many contributions she made to the Nunavut justice system, the Nunavut Court of Justice will be renaming the library at the Iqaluit courthouse, the "Justice Beverley Browne Law Library."

Mr. Speaker and members, once in-person celebrations are possible, the Nunavut Court of Justice will plan a gathering to commemorate this name change and to further honour and celebrate Justice Browne's important legacy in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Continuing on. Members' Statements. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Netser.

Item 3: Members' Statements**Member's Statement 909 – 5(2): Organized Fishing for Elders**

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to the residents of Coral Harbour and Naujaat who are listening to the proceedings.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the Hamlet of Coral Harbour during this pandemic, as just last week, they organized a gathering of all local elders to prepare for a day trip to a fishing lake called Qamanialuk.

This was to alleviate their boredom in light of the COVID-19 restrictions which were in place all winter, so it was obvious they were a bit stir-crazy or suffering cabin fever due to being not allowed to go out although the weather wasn't very conducive for outdoor activities in any event. The hamlet staff took them out for a change of scenery and to be able to freely walk around.

The elders returned from their trip refreshed and thankful for their time in the fresh air and they also were able to jig for fish during their trip, and the comments we heard was that the elders were now adamant about going on another trip to go fishing again. They seem to be preparing for another trip, so I thank the hamlet officials for being respectful and proud to assist the elders all winter long during this pandemic. Again, I thank the hamlet council. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Pedersen.

Member's Statement 910 – 5(2): Tragedy in Kugluktuk

Mr. Pedersen: Good morning, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to address a tragic loss for the community of Kugluktuk, one which comes at a time when residents have already been struggling for months to come to terms with the loss of young adults, elders, and news of illness in their families.

Mr. Speaker, the recent death of Emerald MacDonald has been devastating for my community and, as of today, the case remains unsolved, making many very uneasy.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that my colleagues and many of those listening to these proceedings will be familiar with the movie *The Grizzlies* which portrays the impact of the high suicide rate and many other issues in the north and in Kugluktuk specifically.

Emerald, or Baboo, as we knew her, was one of the lead actors in that movie and following its release, she continued in her role, travelling across Canada as a strong advocate for healing and suicide prevention.

Wherever she went on her tours, Baboo made every effort to engage with youth and to get the message across that "you can and will be okay, with love, support and a lot of work." Her message was strong and she drove it hard.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday and this morning I went for a drive around town. On that drive I saw hundreds and hundreds of red dresses hanging outside of people's homes to show

support for Baboo. This pulled hard on my heartstrings and I was so amazed to see all of the support and love for the family.

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP have stated that they consider Emerald's death to be a homicide and are asking members of the public to come forward with any information that could help them with the investigation into her death. I urge anyone who may know something to contact the Kugluktuk RCMP, Crime Stoppers or the NWTNUTIPS website.

Mr. Speaker, Baboo's voice and passion made her community proud of her. This is a terrible loss for our town.

I ask my colleagues to join me in sending strength and love to Emerald's family, friends and loved ones, in our prayers. Also this Thursday at 7 p.m. there will be a walk to support starting at the complex. Please wear some red to show your support. I will see you all there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We have the people of Kugluktuk in our hearts. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaerner.

Member's Statement 911 – 5(2): Safe Spring Travels

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Amittuq, Nunavut, and my colleagues.

I rise today to express the feelings of pride evoked by the Sanirajak SAR group and Igloolik's SAR group.

Now, we all can notice the advancing spring season as the weather is warming, the ice looks inviting, and the days are long and sunny. I wish to advise our youth and younger people to always practise prudence when adventuring out onto the land.

When you go to enjoy the outdoors on the land, ensure that you always inform family or friends the general direction, place name, or the length of your anticipated trip. Although your trip may initially be all enjoyable, when your machine starts getting bogged down, it can quickly de-escalate into miserable conditions with no avenue, so take it from someone who knows.

>> *Laughter*

Additionally, for the residents of Iqaluit, I ask that you please be aware as I was told that parts of the sea ice near Iqaluit are dangerous now.

Please be very careful on the land, Nunavummiut, ensure you leave information on your destination, and if able, bring a satellite connected device such as the SPOT device when travelling. It will allow the search and rescue team to immediately decipher your

whereabouts without needing to conduct a lengthy search, as the device would pinpoint your location directly.

As well, while on the subject of search and rescue initiatives I want to speak about recent developments for our groups in Sanirajak and Igloolik. Our application submitted to the Coast Guard for a rescue boat was approved, and the Sanirajak SAR membership have already qualified for this role as they were officially certified and they can now conduct boat searches as they ensured they were prepared beforehand in Sanirajak and this is to inform the emergency division at the Department of Community and Government Services, that the SAR group of Sanirajak is quite qualified.

They would like to use this time to practise once they receive their new boat, and the SAR group is operating smoothly. If in the future, the government wants to move the SAR operations into a central location, that government can consider our community due to its location.

I urge all people to take extra care while out on the land, and to be prepared for all eventualities just in case. I am just urging caution amongst our people during this season of great weather, which is why I rose today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Member's Statement 912 – 5(2): Office Administration Students of Clyde River

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to express my pride as well. Before I do that, I would like to say "good day" to everybody listening and watching in Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River and to my colleagues here.

First of all, I would like to say that although I was late yesterday, I had a very valid reason. One of my family members passed away here. I feel for their relatives and family, and I had to go attend a funeral. That's why I was late yesterday. I have you in my heart and you are in my prayers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my pride in the students who graduated from their courses in Clyde River. They were taking the Office Administration course, which is a first year course at the Arctic College community campus. I would like to express how proud I am, and would encourage my colleagues to do the same, while recognizing the following students:

- Nubiya Angnatsiak
- Nora Aipellee
- Tracy Nookiguak
- Elisapee Kautuk

- Kimberly Hainu

These were the first students to complete the first year office administration course at the Arctic College community campus. We are always encouraging young people to take these opportunities so that they can get jobs. Whenever students complete their education or training, we always have to express our pride in them. I am very proud of the students who completed their courses in Clyde River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Member's Statement 913 – 5(2): Wendel Kaludjak Honours Hockey Bet

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. Now, I rarely even speak about anything related to hockey, nonetheless, yesterday I believe everyone in Rankin Inlet was observing our local lake (interpretation ends) Lake Williamson (interpretation) which may hold sticklebacks, but no fish.

Wendel Kaludjak, who is a diehard Toronto Maple Leafs fan, made good on his promise when his team lost when he drilled a hole with an auger to fish while practically the whole town came out to watch the happenings occurring in our lake, as it is located centrally in Rankin Inlet.

It became quite a joyous event for some, as the fans of the Montreal Canadiens drove by honking their horns the entire length of the road, and although Wendel didn't catch a fish, he stuck to the bet and spent two hours jigging in the middle of the lake, right in the middle of Rankin Inlet.

Practically the whole town was in some way observing his debacle, and although I rarely speak about anything related to hockey, I select this particular junction to speak about Wendel Kaludjak's character as he gamely made good on his loss although when he made the bet the Toronto Maple Leaf hockey team was ahead 3-1.

He assumed that Toronto would win because they were three games ahead, but it didn't happen so I hope I made the audience smile, and I hope the people of Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet all enjoy the playoffs, especially since Jordin Tootoo originated from Rankin Inlet and we are all a little bit nuts about hockey here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, some of us lost. Members' Statements. Member for Tununig, Mr. Qamaniq.

Member's Statement 914 – 5(2): Recent Death in Pond Inlet

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, I was away from Pond Inlet for quite some time and we have lost quite a number of people to date, and just recently our community experienced another loss as a person passed away and their corpse was found outside of Pond Inlet, close by.

To the family and relatives, actually they are part of our relatives, I feel compassion in this time of duress and we will keep them in our thoughts and prayers while they are undergoing this hardship, and to ask that they be provided the strength to overcome this loss in their family.

That is my only item, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to voice today. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. People of Pond Inlet, we have you in our hearts. Members' Statements. Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

Member's Statement 915 – 5(2): Recent Death in Kinngait

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of South Baffin and to Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commemorate a person from Kinngait who passed away recently, and he was quite instrumental in the Kinngait Band, as he was the lead singer, a guitarist as well as a drummer, and he was quite well-known throughout our region. Nonetheless, I wanted to take this opportunity to recall him as his legacy resonates in his music and songs as he was one of the artists who helped resurrect the pride of his fellow Inuit while singing in the Kinngait Band.

His name was Simeonie Nungusuttuq, and I was fortunate enough to play alongside his band and his band mates. To everyone who enjoyed their songs, music and band, along with his relatives, fellow residents of Kinngait and everyone in the music scene in Kinngait, you are in my thoughts at this time.

I wanted to commemorate him, as practically his whole life, he was involved in music and was a musician with many pleasant results that came from his music and songs, so I wanted to recall his accomplishments, and to remember his family who just recently interred him with a funeral last month. I wanted to remember him, and to ensure his songs will not be lost. We are thankful for his life and we take pride in his music. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We send our condolences to the people of Kinngait, including their relatives. Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Akeeagok.

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Member's Statement 916 – 5(2): Montreal Canadiens vs. Toronto Maple Leafs

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently received correspondence from one of my constituents last week, who asked me to make a proclamation in this House with a prepare speech in case of the loss and this is what he prepared for the statement. He drafted it up in English, hence I will read it in that language. I practically sneered last night when his team lost.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I humbly rise today to acknowledge that the mighty Toronto Maple Leafs were eliminated by the Montreal Canadiens.

Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the true, die-hard fans that stood by the Maple Leafs in all the years that fans have ridiculed them will continue. The Habs fans have gone to say that the Toronto Maple Leafs have not been able to pass the first round of playoffs and it is still true to this day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Well said, Mr. Akeeagok. (interpretation) Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Member's Statement 917 – 5(2): Community Learning Centre in Arviat

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that our adult constituents require further education and training, and a chance to be hired in a meaningful job is indeed a priority, and as we all know, the majority of our residents in Nunavut still don't work, and many of my constituents express their concerns about the lack of employment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement about the community learning centre in Arviat, to ensure more reparations are made, either to enlarge the facility or to replace it entirely with a new facility that Arctic College should erect.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, based on the information I was provided, there are no plans in place as to whether any work would be performed either to enlarge or replace the adult education centre in Arviat, and no one has any idea what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, Arctic College recently tabled a document called in English (interpretation ends) the Preliminary Report on Community Learning Centres (interpretation) outlining the local needs for each community's learning centre, along with the status of each facility, its age and whether renovations were required.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that Arviat is not listed in this report, as I actually spent the time looking for it within the document, but nothing is referenced about Arviat. There is a

reference on pages 22 and 23, where the Arctic College (interpretation ends) headquarters office (interpretation) is referenced.

There is nothing listed within the document about the community learning centre in Arviat, yet it purports to speak to the status of each community's facility, but I cannot find any text about the actual status of the learning centre locally. This is quite disconcerting, Mr. Speaker, and it would behoove us to understand what the basis is and whether indeed, there was any research done on the community learning centre in Arviat.

At the appropriate time I will have questions to the minister. The current facility is absolutely too small, and I mean the Arctic College Community Learning Centre in Arviat. Reparation work is really required to bring it up to date, although we would prefer to see a new facility to take its place, at least in my opinion. I will have further questions to the minister later on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. No. 4. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. (interpretation) No. 6. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 1322 – 5(2): Community Learning Centre in Arviat

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister responsible for Arctic College. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are regarding the preliminary report that the minister tabled in the House.

As I mentioned in my statement just now, under the section on the Arviat Community Learning Centre, there is no information on the community learning centre. Instead there is information on the Nunavut Arctic College headquarters building, which is a two-storey office building.

My first question for the minister is: why is there no information on the community learning centre in your report? Is the college planning to move their staff out of this office building and convert the office building into a learning centre? Can the minister please clarify why their office building is included in this report? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Arctic College has completed this preliminary assessment report, and I emphasize "preliminary" that there is more to come on this and we understand and

appreciate that there's a great deal of interest across Nunavut on this matter. Every single community has a learning centre and they're at different stages and conditions.

At this point, as for the member's question, we will be looking at all the infrastructure that is within Arviat, not just the one listed in the preliminary report, and will encompass how we will move forward not just within Arviat but also all the other communities' infrastructure needs going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am concerned. Based on this report, there is no information about the community learning centre. There is only information about a college office building. In every other community listed in this report, there is detailed information about their community learning centre and about the condition, about the different aspects of the physical infrastructure.

Can the minister clarify why the learning centre in Arviat appears to be the only one that was not included in your report on community learning centres? Was it an oversight? I just don't understand why there's no information on the learning centre in Arviat. Can the minister please clarify? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We used a number of sources to develop this preliminary report, including assessments done by the college's own capital planner, as well as some information completed through Community and Government Services and by a consulting firm as well. These different groups or agencies completed and collected information.

I can't specify exactly why the Arviat Community Learning Centre is not included, but again, I stated that this is a preliminary assessment and so we will be looking at all infrastructure within Arviat and what are the needs and how we would like to potentially increase and expand the campus there and weighing other community needs as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) It appears that it was an oversight. I'll add that the information listed mentions a visit in May 2012, so close to ten years ago, your information that you're reporting on your office building is listed in this report. It's unclear to me if anyone has visited the community learning centre in the recent past.

My last question for the minister is: given this apparent oversight and the importance of adult education in Arviat, can the minister commit to visiting Arviat specifically to focus on discussing capital needs with stakeholders in the community? Can the minister commit to visiting as soon as possible and focusing on capital? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his invitation. Mr. Speaker, I had the chance to visit the community learning centre. I believe it was during the cabinet retreat a few years back, but I'll keep that in consideration. However, also, if there are any potential planned visits by staff to look at the current infrastructure in Arviat, I'll be sure to share that with the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Netser.

Question 1323 – 5(2): Specialist Visits

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions today for the Minister of Health.

The eye doctors and dentists are only in the community for a short period of time, which doesn't allow for all the clients to be seen. Often when they are checked, they are rushed and when they finally get to see a dentist, they have more problems with their teeth and these have been an issue by many of our constituents, and that is my question to the Minister of Health. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, Mr. Netser. The specialists that have to arrive in the Nunavut communities, whether they be dentists and whatnot, before they arrive to each community, they look at how many people are on the list who need attention or care and these are first identified.

I think the problem lies when dentists, for example, arrive, the team arrives, people know they're in town and some make appointments at the last minute and sometimes to those who have been scheduled to see a doctor are postponed or there's insufficient time and whether it be eye specialists or dentists in communities. Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. I think we need to really make changes sometimes we have children who are visual problems and many individuals only get to hear that specialist are in turn and make last-minute appointments whether it be a dentist and I support the minister in this regard.

Those who make last minute scheduling I think they should not be prioritized whether it's an eye specialist or the specialist's time in the community could also be extended. Their stay can be extended. I would encourage that minister to look into that. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Minister Speaker. When we sit here, we look for what improvements we may make in Nunavut. How can we serve the Nunavut residents better? I agree with these questions. There are many areas to make improvements and we'll continue to look for best means to have community visits and I support the member's comments, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question. I don't believe he has. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. Now we have a full-time dentist in Rankin Inlet, but in places like Nauyasat and Coral Harbour, I would think it be preferred that they would be flown into the centre in Rankin Inlet and many individuals don't necessarily have means to travel. Perhaps the minister can commit to having those who need dental care scheduled to also be flown from to Rankin Inlet.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you have a tooth ache, it can be painfully debilitating. Perhaps there are less painful ways to remove teeth. Mr. Speaker, we can review this as many specialists were grounded, such as dentist and orthodontists during this COVID-19 pandemic, nonetheless, we will look at outside avenues to ascertain better methods, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaerner.

Question 1324 – 5(2): Housing Construction Plans

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was leisurely trying to draft up my question. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Earlier on, the minister identified the communities where they were going to be building housing units. I would like to ask the minister and as I said earlier, she identified the communities and she mentioned communities that will experience construction delays such as Taloyoak and Iqaluit for the construction of those units.

How many other construction projects in the communities are delayed? There are plans to build more public housing units in Sanirajak. Can the minister identify the communities where there will be further delays in construction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank you for asking that question. Good afternoon to my colleagues.

The communities I identified in this House were projects in 2020-21, previously planned and scheduled for construction and which will not proceed at this time, but the other two communities with one in Rankin Inlet, a four-plex delayed due to the no lots being available, and in Pangnirtung, the five-plex for staff housing scheduled for construction will no longer move ahead.

There are four altogether that have resulted in terminating the work, but as he already asked about the first two communities of Taloyoak and Iqaluit, I stop there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for that information. Can the minister provide further details on the original plans such as the dates that may just be changed or if the actual projects will be shelved or if RFP will be used? What exactly will happen to these projects that are deferred or delayed? Will the projects eventually move forward? What plans does the NHC have in this regard related to the delays imposed by COVID-19? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member for asking that question. We provided previous announcements outlining the reasons for the delays, and how this would impact the projects. The projects that will go ahead this year, or rather, the projects deferred will require more patience as we need to determine the status of the projects.

We have debated some of the issues in this House, such as the increase in lumber prices, the hike in cargo rates and these all require careful scrutiny before changes are wrought, and we have already made plans to request supplemental funding.

The projects that are being deferred are not being contemplated for unending delays, but rather to get a better understanding of the best manner to start preparing to finalize the projects. What I can state is that none of these projects are being abandoned, just that they

will not go ahead in this construction season. We are still looking at all of the issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the increase in the cost of lumber and the shortages, I can understand that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to turn to this issue, my last question relates to the previously planned construction projects and the communities who were anticipating the construction work, and perhaps to use the community of Pangnirtung. I imagine there were different factors...how do I word this? (interpretation ends) Bidding (interpretation) in terms of competitions. Thank you. What was the highest bid or the lowest bid? What is the disparity between the low and high bids for these proposed construction projects such as the five-plexes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. Using Iqaluit as an example, it was at \$3.3 million. There are different rates and I'm not saying that they all overbid, but I can say that it varies from community to community. I'm just using Iqaluit as an example. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 1325 – 5(2): Public Housing Construction Plans

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation and are regarding the public housing construction.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister had indicated, a number of tenders have been cancelled for the construction of public housing units and, as the minister had indicated, many of which were significantly over budget but not all.

Mr. Speaker, further, last fall during the NHC's capital budget review process, the NHC had indicated that the '19-20...sorry...2019-2020 construction season, the average cost per public housing unit was at \$641,000 and this was a significant increase of the average cost per unit just two years before of \$481,000 per unit. Mr. Speaker, it was a 33 percent increase.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: for the upcoming construction season, what is the average cost per public housing unit for the bids that won... ? Sorry. I'm having a

little bit of difficulty here, Mr. Speaker. My question for the minister is: for the upcoming construction season, what is the average cost per unit for the winning bids? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) I'm happy you asked that question. As you stated, it has been steadily increasing and this year is no exception. Looking at the average cost per housing unit, it is now at \$908,000. That's the average. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response, although that figure of the average cost being \$980,000 per unit is quite shocking.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I have strongly encouraged the Nunavut Housing Corporation to consider alternative approaches and methods for construction of new units, including the use of structurally insulated panels.

In June 2020 the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a request for proposals for an independent review of housing construction costs. During our recent winter sitting, the minister informed the House that she was expecting the mid-term report from this review shortly after and the minister had committed to tabling the final report in the Legislative Assembly.

For my next question, I would like to ask the minister if she would be able to provide us with an update as of today on the findings of this report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. In regard to the report, it's at the final stages. (interpretation ends) It's at its final draft, but it should be brought forward to the House, we are hoping, by September. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister again for that response. I'm really looking forward to reviewing the details of that report in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to my last question; across Nunavut, there have been several successful construction projects which have utilized alternative construction methods such as prefabrication, modular units, and structural insulated panels for both commercial and residential projects.

I am aware that a Nunavut construction company has contacted the Minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation as well as the Premier's office, indicating that they have successfully built many residential units which are more spacious, more efficient, stand-alone units at half the cost that Nunavut Housing Corporation pays for a small apartment unit in a multiplex.

Mr. Speaker, the current stick-build method produces a tremendous amount of waste, is lengthy, produces inefficient units, is extremely costly, at almost \$1 million a unit now, and most importantly; is prone to mould.

Mr. Speaker, I have invited the previous minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation to utilize Iqaluit for a pilot project utilizing alternative construction methods. For my last question, I would like to ask the minister: when will the Nunavut Housing Corporation catch up with the times, and test alternative construction methods and confirm what other Nunavut companies have already proven? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. We do get written materials on alternative construction methods, and they indicate to us that they are efficient and we are looking at all of the alternative construction methods of housing.

We have also looked at past programs that the Nunavut Housing Corporation has completed. We're conducting an ongoing review of where we can improve, and we look at all the alternative suggestions that we receive and I know there are better methods of construction. If we can adopt these better methods, we will do that, but we do still have to properly review everything we receive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 1326 – 5(2): Proof of Vaccination

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

I have been following with interest, the idea of providing incentives to individuals to get themselves vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. I do believe that vaccines will help lessen the impact of the pandemic both for individuals and for our communities.

Can the minister describe what consideration has been given to permitting those who have been vaccinated to return to such regular activities as work and sport, as well as being permitted to travel into the territory without the need to spend 14 days in an isolation hub? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department has those conversations almost every day. Our COVID team is assessing the situations as we go, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. Nunavummiut who have received the COVID vaccine are given a small card which is a form of receipt that they can use to prove they have been vaccinated.

Can the minister tell us if the Department of Health maintains a comprehensive record of all Nunavummiut who have been vaccinated that can be assessed to provide validation of an individual's vaccine record? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every single Nunavummiut that has a health record, in it is recorded every vaccine that the individuals have taken; not just COVID but all the other vaccinations are in each person's individual health record, Mr. Speaker, and those are securely held in confidentiality, but yes they are there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response and the assurance given by his staff that they keep things very organized and secure; our records.

Mr. Speaker, there has been some discussion in the national media regarding the use of vaccine passport as proof of vaccination. This kind of document or electronic receipt may be necessary to travel to countries outside of Canada in the future.

Can the minister describe Nunavut's position on vaccine passports and what concerns he has raised with his provincial and territorial counterparts on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Myself and my provincial and territorial counterparts have not discussed the vaccine passports, sort of speak, to be able to travel outside of the country. A passport and travel outside of the country doesn't fall within our jurisdiction. It falls with the federal government, Mr. Speaker, and that would be handled through the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu, Ms. Angnakak.

Question 1327 – 5(2): Support for Small Business during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, and they concern the issue of support to Nunavut businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I want to begin by paying tribute to the small business community of Iqaluit. Their entrepreneurial energy creates jobs and helps to diversify our economy. Mr. Speaker, I have heard from far too many of my constituents in the small business community that the last year has been absolutely devastating for them. Public health restrictions have forced many of them to suspend operations and many of them are teetering on the brink, I'm sorry to say.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I recently wrote correspondence to him concerning this issue on behalf of my constituents, and I'm wondering: when will he reply to my letter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 17 I did respond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must have missed that reply because I didn't see it, so I will have to go back and look, and I do appreciate him taking the time to respond.

Mr. Speaker, the minister recently made a statement in which he announced that eligible Nunavut businesses can access up to \$100,000 in alternative financing in the form of an interest-free partially forgivable loan under the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund that the territorial and federal governments have been partnering on.

Mr. Speaker, many of our small businesses will have difficulty taking on even more debt and I again emphasize that the restrictions on business activity have been imposed on

them as a consequence of the need for the public health measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 virus.

Can the minister clarify how this program will determine what percentage of the loans will be forgivable and what percentage will have to be repaid? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do apologize if the member hasn't received the letter yet. I will double check with my office to make sure that we do resend this.

That \$100,000 forgivable loan does have certain conditions and they are spelled out within the loan applications, and those are being administered through our Community Futures associations and which would set and determine what is forgivable and what isn't. I don't have that level of detail through this, but it is working with the businesses; those conditions would be spelled out within those agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. It would be good to get that information out to the business environment as well.

As the minister is aware, although summer is just around the corner, the ongoing restrictions on travel into the territory will continue to have severe consequences for what's left of small businesses in our tourism and outfitting sector. As the minister will recall, his department's business plan indicates that one of its priorities is to establish a Tourism Task Force to "develop a Tourism recovery and Resiliency Plan for Nunavut." I was wondering, Mr. Speaker, if the minister update the House today on what progress has been made by the Task Force. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the progress on the taskforce itself in terms of tourism at the moment, but I will definitely commit to providing that information. I do want to stress that as long as there are restrictions, this is going to have a huge impact, and we acknowledge that, especially for small businesses.

I feel for them and they need to be helped and our government has been trying to help through that small business program, and there are different levels that can get assistance from, and our office, along with the CANOR office and the Inuit organizations are all dealing with the businesses and have been working very hard to ensure those supports are there.

I want the businesses to reach out to our offices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Rumbolt.

Question 1328 – 5(2): Sanikiluaq Local Housing Organization Complex

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of Sanikiluaq and the people of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly approved capital funding earlier in its term for the construction of a much-needed new office and warehouse complex for Sanikiluaq's local housing organization.

As the minister will also recall, the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued the tender for this project on February 5, 2021. The tender closed on March 19, 2021, which is over two months ago.

Can the minister confirm when the Nunavut Housing Corporation will issue the tender award details for this important project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. I will look into that and see who won the tender, but the warehouse in Sanikiluaq will proceed this year and last week the letters were sent out identifying who got the tender. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary question, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not receive any information on the tender award and I would appreciate it if I could get that from the minister.

Also, as the minister is aware, the Department of Community and Government Services is moving forward with the construction of Sanikiluaq's new hamlet office. Can she clarify the extent to which the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Department of Community and Government Services may be able to coordinate some of their work with respect such areas as providing apprenticeship and training opportunities for local residents on these projects? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. With regard to the first question, I apologize, unfortunately all the offices were shut down, but the successful contractors have been written to, and if it's not too late, I know we will work with the contractors for sure along with (interpretation ends) Community and Government Services (interpretation) and also Family Services on the apprenticeships because they administer some of that. We can look into that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of my colleagues have been expressing concern about the Nunavut Housing Corporation's recent cancellation of a number of housing construction tenders.

When it comes to deciding whether or not a given tender is going to go ahead or be cancelled, can the minister clarify who makes the final decision? Is it the president of the corporation or the directors, the minister or the Financial Management Board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. The vice president conducts the review along with (interpretation ends) the chief executive officer along with our president and the chief operating officer. They work together to see what the best way to way to proceed is and they make a decision as to which community will proceed and which community will not proceed and finances are also a consideration.. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Question 1329 – 5(2): Isolation Hub Contractors for Ottawa

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, at this time patients are required to isolate at the hubs for a period prior to returning home, specifically for 14 days on average. Now, this does provide benefits, however, I have questions on the details to the Minister of Health.

Can the minister verify whether or not the isolation hubs that our medical patients are required to attend, particularly that one we utilize as Baffin residents in Ottawa? I have no clue about other hubs, however.

Can the minister clarify certain details respecting the different staff at the hubs, and the medical patient staff as well as the different service providers either employed or contracted? Can the minister identify how many contracts are presently signed for the isolation hubs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The boarding home he mentioned, the facility in Ottawa is administered by a contractor who either owns the building that houses the medical patients, or who hires an independent contractor in the case of 24-hour food services if no restaurant is available. There is a contract in place for catering delivered meals, and the workers and managers are also there to assist them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that clarification. Mr. Speaker, irrespective of that differentiation, I believe there is a truth to the kernel of complaints by medical patients who experience this actuality in light of the fight to keep COVID-19 out of Nunavut, and that seems to be the pervasive reasoning, albeit it is rather helpful that way.

Nevertheless, medical travel patients may end up feeling belittled due to this detail and they ought not to be feeling barred from receiving required medical services but it happens due to the lack of preferential treatment towards those who need it.

Mr. Speaker, whilst I was there, I had to endure my own 14-day period where I was in isolation hence my empathy to people who have to undergo that experience. Many constituents kept expressing their joy in seeing their MLA but, I will have stories to present later on, as I was given messages to relay. I could not turn them down; therefore I will pass along their messages at that junction.

There were many Inuit turned off by the meal choices, primarily due to the lack of choices of meat as Inuit grew up subsisting on meat, mostly marine mammal meat and the diet enforced in southern locales focuses on agrarian meals.

This impacts the people sent down for medical reasons as most of the food served is just thrown in the garbage. This act of throwing away edible foods is antithesis to older Inuit who have experienced starvation and hunger, so this ought not to be even an issue. Inuit going to medical establishments ought not to be forced to experience that.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): This should not be an issue with peoples taught the principles of honesty and taking other people's circumstances to heart. When elders are provided meals that are not based on meat, most of the foodstuff is thrown directly into the garbage since it is Agrarian food, not Inuit carnivore foods.

Can the minister work with the catering sector to provide more culturally appropriate foods and if she can work collaboratively with the confectionary service providers, as medical travel patients should be provided foods that are complementary to their bodies' healing processes, and further that it causes some patients to abandon their medical treatments.

There are many cases where patients relayed their experiences, and that if they had the choice to live or die by attending their medical appointments, many would prefer a shortened life instead. I was told by one patient that next time, he will not be going back for medical travel as long as the isolation program is in effect. He cited the nature of the food provided. Can the minister look into this further? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for the question. There have been many different issues raised, and food/catering is one of them.

However, I can say that the claim that food gets thrown in the garbage is simply not true. Many people have told me that the catering service is great. When meals are provided, it is obvious that we all have different tastes. We all have our own preferences. Yes, of course I can acknowledge that there are some individuals who may not like the meals provided, however not everyone is dissatisfied, and those who are dissatisfied often make it known to the caterer. I believe it is the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation that has the catering contract, and they are informed what meals are not so popular.

However, I will speak to my colleague and look into this further and will try and ask the question of what people want to see on the meal list. We want to ensure that proper meals are provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, I was in the isolation hub and the entire time that I was there, we were provided with the exact same food on a daily basis. There was absolutely no variety in the food provided; nothing new was ever on the menu. Often when you're Inuk you don't want to be eating things like frozen vegetables. We are given food containers and their contents are always the same. You never get to see any variety, so I thank the minister for agreeing to look into this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I also had many concerns expressed to me while I was in the isolation hubs regarding the rules that are in place and must be abided by for those who are on medical travel. There are many different rules provided, but not one rule is translated into Inuktitut. Many individuals who are unilingual go on medical travel and there's no Inuktitut translation on notices or rules. Perhaps the minister can look into this along with his officials to ensure Inuktitut notices are given and that the rules are provided in Inuktitut to ensure that medical patients abide by the rules. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Question 1330 – 5(2): Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon colleagues, everyone watching TV. It's nice to see a minister promoting his portfolio by using his attire, where the "CH" stands for "Community Health."

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I was one of the Members of the previous Legislative Assembly that passed into law the new *Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act*. This new legislation provides the government with important new tools with which to fight drug dealing and bootlegging in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asking many questions during our current Assembly about the coming into force of the new legislation. I was very pleased to read the official notice in yesterday's edition of the *Nunavut Gazette* which announced that the *Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act* is now in force.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm who has been appointed to be the new director of civil forfeiture and can the minister describe what the office's initial priorities will be? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm in an awkward position of stealing my own thunder. I have a minister's statement on this topic scheduled for next week.

>>Laughter

Mr. Speaker, what I will say at this point is that the initial stage of the office is going to be, as I had mentioned previously, community awareness so that people understand what their options are, to how to lodge a complaint, to work with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on making sure that any investigations are proceeding. That's where a lot of the suggestions will come from.

With regard to the Civil Forfeiture Office itself, investigations will initially be brought forward, typically we're expecting, by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but the community awareness is going to be a very important part of this office's mandate so that people know what their options are and who to speak to and how to lodge a formal complaint. That's going to be my response for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for his response. I'm hoping he can answer the second question, if he can.

Mr. Speaker, when the Members of the Legislative Assembly discussed this issue during our recent winter sitting, we were informed by departmental officials that a new "tip line" would be set up so that people living in smaller communities outside of Iqaluit would be able to directly contact the office with information concerning the activities of drug dealers and bootleggers. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm when the new tip line will be operational? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The director of forfeiture will have the responsibility to get the line together, the information out, the community awareness, and information packages sent out to hamlets and RCMP and different officials across the territory on how to proceed to lodge complaints. Up until the point that that is in place, which I don't have a firm timeline on, I do expect to have some more information in the next few weeks as the individual gets settled into his role. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize the minister did answer some of the last question I'm going to pose. Mr. Speaker, can the minister describe what work will be undertaken in coming months to contact municipal councils to explore ways in which the new civil forfeiture office can work with municipal law enforcement authorities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the member mentioned, I did summarize some in my response in the previous one. I just want to stress the importance that all community members can still forward complaints to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and bring forward charges for bootlegging or drug dealing.

The burden of proof is a little less with the civil forfeiture office than criminal proceedings, but if anyone is out there that knows that people are dealing drugs and bootlegging, are willing to come forward and lodge a complaint with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, I do encourage them to do so. Until such time as all the information packages are put together and communicated with hamlets and other entities that are going to be involved with this office, that process can still take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Please note that the time for question period has expired. Mr. Lightstone.

Motion 115 – 5(2): Extension of Question Period

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 39(7), I move, seconded by the Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, that the time allotted for oral question period be extended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order and is not subject to debate. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and question period is extended for an additional 30 minutes.

(interpretation) Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Mr. Qamaniq.

Question 1331 – 5(2): Marine Infrastructure in Pond Inlet

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of Pond Inlet, my colleagues, and the people of Nunavut. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, the people of Pond Inlet have been very supportive of the new marine infrastructure project that is being constructed in my community. Recent news reports indicate that work on the project continues today. I have the information of the recent report. I would like to ask the minister, (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the timeline and budget for the completion of the project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. COVID-19 has had an impact, but the project is going to go as planned, and we will keep working on it until it's completed in Pond Inlet. We're still in line with the plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The original tender for the Pond Inlet marine infrastructure project included an Inuit labour requirement of at least 15 percent. Can the minister clarify the extent to which this requirement has been met or exceeded? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am frantically looking for that exact percentage. If I recall; though I don't have it right in front of me, but I do recall that they had either matched or exceeded the Inuit employment component, but it is still pending because the project hasn't been completed.

Inuit employment fluctuates as a part of the project, so I cannot say whether they have exceeded, but to date they have been either very close or have exceeded it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing from the minister I guess once the project has been completed. Mr. Speaker, information provided by the Department of Economic Development and Transportation indicates that it has recently "Commissioned an operations plan inception report to refine the estimates of annual operations and maintenance costs for both the Pond Inlet and Iqaluit new marine facilities."

Can the minister clarify which company has been commissioned to undertake this work, and will he commit to providing a copy of the final report to the municipality of Pond Inlet and my office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the... (interpretation) I can't pronounce it. (interpretation ends) Advisian Company that has been commissioned to do the operational work, and once the report is done and as we are always committed, is report back to the community and I will be committing to reporting that back to the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Question 1332 – 5(2): Public Housing Construction

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to direct my questions to the minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and it again concerns the subject of public housing construction deferral.

We are still in shock today in my community of Taloyoak since the minister announced last week that the Nunavut Housing Corporation's tender for the community's new five-plex units is cancelled. The Nunavut Housing Corporation indicated last year that they were going to be building a new five-plex, but it is now cancelled. I have been strongly advocating for the need for more units in my constituency since the beginning of the Legislative Assembly in 2016.

Can the minister clearly tell me whether or not she has directly contacted the members of the Taloyoak Local Housing Association to explain this situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the member for asking that question. With regard to Taloyoak, we have cancelled the construction of units because we had problems with the insurance and the rising costs as we indicated on more than one occasion. The price of lumber has gone exceedingly high and it created a problem with the insurance part of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) When I raised this issue during last Friday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the minister blamed the high cost of construction materials for the cancellation of the tender. Can the minister clearly explain the extent to which tenders that were received for the Taloyoak project exceeded the available budget? (interpretation) That's to clarify my point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the member for his question. I can't indicate who the construction company was, but it is the high cost of construction materials and for the freight and so on. As I indicated earlier, because of the rising costs we had problems with the insurance portion

of it, but we are currently looking at it and if I have further information I'll make sure to get the message across. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister is very much aware, Taloyoak is one of the communities with the greatest need for more units.

Can the minister clearly explain why the Nunavut Housing Corporation cannot issue a new tender this year for the project, and can she clearly indicate when a new tender will be issued for the project? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the member for the question. We are currently looking at the difficult situation we are in. It is being delayed and we can't indicate who the bidders are, but the plan is still in the works. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Ms. Angnakak.

Question 1333 – 5(2): Monitoring School Attendance during the Pandemic

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for giving me a chance to ask a second question today. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

We are all aware that school attendance is an ongoing issue affecting the success of Nunavut's students. Concerns have been raised with respect to attendance during the pandemic and what the department is doing to monitor the situation.

Can the minister clearly explain which entity makes the final decision for students to attend school in those communities which are at stages 1 through 3? Is it the district education authority or the department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Education, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, overall attendance rates in Nunavut, looking at the past couple of years, we have seen an increase and this could be partially attributed to the school closures and relate to COVID-19 as the methodology where we had looked at and attendance is improving and

the DEAs work with the school staff on determining which students are marked as truant or attending.

As for the question on which has the final say, I believe that would lie with the regional school operations in consultation with the DEA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been brought to my attention that in some communities, parents have been given to understand that they can decide whether or not to send their child to school. It appears that this has contributed to some low attendance rates, even when there are in-school learning opportunities.

Can the minister tell us how school attendance rates are being monitored throughout the pandemic and whether attendance rates have gone down despite schools in some communities that are open? If they're open, is there any monitoring going on with attendance rates and, if so, have they gone down? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Education, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated, if we look at the past, so in the '18-19 school year, the school attendance rate was at 64.8 percent and whereas 2019-2020 it was at 76.5 percent, and again, all students were counted as present during school closures. That was how we marked student attendance.

Yes, we understand that some parents are choosing, along with their child, to keep their child at home versus sending them to school and it's their right to do that. However, schools have their normal ways of marking students. If they are not in attendance, if they have a reason, then they state it and otherwise they would be marked as truant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess that's kind of what I was trying to get at is how much monitoring takes place with schools that are open, yet with the pandemic where parents are choosing to keep their children at home, even though the school is open.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education has put significant effort into its Apataka Family Engagement program. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly made this program even more important than ever.

Can the minister describe what specific family engagement activities his department has conducted during the pandemic to support families and students and also to ensure that they attend school whenever in-school learning is possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Education, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the family engagement campaign, we're trying to build on this and also working with DEAs and school principals on different stay-in-school initiatives. There are different ways that schools are trying to keep their students to attend as best as they can.

Just also to state that during the pandemic, we have been dealing with some communities or DEAs where, when we revert to different stages, the community reacts in a different way, so we've had to try to manage that as well as work with the DEA to ensure that we go with the chief public health officer's advice and recommendation.

Mr. Speaker, the DEAs also have their own attendance and registration policies and Inuuqatigiitsiarniq policies that try to support and encourage student attendance and different ways to keep attendance rates higher than we have seen before. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Question 1334 – 5(2): Vaccine Passport/Verification

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask questions to our Premier. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are on the topic of vaccine passports and vaccine certification.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, Mr. Simailak, mentioned earlier in questions to the health minister, this has been a very heavily discussed topic within Canada and beyond in terms of providing proof of vaccination for travel, either within Canada and outside of Canada.

My first question is for the Premier. The federal government has stated that they are working on a certification system for international travel. My first question for the Premier is: what discussions has the Premier had with the federal government on the topic of vaccine passports for international travel and what role would the Nunavut government have in such a system? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we're going to have a vaccine passport that's for international travel, that is clearly the jurisdiction of the federal

government and the federal government would work with all the provinces and territories to get the data on who is vaccinated. There have been some discussions with the federal government with all the premiers of Canada, but nothing confirmed has come out of these results.

Our role would be, if such a passport was coming out, to provide the data to the federal government on who has been vaccinated within Nunavut. The Minister of Health and chief public health officer, it would be their role to work with whoever designs that program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) *Ma'na*, Premier. The health records this year in particular is why I asked what Nunavut's role would be because the health records are stored provincially and territorially.

In terms of domestic travel, this has also been coming up in the news media lately: domestic verification, I'll call it as opposed to using the term "passport." Currently the territory of Yukon is leading the way in discussions on this topic because they have, I believe, the highest vaccination rate in the whole country.

The deputy chief public health officer of Canada has stated in the media that "...close collaboration between provinces and territories to sort out a system" will be required. My next question for the Premier: what discussions has he had with his provincial and territorial counterparts on a domestic verification system for travel within Canada? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have had discussions at the premier level but at the lower level. If anything like this were to happen, the chief public health offices of each province and territory and the health department from each province and territory would have these discussions. I have had not these discussions on verification of vaccine for domestic travel. Those discussions would happen at the chief public health officer and the Department of Health level. To the best of my knowledge, they are not being discussed right now, but I do know that the health department and the chief public health officer are always in discussions about vaccines and what it means to be vaccinated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hello? (interpretation) I'll first ask: Mr. Main, can you still hear me or the members? Continuing on. Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. (interpretation ends) I didn't hear the Premier's response, so it's a bit hard to follow up on that issue in particular, but I'll proceed with my final question, which was regarding privacy concerns.

This has been something that has been raised with regard to vaccine verification. One suggestion has been made that any vaccine passport should be destroyed at the end of the pandemic.

In terms of the work of the Nunavut Information and Privacy Commissioner, can the Premier confirm whether the Information and Privacy Commissioner has been consulted to date on the topic of vaccine verification and/or passports? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't use that special remote I have any more on MLA Main. I'm just kidding.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, if we're going towards sharing data, of course, the privacy commissioner would be involved. Right now currently we are not even at the discussion stage with the privacy commissioner, but if and when we get to where there are privacy issues involved, definitely the privacy commissioner would be involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 1335 – 5(2): Safe Places for Youth

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Family Services and I would like to follow up on yesterday's questions regarding safe spaces for youth.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the minister for committing to provide a much-needed safe shelter for youth here in Iqaluit. I would just like to request more details on the minister's intentions.

Yesterday the minister had indicated that there is funding available as the government received federal COVID funding for transitional housing for youth. Mr. Speaker, for my first question, I would like to ask the minister to confirm how much of this funding will be utilized for a youth shelter here in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. If the question is referring to the federal announcement on

transitional housing because of COVID, it was \$8 million over nine years, I do believe, and it would be application based. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the minister and the Department of Family Services will be filling out an application to access some of that funding.

Yesterday the minister had also indicated that it's a matter of having the partners getting together to make it a reality, referring to a youth shelter here in Iqaluit. I assume that this shelter will not be a GN-run facility. I would like to ask: can the minister indicate which partners the Department of Family Services is working with on this initiative? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I said that there is funding made available through the federal government on that \$8 million or \$9 million pot of money.

When I refer to potential partners, it's who in our community provides similar services because a lot of times it's for not-for-profit organizations that establish much-needed services in our communities. It's those kinds of partners, potentially Uquutaq, the Agvvik Society; those are the kinds of partners that we would obviously reach out to if we were going to look at having one. Maybe the City of Iqaluit is an example.

There are many possibilities when it comes to partners if we're going to move forward on a permanent youth homeless shelter. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For my final question, I would like to ask the minister if the Department of Family Services intends on potentially utilizing Building 534, which the low-barrier shelter will soon be vacating, for this new youth safe shelter in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that question. When we made it a low-barrier shelter, it was a temporary use. If you're aware, we actually own 534, but half of the building is condemned and it was a temporary approval from inspectors to use it. I think, if we're going to change the use, we would have to probably get an inspector to confirm yet again if we can extend the use of 534. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members will note that the time for question period has expired. Continuing on. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. (interpretation) No. 8. Returns to Written Questions. No. 9. Replies to Opening Address. No. 10. Petitions. 11. Responses to Petitions. No. 12. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Community and Government Services, Ms. Ehaloak.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 391 – 5(2): Nunavut Emergency Management 2019-2020 Annual Report

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the 2019-2020 Nunavut Emergency Management's Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Mr. Lightstone.

Tabled Document 392 – 5(2): Correspondence from the Iqaluit Condominium Corporation Collective

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am tabling a copy of correspondence from the Iqaluit Condominium Corporation Collective.

Mr. Speaker, the organization represents a significant number of residents of Iqaluit. In their correspondence to the Government of Nunavut, a number of concerns have been raised concerning the impact of rising insurance rates, which is an issue that is having a significant and negative impact on the community's housing continuum.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to review the document with care, and I will have questions on these issues during our spring sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Notices of Motions. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Motions. First Reading of Bills. Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasie.

Item 18: Second Reading of Bills

Bill 73 – An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, that Bill 73, *An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act*, be read for the second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: All those favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 73 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Community and Government Services, Ms. Ehloak.

Bill 74 – An Act to Amend the Hamlets Act – Second Reading

Hon. Jeannie Ehloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet South, that Bill 74, *An Act to Amend the Hamlets Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Hamlets Act* to allow for different provisions to be made in land administration bylaws with respect to different classes of persons. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The motion is in order. (interpretation ends) To the principle of the bill.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. Opposed. (interpretation ends) The motion is carried and Bill 74 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Bill 75 – An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act – Second Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 75, *An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Summary Conviction Procedures Act* to clarify the authority of the Government of Nunavut and of municipalities to prosecute offences under enactments and municipal bylaws, and to conduct appeals with respect to those prosecutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 75 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Community and Government Services, Ms. Ehaloak.

Bill 76 – An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act – Second Reading

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet South, that Bill 76, *An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act* to provide for a more flexible composition of the Northern Employee Benefits Pension Committee and more regulation-making powers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 76 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation) Continuing on. (interpretation ends)
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 69, 70, 71, and 72 with Ms. Angnakak in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 114 – 5(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Before we proceed with the committee, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:42 and Committee resumed at 16:10*

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

Chairperson (Ms. Angnakak): Alright. Welcome back, everybody. Welcome to those who are just joining us today. I would like to call this meeting back to order. In

Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 69, 70, 71, and 72. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Madam Chairperson, we wish to commence with the review of Bill 69 and Bill 70 and the supporting documents. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kaerner. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 69?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 69 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 3,
2020-2021 – Consideration in Committee**

Chairperson: Okay, I see nods from the Zoom members. I would like to ask Minister Hickes: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. George Hickes: Yes, I do, Madam Chairman.

Chairperson: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Okay. For the record, Minister Hickes, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments. Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. For the sake of time, I'll introduce the witnesses that I have with me for Bills 69 and 70, and they will be called upon as appropriate. Starting to my far right, Colleen Stockley, Deputy Minister of Health; to my immediate right, Terry Audla, President of the Nunavut Housing Corporation; to my immediate left, Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance; and to my far left, Dan Carlson, Assistant Deputy of Finance. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I appear before you today to present Bill 69, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2020-2021*.

Through this bill we are seeking approval to change the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' overall operations and maintenance budget in 2020-21 by... nothing at all.

More accurately, this bill asks you to increase and then decrease the department's appropriation by \$4,606,000. Madam Chairperson, in any case, this bill, if approved, will have no net impact on the government's budget.

I would like to explain this odd request, which relates to our support of northern airlines. As you know, I wrote to members on April 14 to update you in detail about the situation but will summarize it now.

The COVID pandemic continues to impact air travel to, from and within Nunavut, significantly impacting our airlines. Our government has maintained the philosophy of helping airlines break even so they can continue to fly to our communities.

This financial support is temporary and only in response to the pandemic's actual impacts on air travel, which we cannot know ahead of time.

The Government of Nunavut has organized our support into short phases; a few months at a time. Airlines provide us with a forward-looking estimate of their operating needs, we provide funding based on these estimates, and then based on actual audited statements, we adjust what they needed over the period. This includes being reimbursed for any amounts the airlines did not, with the benefit of hindsight, require.

Madam Chairperson, in late March 2021, just before the end of our fiscal year, we agreed to make available another \$18 million to help airlines cover the January to March period. This amount was based on the airlines' own forecasts.

At the time of our decision, to ensure we had full spending authorities in place, our government issued Special Warrant No. 11. This increased the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' 2020-21 appropriation by \$4,606,000 and allowed us to move forward with our contributions to the airlines.

Madam Chairperson, the letter I sent you in April describes these events and our previous support in greater detail.

Because we issued a special warrant, our *Financial Administration Act* requires me to submit this amount to the Assembly by way of a supplementary appropriation. This is an important part of our government's financial transparency and accountability, so I am pleased to be here.

However, we recently learned two bits of helpful news. First, counterparts at Transport Canada confirmed that we have some flexibility in terms of using funds they had previously provided. Second, we recently received the backwards-looking statements from the airlines showing updated figures.

As a result, we can confirm with better information and hindsight that we do not actually need the additional spending authorities made available in 2020-21 by Special Warrant No. 11.

Because the *Financial Administration Act* requires that we seek your approval of the \$4.6 million, but as we do not actually need these funds, we are also asking you to reduce Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' appropriation by the same amount.

This explains the “in and out” funding request we are seeking through this bill. There will be no net impact in 2020-21.

Madam Chairperson and members, I can honestly say that of all the requests for supplementary appropriations I have made as Minister of Finance, this is by far my favourite. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Do any members have any general comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for recognizing me. (interpretation ends) I just have a comment on the principle of providing support to for-profit businesses. It’s something that has been raised before in our discussions in the House on similar appropriations and that’s the issue of taking an equity stake in airlines in question.

I do understand that certain portions of these payments do end up going towards plane tickets for medical travel and civil service to travel, but there still remains a chunk of money that goes towards the airlines and I do understand that in return, there are things that the territory does receive. The territory receives a continuation of service, basically. There are more flights. As I understand it, there are more flights than there would be if there wasn’t any support from the government provided in terms of flight schedules and what have you, but I do feel that it would be appropriate for the government to receive an equity stake in the airlines in question, Canadian North and Calm Air, in return for this support.

Calm Air in particular is a publicly traded company or it’s a subsidiary of a publicly traded company, Exchange Income Corporation, and Canadian North is a bit different because it’s privately held, but I do believe that in both cases it would be possible for the airlines, in exchange for support, to offer up equity stakes in their business to the government, either by, in Canadian North’s case, increasing the number of issuing shares. These contributions could be recognized as a forgivable loan.

I mean, there are a number of different ways that it could have been dealt with and I’m a bit disappointed that we find ourselves more than a year into the pandemic and we are still putting money towards the airlines, of which some of that money does come from the Nunavut government’s own budget, and we are not receiving equity stake or recognition of that contribution in return.

That’s the extent of my comments and it’s something that we have raised before in the House and I think that it is something that should be considered by the government for further support payments to these for-profit businesses. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Towtongie. Alright, here we go. I have no other names... . Oh, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would just like to mirror Mr. Main's comments. I believe that in total, the Government of Nunavut, as well as utilizing a portion of federal funding, has allocated over nearly \$100 million in payments to these airlines. I understand that the airlines were at risk, given the significant drop in services and revenues provided by those services, and that would have put Nunavummiut at risk, but I also believe that we missed out on a golden opportunity.

Canadian North has been profiteering off of the Government of Nunavut for decades, for quite a considerable amount of time and it would have been ideal if the Government of Nunavut had taken advantage of the opportunity and used this \$100 million to buy-in to the corporation and allow the corporation to then reinvest those funds to support its operations.

I understand that through the recently signed duty and medical travel contract, there was an agreement stipulation of minimum flights to communities and had the airlines been in breach of that clause within the contract, then the airline would have been liable in some way or form. Again, the airline ran the risk of becoming defunct, but had the government decided to wait out, possibly a little bit longer and waited for the airlines to come to terms, then this \$100 million, then the Government of Nunavut would have had something to show for it.

I just wanted to mirror Mr. Main's comments and I completely agree that this was a missed opportunity and likely \$100 million wasted. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. I have no other names on my list. (interpretation ends) Members, can you go to page 4... . Oh, Mr. Qirngnuq, I didn't see you. Sorry. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In the minister's opening comment, the part where it discusses the operations and maintenance budget in 2020-21, it says it should be affected by nothing at all, if I understood it correctly. Madam Chairperson, I think it has already affected things.

I'm thinking about that and brainstorming as to how can we improve things in the near future so we won't have to go through this again down the road. I don't have anything else to say other than that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. I apologize for not seeing you when you first raised your hand earlier. (interpretation ends) Okay, anybody else? No. Okay. If members can go to page 4 of the supplementary appropriation binder.

Okay, on page 4. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Operations and Maintenance. Special Warrants. Mr. Lightstone, you had a question? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just have one line of questioning and just out of curiosity, when was this special warrant put forward to the FMB for

consideration and when did the Financial Management Board approve the original special warrant? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I was just getting the exact date. It was March 29. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Lightstone, do you have any more? Are you done? (interpretation ends) Okay. No other names. Oh, Mr. Main. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) The briefing material that we have in front of us, I don't have the minister's opening comments in front of me. I'm not sure if it's lost in the emails that we're receiving.

The briefing materials, the very last bullet says that the GN is still hoping that Transport Canada will allow the use of the remaining \$4.6 million for the third round of support. Did I hear the minister's opening comments correctly that they have received word from Transport Canada with regard to using the remaining \$4.6 million? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The member heard correctly. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Main, do you have any more?

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) The remaining \$4.6 million will be used for the third round of support, which is good news, so thank you to Transport Canada for that.

Has the department had any discussions with Transport Canada regarding taking an equity stake in any of the airlines? Specifically, has Transport Canada given any guidance to the Government of Nunavut on this topic and whether it would be appropriate or whether it would be inappropriate? Has there been any discussion or guidance provided by the Transport Canada officials? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There were no discussions of that nature with Transport Canada. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Main, do you have any more? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Were there any discussions with the airlines regarding this concept that the Government of Nunavut, in exchange for supporting the airlines during this period of hardship, that the government would receive a stake in either Calm Air or Canadian North? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Very early on in the consultant discussions when we first started recognizing that we were going to need to support the airlines, as a government, we looked at all the different options that were available.

If members will indulge me a little bit, I'll use the federal government's support to one of the major airlines in Canada, where they purchased shares, but they still had to provide interest-free loans, which is another topic that did come up as well too. At the same time it would have taken away the opportunity to put our own measures in place for a minimum standard of scheduling or, as Member Lightstone put it earlier, it would have forced the airlines in a breach of their contract, which could have put them in financial jeopardy, which would have jeopardized our transportation routes available totally.

If they were to fold it up and walked away, we calculate that it would have taken at least two weeks to put measures in place to get people and cargo moving again. When you look at the opportunity that has been alluded to as being a missed opportunity; by providing this funding as the barebones operational requirements, we would have had to provide excess funding if we were looking at purchasing portions of the airline.

We didn't know at that time, and in some respects, we are still figuring out what the impact of COVID is on our fiscal situation. We weren't willing to put Nunavut's money again in jeopardy with a contracted entity that we have arrangements with. We do our due diligence in these types of negotiations to do what's best for Nunavummiut. The decision was made by cabinet and FMB at different stages of the discussions on how to provide that minimal level of service for transportation of cargo and people within the territory and to the first points of exit, being like the Ottawa, Winnipeg and Yellowknife. We had to take all those factors into consideration and our unknown fiscal situation in a lot of respects. We didn't know how much assistance the federal government was willing to provide at that time. We had to do what's best for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The minister mentioned that very early on it was considered, so I interpret that to say that this approach was chosen and this has been the consistent, the same approach since the beginning of these rounds of funding.

Am I safe to assume that there's not going to be any change in approach or there are no plans for further rounds of funding to look at things like equity stakes in the airlines? It is an assumption. It sounds like the minister's saying there's no... I don't anticipate just hearing his wording that there'd be any changes or consideration of taking equity stakes and/or issuing forgivable loans.

Is this something that is still on the table or is that kind of that door is closed at this point in time? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm sure all members know I don't like to say any door is totally closed, but at this time that is not an option we are exploring. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main. That's it? Okay. Let me try this again. Page 4. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Operations and Maintenance

An Hon. Member: Cathy has her hand up.

Chairperson: Ms. Towtongie, do you have your hand up? It's very hard to tell from here. Okay. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just have one question to the Minister of Finance, and that is on the special warrant in the amount of \$10 million. It says "financial support to Canadian North, Calm Air and Kenn Borek Air." We don't have Kenn Borek Air. Does Kenn Borek Air do medical emergency travels? We don't have the airline here. It must be from... can you hear me? Can you hear me now?

Chairperson: Ms. Towtongie, you've jumped ahead of us. You're in the next one, so if you'd like to save that question for number 70, Bill 70.

Ms. Towtongie: Okay.

Chairperson: Okay. Alright, so does anybody have else want to ask questions on this page? Okay, I don't see any hands up, so I'm going to start reading. Okay. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Operations and Maintenance. Special Warrants. The net effect of this is zero. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Go to Bill 69 in your legislation binder. Okay. Bill 69, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2020-2021*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Do members agree to Bill 69 as a whole?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Do members agree to put Bill 69 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Closing comments. Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just quickly, it is almost a shame that we have to put these bills by number. I would have like to have called it the “Seinfeld Bill.” It’s a show about nothing. This is a bill about nothing as a net result of zero. I don’t know if that has ever happened before in this legislature, and if it hasn’t, I guess I am pioneering the way.

I just want to thank members for the questions. I know we had a few more questions in the committee, and I would like to thank the staff that worked behind the scenes on this and thank the Committee of the Whole for their diligence. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Hickes. We will now proceed to Bill 70. Mr. Hickes, please proceed with your opening comments for Bill 70.

**Bill 70 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 1,
2021-2022 – Consideration in Committee**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson and members, I appear before you today to present Bill 70, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2021-2022*.

Through this bill we are seeking to increase the government’s operations and maintenance appropriation by, not nothing; \$27.71 million in 2021-22.

This would bring our total operations and maintenance spending authority to \$1,885,000,000, an increase of about 1.5 percent over what the Assembly approved in March.

Madam Chairperson and members, there are three parts to this request.

First, we are seeking \$10 million so the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs can continue to provide financial assistance to help northern airlines break even while maintaining flight services to our communities. These new territorial funds will add to the nearly \$12,558,000 in support Transport Canada is also providing. Together, these funds will extent support until the end of June 2021.

Second, we are seeking \$17.11 million so the Department of Health may continue to operate isolation hubs between July until the end of September 2021 should we need to. These new territorial funds would build on the \$17 million in federal funding we have set aside to operate the hubs until the end of June. This continues our government's efforts to limit and slow the spread of COVID into Nunavut.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, we are seeking \$500,000 so the Nunavut Housing Corporation can launch a new, targeted incentive program to encourage home ownership in Nunavut.

Madam Chairperson and members, the Homebuyer Matched-Savings Program will encourage employees of the GN and public agencies to transition out of staff housing and into private residences, a goal identified in the *Blueprint for Action on Housing*.

Madam Chairperson, through this new program, the Government of Nunavut will help participating employees save for a down-payment by setting aside money from each pay cheque. When an employee is ready to make a down-payment, the Nunavut Housing Corporation will contribute an amount that matches what the employee has set aside under the program. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's contributions are to be used exclusively towards the purchase costs of an existing house or new home construction within the territory. The program will have a total contribution limit, with only one program applicant per household.

Madam Chairperson, by encouraging savings in this way, this program will make it a little easier for many in Nunavut to move out of staff housing, which can then be made available to others who have not had the time to build up savings.

Madam Chairperson and members, this concludes my opening comments. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Hickes. (interpretation ends) Do members have any general comments? Seeing none, go to page 4 of the supplementary appropriation binder, please. Did I hear somebody say something? General comments. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My comment to the opening comments of the minister's statement and looking at the supplementary appropriation, I see three airlines: Canadian North, Calm Air, and Kenn Borek. I don't know what Kenn Borek does. I believe it flies in the Qikiqtaaluk. Do they charter for medical purposes or medical emergencies?

Secondly, in looking at the appropriation, \$500,000 for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's budget is at \$219,625,000. Why could they not have taken that out of their own funding up to date because it's limited? We are informed that this is limited to government employees and they will deduct money from each pay cheque.

Those are my observations and comments. I would have thought that it would be open to anyone who wanted their own private or businesses who would like to buy houses. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. You look so bored, so I'm now giving you the name I gave you last time, so Madam Chairperson, my comments. (interpretation) That's all.

>> *Laughter*

Chairperson: I don't think there's ever a boring moment when we have Ms. Towtongie here. That's for sure.

Those with general comments and I just want to remind members that we're going to go page by page in this binder and you can ask questions on the page that we're on so that we're organized and we know where we are at any given time.

Page 4 of the binder. Health. I better put my glasses on; I might read the wrong numbers. Health. Operations and Maintenance. Special Warrants. \$10,100,000. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I'm looking at the briefing material and the phrase used is "to fund the shortfall in existing appropriations required to address the airlines' financial requirements to break even." My first question for the minister is: who is reviewing the financial information provided to the government in terms of verifying where the break-even point is and how much support the airlines require? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate the question. There are a few different departments involved. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, obviously, has been administering the contracts with the airlines. The Department of Health, obviously, is involved with some of the numbers, as well as the Department of Economic Development and Transportation with their airline expertise, but the bulk of the financial analysis is done by my Deputy Minister, Jeff Chown, and his team. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Has the government or the group accessed any specialists in the area of private sector financing? I have a lot of respect for the financial experts within the government, but my assumption is that their expertise would be more towards the public sector. Particularly when you're dealing with publicly traded companies, private sector finance is very specialized. Has there been any contracting or any support provided by outside experts in terms of airline or private sector financial analysis? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate the member's question and the comment. At the beginning of this need, we did do some work with Lufthansa, who had recently completed a contract with the Government of Nunavut when we were looking at our medical and duty travel contracts with airlines, so yes. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Is this support from Lufthansa something that's ongoing? I know there have been a number of rounds; I think we're up to round 3. Was that kind of a one-off support from Lufthansa or is that ongoing? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It was just at the beginning so that we had some information and expertise on what to look for, so it was just at the early stages of the first phase of funding and hasn't been since. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I would like to ask about what types of conditions are placed on the airlines when they receive this funding. Particularly I'm interested in executive compensation and bonuses.

There have been media reports from southern Canada of companies, not necessarily airlines, but private companies that received COVID-related support and went on to pay bonuses to their executives or things that were maybe flagged as being ethically questionable.

When it comes to executive compensation and bonuses, what types of conditions are in the agreements with the airlines? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Through the audited statements, part of the contract requirement is that we do not support any executive bonuses or payments of that nature.

That being said, if the airline were to use money from other sources to give their executives a COVID bonus, it would be not applicable to us. The arrangement we have is to cover the operational requirements of what it costs to put a plane in the air and land, with our cargo and people, and to maintain the routes as far as minimum flights.

One of the other conditions is that they apply for any federal funding programs that are available to that industry and to business. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. There is a condition in there that specifies or prohibits the government dollars from being put towards bonuses. I just wanted to get that clarified before I ask my next question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The member is correct. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) If the government money is not allowed to be used for bonuses, that's clear, I guess, but there's nothing, as the minister mentioned, that prohibits the airline from paying bonuses out of... . They could say, "Oh, this comes from a different source."

I mean, the reason I'm interested in this bonus issue is that generally you can use it as an indicator or it could be tracked as an indicator of financial performance. If a company is doing well, you would want to see the executives rewarded or perhaps the board, in some cases, rewarded, but if a company is doing poorly, you would want to see the pain that, perhaps, the shareholders are feeling extends to the executive level in terms of the board and senior management.

Has the Government of Nunavut been tracking either Calm Air or Canadian North in terms of whether they are paying bonuses and whether they have paid bonuses during this pandemic period? I'm asking about the last year or the last year and a bit. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In all the financial documents that have gone through the Government of Nunavut, there has been no indication of any bonuses being paid. That being said, I can't presume the criteria of a private organization of what they would use as bonus criteria, whether it be financial performance. I'm sure Mr. Avery and his team have put in a lot of extra hours over this last year dealing with a lot of issues that come up very quickly. If their organization were to pay bonuses, personally I wouldn't have an issue with that as long as it doesn't come from Government of Nunavut coffers. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I personally would have an issue with that. When we have for-profit businesses receiving public dollars from the Government of Nunavut and the federal government, those same dollars could go towards any number of different needs within the territory.

My last question is: I don't want to get hypothetical, but if either of these airlines are paying bonuses currently or have been paying bonuses during the pandemic period to their senior management or board, does the government have the ability to claw back any of the funding that has been provided or is that something that has to be caught at the audit committee level that the minister has mentioned and they're the ones with the only ability to reduce the contribution? I hope that's a clear question. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Mr. Main, I'll take that as your last question on that topic; we have another name on the list. Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With the agreement that we have in place with the airlines, we only see the Nunavut side of their business. Some of these airlines have business sectors in other jurisdictions, so we do not get that financial information and I think it would be unfair for us to ask for that type of information. We are looking at keeping the airlines afloat at a non-profit margin operationally.

Like I said earlier, what it costs to put a plane in the air, what it costs to load the bags on, for the fuel for that plane, for the crew on that plane, those are the costs that we're covering. We're not covering any capital investments. We're not covering any capitalization of investments or losses.

I think that there may be a misunderstanding of what a bonus structure would look like under those parameters, but I can assure all members and anyone paying attention here that not one nickel of Nunavut's money will go towards that executive bonus. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Recently the federal government approved a loan for Air Canada, sort of bailout funds, and one of the stipulations was that Air Canada was to repay all customers who had credits for cancelled flights.

My first question is: at any point did the Government of Nunavut, in its discussions with Canadian North, discussed the topic of credits that Canadian North holds for flights which were cancelled since the beginning of the pandemic? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Although I know quite a bit about this file, I don't sit at the table, so I don't hear every little discussion topic. Through you, Madam Chairperson, if Mr. Chown could respond to the member's question.

Chairperson: Mr. Chown.

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, we did have those discussions, not initially during the first round of airline funding, but in the most recent round of discussions, we did bring up the idea of potentially requiring them to repay funds. It was just a preliminary discussion and concerns were raised around the potential liquidity issues it might cause for them with their cash in the bank.

We chose not to pursue it at this time. We did have confirmation from them that they are continuing to honour those airline credits so they're not expiring. The answer is yes, we did have discussions, but we did not pursue the issue as a requirement of the current agreements. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Chown. I'm curious. Since the credits due to cancelled flights were not initially discussed at the first round of discussions and during the subsequent discussions with Canadian North when the topic was brought up, was the Government of Nunavut aware of the total amount of dollar value of credits that Canadian North holds for Nunavummiut who had cancelled their flights? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No, those numbers weren't discussed. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Was the cash in the bank the credits for the cancelled flights that Canadian North is retaining, has that been built into any of

the break-even calculations? People had paid for these flights, these flights did not occur, the operational requirements were no longer required, so Canadian North is sitting on countless cancelled flight tickets. With thousands of dollars for each round trip, that's a substantial amount of money, so I'm curious if that has been built in, in any way, shape, or form through any of the rounds of discussions into the financial calculations. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, those funds would be accounted for. If they were used, it would offset any of our funding and it would be basically a charge back that we would get through our break-even point because if they have revenue on a flight, it comes off the money that we are providing them. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'm not sure if I caught all that, but I'll move on to my next question. Has the government been made aware of the number of Nunavummiut who cancelled flights and the dollar value of those credits and, if not, would the government be able to get a hold of that information? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I apologize for the delay.

Technically we could gather that information from the airlines, but we would not be able to share it publicly anyway. I'm not aware; I haven't had any complaints cross my desk as an MLA or as a minister on people complaining that they're not able to access these funds. I'm sure there are people that are out there that are challenged financially through this and hopefully they can come to some type of an arrangement with the airline to use those tickets or work out some type of an arrangement with the airline.

Our focus is on making sure that there's a minimum flight schedule to maintain our communities' needs and our health care needs. That isn't something that, even if we had that information, would be actionable on our part publicly. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? (interpretation ends) Okay. I don't have any more names. There's a typo in the binder. It shouldn't have been "Health" on page 4; it should have been "EIA," Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Operations and Maintenance. Special Warrants. \$10,100,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Okay. Turn the page. Page 5. Health. Operations and Maintenance. Not Previously Authorized. \$17,110,000. Agreed? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I'm referring to the briefing material that was provided here.

These funds that are being requested are for the period from the second quarter. It says "July 1 to September 30," but it says "second quarter," so I wonder if I could just get a clarification. It's on page 1 of the briefing note. Is that supposed to say "third quarter"? Maybe a clarification, please. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That is not a typo. We run on a fiscal calendar, so first quarter would be April 1 and then the second quarter would be starting July 1. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister, for clarifying that. Isolation hubs, what can I say? I understand why they're in place and I really do appreciate all the effort that has gone into keeping Nunavut COVID-free, but at the end of the day they're not all that popular. People still would like to isolate at home as opposed to spending 14 days in a hotel. I realize that's a decision within the hands of the chief public health officer.

In terms of the performance to date in the hubs, the minister or the department...thank you to the department for providing us a summary which indicates that there have been 17,000 completed hub stays, 17,208, and when we look at that number, how many times have individuals tested positive for COVID while in the hubs? I'm just trying to understand how many cases have been caught as a result of the hub operations to date. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I think one thing to recognize is that it was only fairly recently that they initiated voluntary testing into the hubs. It hasn't been mandatory. We can't make someone take a test.

I do agree with the member that these hubs have been instrumental in keeping COVID out of the territory. Unfortunately I don't have any numbers with me today on the impact of any positive cases. That being said, that's the reason that the hubs are there so that if somebody is positive, by the time they leave there, the virus would have run its course. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The briefing material references to September 30, I guess I don't want to request a prediction on when the pandemic will end, but in terms of the hubs themselves, is there any hope or any chance that the hub operations could be wrapped up prior to September 30, that we could see the hubs shut down before that date or is that September 30 the very earliest date that we can anticipate them to be no longer needed? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I truly appreciate that question. I think it's very important to recognize that we all have a part to play in how long the hubs are in place, through our vaccination measures, through our own habits and following the chief public health officer's recommendations in our communities, in our homes. It does have some impact on southern jurisdictions that are going through, in some places, quite serious outbreaks right now, which does jeopardize the opportunity for COVID to enter the territory, but like I had mentioned in my opening comments, there is a caveat in the request of "if needed." For how long that's needed, we don't know.

I would like to hope that the hubs would be, hopefully, gone long before September, but that's going to take every one of us, not just in this building but every one of us in our communities to get vaccinated. I'm very excited about the rollout of the Pfizer vaccine in a couple of weeks that is going to be going across the territory. That is going to have a huge impact on our herd immunity statistics, and I do hope that people take advantage of those clinics when they become available, and the sooner people have the uptake in the vaccines, the sooner we can close the hubs. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Yes, it's concerning that we don't have higher vaccination numbers already and hopefully we can see more people taking the vaccine.

This bill is about money and so every guest that has to go through the isolation hubs costs the government money. In terms of reducing the number of persons who go through the hubs, who stay there for 14 days, I'm not a medical professional, obviously, but my first question to the medical professionals would be: why are we requiring fully vaccinated individuals to stay in the hubs for 14 days?

I guess the question for the minister is: is there any way that we can see exemptions put in place for fully vaccinated individuals to bypass the hubs and to return directly home or is this a discussion that we are not allowed to have because it's in the domain of the public health officer? I'll put that question to the minister and I would like to understand what cabinet's involvement in that decision is, specifically exempting fully vaccinated individuals from the isolation hubs. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I know those discussions are happening all across the county, if not the world, right now and Minister Kusugak would probably be best suited to respond to that question for the member. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate the question. Yes, we have those discussions as well within our department and within the COVID team and those discussions are ongoing. We would like to see it happen sooner than later, but there are a number of boxes, I guess, for a lack of a better term, that need to be ticked at this point.

I can't foresee an isolation hub closure completely anytime soon, but definitely the discussions around having fully vaccinated Nunavummiut not have to isolate completely go through a two-week isolation process is something definitely that we are discussing at this time. I just can't give a clear indicated date of when that would happen, but I assure you that those discussions do happen or are happening.

In terms of having to not go through isolation hubs or to shut them down, I don't think that portion would be happening anytime soon because you have to understand that there are many people down south who do have to come to Nunavut and there is no guarantee that they are fully vaccinated when they do enter our isolation hubs. We also have many Nunavummiut who will be non-vaccinatable because they are under the age of 12 that would have to go through that situation.

I realize it's a long answer, but yes, we are looking at reducing the use of the isolation hubs and yes, we are definitely having discussions around whether we should remove the necessity to have isolation hub stays if you have been fully vaccinated. Those discussions are happening, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) It's really exciting to hear that. I know there are a lot of people who are waiting to visit family in the south or people in the south looking forward to coming up north, but that 14-day barrier really discourages people from travelling, which is good. I totally understand why the hubs are needed and why they will continue to be needed.

Just to follow up with Minister Kusugak, if Minister Hickes will allow, in terms of the time frame when we could see changes or see exemptions for fully vaccinated persons, what is the holdup? Are you waiting for data from Health Canada or Public Health Canada or is it more on the Nunavut side in terms of the decision-making? I'm trying to ask in terms of what the decision-making time frame is and what the holdup is. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I don't think there is a holdup *per se*, but there are issues out there, there are things that need to be confirmed and done properly. We would like to see the increase in terms of people being vaccinated. Those numbers are still going up. We currently still have COVID cases in Nunavut. We would like to see that come to a close.

We are just starting the vaccination of our children in Nunavut that are under the age of 18 to 12 years old, so that's just starting up, Madam Chairperson. Once these things and other issues are dealt with within our COVID team, then would be in a better position to be able to make some firm decisions on where we go with fully vaccinated Nunavummiut. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Minister Kusugak. (interpretation ends) I look forward to those announcements.

I want to turn to the contracts related to the hub operations. Thank you to the Minister of Finance for giving the committee a list of contracts that have been issued and I'll avoid referring to specific contracts. I'm not sure if this is confidential or not.

Just going down the list, these are large contracts: \$30 million, \$5 million, \$8 million, \$5 million, \$10 million; these hubs are expensive. So when we look at the security contracts, the hotel contracts and all of these other support contracts, including nursing services, were these contracts that were tendered out, or was there an invitation to tender type of process? Or, how were they procured? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I don't have an exact breakdown of which ones were sole sourced or which ones went out to competition. It would be safe to say that the majority of them were sole sourced due to the necessity of setting up these hubs in such a short timeframe. We didn't have time to go out to market.

Once those contracts were signed, the experience that was gained and the efficiencies that were identified through ongoing discussions of any further contracts took into consideration. One of the hardest things was to find interested hotels, especially if we were overtaking the entire hotel. I know there were some concerns early on in one of the hotels that I was aware of that still had people travelling from other places around Canada as regular guests, not mixed in, because they were separated by floors, but there were still guests in some of the hotels.

Finding hotels that would work exclusively with us wasn't an easy feat, but the majority of the sole sourcing was done out of necessity of time and emergency of the situation. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Some of them were sole sourced and some were tendered. Will all of these contracts that the department provided, will they be reported on in the contract activity or procurement activity report along with all of the other government contracts, or will these be treated differently in terms of reporting to the Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. All government contracts are included in the CAR-PAR-LAR reports that are tabled each year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. In terms of whether they were sole sourced or whether they were tendered, is that the earliest when members can understand which ones were sole sourced and which ones weren't or is there another way to get that information? Whenever we have a sole sourced contract it is concerning to me from a financial management perspective. Whenever it can be avoided it should be avoided. I think that is my last question. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Like I said, obviously I don't have the information in front of me here today, but I'm sure if the committee were to write correspondence to the Minister of Community and Government Services, she would be able to respond adequately to the committee. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just wanted to thank Minister Kusugak for elaborating further to Mr. Main's questions regarding lifting mandatory isolation for fully vaccinated Nunavummiut. It's really exciting news to hear. It's something that Nunavummiut have been asking for quite some time.

I'm curious how long this has been under consideration and for the benefit of the public, just to encourage more people to get that vaccine and meet those requirements to implement lifting mandatory isolation requirements for fully vaccinated Nunavummiut,

would you be able to elaborate a little bit further on what sort of boxes need to be checked before those isolation requirements can be lifted? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I think we're going a little off topic from the financial information here. There are other venues that are more appropriate to direct those questions to the Minister of Health. These hubs have been in place now for a year. I think all members are quite familiar with the operations and what is needed. We're here to talk about the financial measures of the hubs, not what ifs and could be's of opening up isolation requirements. If the minister does want to respond, but I just don't think this is the appropriate venue for those questions. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Okay, I'll rephrase my question then.

In the event that Nunavut follows suit with other jurisdictions, such as Yukon, who have lifted the mandatory isolation requirements for their own citizens who are entering the jurisdiction, what kind of financial impact would that have on the Government of Nunavut? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Now, I'm not trying to dodge these questions; I just think where time better spent is on the financial aspect of it.

Madam Chairperson, again, that would be very dependent upon the volume of residents that do open up for travel. I think the minister was quite clear that these discussions are ongoing and he will be making an announcement at the absolute earliest opportunity. I think we're all waiting with bated breath to have some benefit other than just the safety from COVID, of getting our vaccinations and travel is definitely one of those benefits that I know myself and my family and I'm sure many other people across the territory are looking forward to spreading our wings, as they say. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Moving on to the next line of questioning, several other jurisdictions have already implemented a reduction to isolation requirements based on COVID testing. My next question is: when...? Sorry. This supplementary appropriation is based upon the full two-week mandatory isolation time. In the event that Nunavut joins the other jurisdictions in utilizing COVID testing to reduce isolation requirements, how much of an impact would that have on the financial requirements? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If the requirements were eased to a point where people would spend less time in the hub or even not at all, it would have quite a dramatic impact on the fiscal situation of it to a point where that's where we're going to have to continue to analyze those figures with our contract partners to determine that point of value.

At some point these hotels aren't going to want to shut their entire hotel down to accommodate us if we're only sending a few people through. We're going to have to continue to monitor the numbers. The length of time will have an impact and the numbers will also have an impact, but the majority of the contracts that we have in place are based on the per-person costs, so it would lessen the burden on Nunavut. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? Mr. Qamaniq, it's your turn.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Madam Chairperson, if you said my name, I didn't raise my hand. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Okay. (interpretation) I was mistaken. We are on page 5. (interpretation ends) Health. Operations and Maintenance. \$17,110,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Turn the page. Page 6. Nunavut Housing Corporation. Operations and Maintenance. Not Previously Authorized. \$500,000. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just wanted to state that I'm very excited that the Government of Nunavut is finally releasing this homebuyer matched savings program. I know it had been identified in the business plans as an initiative that the government is working on to support more homeownership in the territory. Again, I'm very excited to see this is finally coming forth. My first question is: when does the minister expect that this program will roll out or commence? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The target is early fall. However, I think we have some comfort that it can be done sooner. They're still ironing out a few of the policies and some of the requirements and restrictions to the program, so those details aren't available yet. That is the reason why we have brought forward a funding request for a program that technically isn't available yet. It's a little bit out of the ordinary, but we feel this is, and I agree with the member, this is a long-awaited program that we anticipate some high demand on and we want to open up the program absolutely on day one as soon as possible.

The other alternative, if we have any delays in this, would delay any implementation of the program until after we meet again and would be able to approve an appropriated budget. That's why we're appropriating seed money, I'm calling it, for a program that technically isn't in place yet, but if we can get it, just hypothetically... I hate using hypotheticals, as Mr. Main mentioned earlier, but if we can get it up and running for next month, then we could start payroll deductions next month. The sooner we can get this program available to people, we want to have the money appropriated already so that there are no further delays in implementing this. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The minister indicated that this is an unusual approach, creating a budget for a new program which is currently under development and still incomplete. The Government of Nunavut has been working on this initiative for quite some time. I'm curious what details remain to be ironed out. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Like I had mentioned, it is a little bit out of the norm, but I think it's important to recognize that as soon as it is available to be implemented and actioned, we can hit the ground running.

Just for the clarity of what specific aspects of the policy are still being worked on, I will say that, like regulations as an example, when we look at legislation, we can't do the regulations until the legislation is in place. It's very similar to programs. It's very difficult to have all the criteria in place before money is allocated, so it's a little bit different in that regard. There may have been quite a bit of work done up to date in hopes that this program will go forward, but there are still things that get worked on once the program is approved.

Mr. Audla would probably be best suited to respond to any detailed things, but again, I would caution members that this is still a working policy and these are just items that are being looked at. I'll leave it at that and I'll let Mr. Audla get into the member's response. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Considering that this is a multiple department initiative with the Department of Finance as well as the Department of Human Resources, there was a lot of collaborative effort to try to establish what it is that we're trying to provide and how we're going to incentivize homeownership amongst the GN employees, and then the other aspect is as we get to this point in developing the policy, the details of whether or not the taxes, the implications of taxes is an issue, how we would deal with the Canada Revenue Agency, considering that this is an employee

benefit, and how that would be spread out and how we can minimize the impact on the employee in that aspect.

We just need to get to the bottom of those types of details. I don't think it's going to take too long, but it's again a collaborative effort and I would like to try to nail down a date, but that's difficult to do when we have other players trying to come up with those types of details. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Audla, for elaborating this interdepartmental initiative. The last remaining item to be ironed out is the tax implications and the complexities that arise with the CRA.

I'm still very curious about learning more about this program. It's going to be very beneficial for Nunavummiut and I would like to ensure that it is designed to succeed. In the eighth bullet of the briefing binder it states that the program will have a total contribution limit with only one applicant per household and all eligible applicants will be able to access this program. I'm curious: first off, what is the total contribution limit and two, what are the eligibility criteria? Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Again, that's part of the discussion that's going on to some extent. Just to clarify, so the policy or the program itself is coming out of Human Resources because it is an employee-related program. We're looking at about a \$50,000 matching contribution.

With regard to the criteria, in a nutshell, pretty much any indeterminate employee from the Government of Nunavut or any of its Crown agencies is the target. There may be some nuances and some timelines as part of the stuff that's being worked on as well too. Does somebody that gets off the plane tomorrow qualify? There are those types of questions that are still being ironed out. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just have two more questions.

The minister had indicated that there are a few other items that still need to be ironed out as to eligibility criteria. I was curious if the Government of Nunavut would be willing to share this draft policy with the standing committee. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We're not there yet. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I understand that the government has not developed or finalized this policy, but it is our role to debate policy and I wasn't sure if that meant that the government is unwilling to share this draft policy or not. My next question is: has this draft policy been shared with any other external members such as NTI or Inuit orgs and/or unions? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Not that I'm aware of. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This has been a long time coming and I know it's a In the minister's opening statement, "The Nunavut Housing Corporation's contributions are to be used exclusively towards the purchase costs of an existing house..."

Now, given the lack of housing markets in smaller communities, such as Sanirajak, does this saving matching program be combined with the Nunavut Housing Corporation's Tenant to Owner Program to allow Government of Nunavut employees in public housing to buy their unit, as you have mentioned, an existing house? Is my question clear on that matter? Will these GN employees who are in a public unit be able to start paying for their own home in that unit? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. That's a very good question. Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just to clarify, it's existing or new home builds; new home construction is eligible. With regard to the member's question, again, that's the type of stuff that is being worked on right now to see how far other housing ownership programs can be worked either in coordination or whether there needs to be lines of separation. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I mean, there are hardly any new houses that are being built due to the new lumber prices that are way up high. This leads to my next question. I guess, for those individuals working at the level of a local housing organization, these employees at the local housing level are paying at the maximum rent. I wonder if these local housing authority employees will also be eligible for this program when it comes to buying their own home without being a Government of Nunavut employee. Are they eligible? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No, they would not be eligible. They would be eligible, however, to other homeownership programs that the Nunavut Housing Corporation provides. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In your opening statement too, I thought it is one applicant per household. For instance, if I'm a government employee, then I'm eligible to own a home, but my spouse is also working for them, so I guess I would be the one that would apply. That's my last question. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That's where the discussion in the household would have to occur on which Government of Nunavut employee would do the payroll deductions to maximize the benefit and to maximize the matching contribution. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Kaernek, your last question.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Even though I said last, but real last, could there be a recommendation that these local housing employees also be eligible since there's a lack of housing markets in the smaller communities? Would that be considered as a recommendation from the committee? Thank you, for giving me a last chance.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Not likely. This is a Government of Nunavut and Crown agency program. It's an employee benefit for our employees to help alleviate... . There's a two-fold benefit here. Well many more than two I guess, but just off the top of my head, when you look at our staff housing needs across the territory, any time we can remove somebody from staff housing or public housing for that matter and put them in a home ownership position, it's an absolute dramatic fiscal benefit to the Government of Nunavut from our costs as well as it promotes more job security. People aren't going to move away as fast as they may. They may stay for many years longer or it may promote more home ownership opportunities for Nunavummiut that have spent their entire lives here that struggle to save up enough for a down payment working in many different levels of governments.

So I think it seems to be quite a good consensus that this is a very much needed program and it's long overdue. Hence the reason why we're bringing it forward now so that we can hit the ground running the moment the policy is approved.

I did just get a note sent to me that on the consultation process saying that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated was consulted on this. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Rumbolt. You're next.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My questions are kind along what Joellie was talking about. This money is to be used exclusively for the purchase of existing homes or new home construction. I want to concentrate on the existing homes for a minute. In a place like Iqaluit, to buy a used home you are going to pay upwards to half a million dollars or more. So \$50,000 towards it is not a big amount of money. It helps with the down payment. If you go to some of our smaller communities where the housing market is not so great you can buy a three-bedroom, for example, in my community probably for a \$100,000 to \$120,000; a used one.

So if employees take this option and they contribute their \$25,000, and the housing corporation, another \$25,000; that's \$50,000 towards a \$100,000 home. Will the government be upholding this? Paying basically half of the home? Or will there be a sliding scale based on the cost of the property that one is buying? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just to clarify, it's the \$50,000 that is the matching amount. So theoretically it could be a \$100,000 down payment made with this program. That being said, in different communities like Mr. Rumbolt has mentioned, the Member from Sanikiluaq, different communities may have different needs, so there is no sliding scale. If you saved \$20,000 and you are ready to pull the trigger and buy a house, then we'll match the \$20,000. If you need more time and you want to build up more equity and save longer up to the \$50,000 limit then you would initiate your purchase at that point. So it's up to the employee on when they want to initiate the program and it's up to them on how much of a benefit it would be available to them. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Rumbolt. (interpretation) You're done? Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It's slated only for government employees and we're trying to approve it and we just get the message that it may be implemented in September. If that is the case, this bill, along with the proposed regulations (interpretation ends) and policies (interpretation) that govern this particular initiative, and I wonder, if we as regular MLAs can be included in this review?

Can this be part of your overall review over this two-year period? Here I mean the bill that will be supported by the Government of Nunavut, or rather the work listed under the *Hamlets Act* specific to that two-year requirement for residency if you will continue to lease the land. Can this aspect be included in this review? That's my question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If I understood the question correctly, there is no two-year timeframe or anything like that associated with it. With regard to leasing the land, that would be part of the purchase price of any existing dwelling or it would have to be arranged with the hamlet or municipality to have a lot allocated for new construction. I hope that answers the member's question, if I understood it correctly.

Chairman: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under the proposed bill for the *Hamlets Act*, an individual who is going to lease a lot has to live in the community for at least two years before they can apply for a lot in the community. If this criteria is going to be used by this new proposed bill, I think it should be considered from the executive, or whoever; Human Resources should consider that the person applying for this program should at least be living in the community for two years. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Qamaniq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We wouldn't have the ability to override any municipal or hamlet bylaw through this program. So if that is a local rule, we wouldn't be able to override that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? Okay. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Thank you. I just have one question, Madam Chairperson. It relates to the down-payment assistance program. For our GN staff that went from social housing, I know when an individual wants to buy his house that he is renting from the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the rent that he has paid up to the time that he wants to purchase the house is used as a down-payment towards that house. Will this be implemented as well in this new program is my question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Those are some of the details that we are still ironing out of which existing programs complement this or compete against it. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Is he done? Okay.

Mr. Netser: Just one more question. I'm sorry. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we have the... .

Chairperson: Go ahead.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Can we have the assurance that the government will seriously look at including this program where, as I said earlier, when people renting social housing want to buy a particular house, they use that money that they paid up to for rent for how many years that they stayed there. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) My final question.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Like I had mentioned, all of these items are up for discussion internally to see which programs could complement a program such as this or compete against it. All those things are on the table. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? Mr. Netser, are you done? (interpretation ends) Okay. I have no more names on the list. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There have been a lot of excellent questions and responses.

Sorry. There have been a lot of great questions and responses here this evening, and I just wanted to follow up on the response that was provided to me earlier. I just wanted to confirm. You had indicated that the Government of Nunavut has shared some sort of information with NTI during the consultation phase. I was wondering if you would be able to elaborate a little bit further on what exactly occurred during that consultation phase with NTI. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. I have two more names on the list. Just so that members know, I've got your name, Mr. Simailak and Mr. Rumbolt. I have you both down on my list after Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Actually, Madam Chairperson, through you, Mr. Audla would be best suited to respond to the member's question.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Through the improved Katujjiqatigiinniq Protocol and the sharing arrangement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, taking the Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs' lead on this, prior to any contemplation by cabinet and the FMB, it was recommended that we share any drafts with NTI and it came back that considering that this is a GN employee specific benefit, NTI's contribution is not as elevated as compared to, let's say, if it was for all Nunavut Inuit, as an example.

To the level of drafts, which drafts were shared, I'll confirm back with the minister to respond to the committee, but so far as I understand, it was any draft decisions required as well as some of the early drafts of any policy papers. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone, one more question from you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I just wanted to state my disappointment that draft policies are shared with outside organizations, yet refuse to be shared with standing committees when requested.

With that being said, it is getting quite late and I would like to put forward a motion to report progress. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairperson: Okay. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion, raise your hands, please. Okay. All those opposed. The motion is carried and I will now rise to report progress.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials from the table.

Speaker (interpretation): Good evening. Is there a report from the committee? Ms. Angnakak.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 69 and Bill 70 and would like to report that Bill 69 is immediately ready for third reading as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I just want to clarify further that the bill has not been amended; (interpretation ends) not amended. (interpretation) That's my understanding.

There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Ms. Towtongie. Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

(interpretation) Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 69 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2020-2021 – Third Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 69, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 3, 2020-2021*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 69 is ready for assent.

(interpretation) Item 22. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder that the Regular Members' Caucus meets tomorrow at 10 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time. That is a change of times.

Orders of the Day for June 2:

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 70
 - Bill 71
 - Bill 72
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 2, at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:01*

