

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Gjoa Haven)

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(Quttiktuq)

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Development and Transportation; Minister of
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(Amittuq)

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(Uqqummiut)

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Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

*Premier; Minister of Executive and
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for Immigration; Minister responsible for the
Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for the
Utility Rates Review Council*

Hon. Lorne Kusugak
(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Finance, Chair of the
Financial Management Board; Minister
responsible for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation*

Hon. Joanna Quassa
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*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of
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*Minister of Family Services; Minister
responsible for Homelessness; Minister of
Human Resources;*

Hon. Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

*Minister of Justice; Minister
responsible for Labour; Minister
responsible for the Qulliq Energy
Corporation*

Hon. David Joanasic
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*Government House Leader; Minister of
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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Thursday, March 9, 2023

Members Present:

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

>>*House commenced at 9:59*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Let us pray.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning. I hope we have a nice day.

(interpretation ends) Members, I wish to advise that the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone, will not be in today and the Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok, will not be in today as well.

I recognize the Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues. (interpretation ends) I seek unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to go directly to Item 19. Are there any nays? There is a nay. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister for Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 194 – 6(2): Resignation from Executive Council of Nunavut

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, all. Constituents in Baker Lake, good morning.

I have been thinking about it for some time now, trying to balance the ministerial life with family life, and I just couldn't quite get the balance of it. With a heavy heart, I am announcing my resignation as minister effective immediately.

I would like to thank my staff at the Department of Justice and the Qulliq Energy Corporation, along with my staff upstairs, Nicole Camphaug and Susie Alainga. Thank you all very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Minister's Statement 195 – 6(2): Reassignment of Portfolios

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to my colleagues, even though we are going through a difficult time.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the *Katujjiluta* mandate is founded on a partnership between all members of our consensus government. I respect each member here as elected officials and I trust that we can continue working together to serve our territory.

Craig Simailak, MLA for Baker Lake, has resigned from the Executive Council, and I extend my appreciation for his service for Nunavummiut.

As a cabinet, we look to continue the progress made during the last sitting, when our government reaffirmed the commitment to be direct and forthcoming with information.

Mr. Speaker, we seek to further strengthen the Department of Justice portfolio as we work to realize reconciliation in Nunavut. Our Qulliq Energy Corporation requires continued leadership as it faces current and emerging challenges, as we know. In the interim, Minister Akeegok will act as Minister of Justice and I will act as Minister for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, again, I wish to thank MLA Simailak for his hard work and dedicating, serving over two crucial portfolios. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. I have no more names. Members' Statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Motions. I recognize the Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Sorry. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

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

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Good morning. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue reviewing the main estimates and business plan for the Department of Justice, followed by the departments of Finance and Economic Development and Transportation and Nunavut Arctic College. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 18?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Committee Motion 003 – 6(2): Deferral of the Department of Justice

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion to defer the Department of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: We have a motion on the floor. Mr. Malliki seconds the motion. It's just a motion. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Chairman: All in agreement with the motion. The motion is carried.

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Finance – Consideration in Committee

Now we will deal with Finance. Mr. Kusugak, if you want to take the witness table.

Thank you. Minister Kusugak, if you want to just proceed with your opening comments. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, colleagues, for your patience.

Mr. Chairman and members, I'm here to discuss the Department of Finance's 2023-24 main estimates and business plan. The Department of Finance plays an essential role in the government and supports core financial governance and administrative functions so that other departments and public agencies can deliver programs and services to Nunavummiut.

In 2023-24 we are seeking the appropriation of \$108,286,000 for our operations, an increase of \$5,330,000 over the previous year. Of our total budget, \$27.7 million relates to the compensation and benefits costs of paying our 199 approved Vote 1 positions. We have added one new position this year, the first we have added in many years. The department requires \$7.3 million for other operations and maintenance costs.

More than half of this is for software and licencing used by the government departments. About two-thirds of our proposed budget is to pay for centrally administered funds. These are expenses that the Department of Finance manages on behalf of the wider government. Specifically, we are seeking \$73.3 million for the following central expenses:

- \$25 million for employee medical travel. This is in line with last year's budget;
- \$18.5 million for energy subsidies, including \$6.5 million for the Nunavut Electricity Subsidy Program;
- \$12 million for the proposed Nunavut Carbon Credit and the one-time Homeowner Fuel Rebate payment;
- \$10.1 million to pay for the government's insurance premiums;
- \$9.4 million for the cost we pay as an employer to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission;
- \$7.7 million for accounting expenses related to post-retirement employee benefits; and
- \$2.1 million for the Nunavut Child Benefit, a grant paid to low-income families with children through the income tax system.

Most of our budget is consistent with last year aside from three main changes: we have included \$3.3 million for licencing and support costs related to the Enterprise Resource Planning Implementation Project; \$330,000 to begin using secure electronic signatures; and, \$12 million for measures to tackle the increasing cost of living. The Nunavut Carbon Credit and the Homeowner Fuel Rebate; some of the increases to our budget have been offset by reductions in our other programs. The cost of the Nunavut Energy Subsidy Program has decreased by \$5.8 million because of the changes to the Qulliq Energy Corporation's rate structure. The cancellation of the Nunavut Carbon Rebate, our at-the-pump subsidy of Carbon Tax, will reduce the Department of Finance's budget by \$5.3 million.

Mr. Chairman, this completes my comments. I am available to take questions about this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Does the Chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on its review of the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and the 2023-26 Business Plan of the Department of Finance.

Mr. Chairman and members, the department's proposed 2023-24 operations and maintenance budget is \$108,286,000. This represents a 5.2 percent increase from the 2022-23 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is increasing from 231.0 to 233.0.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

The Department of Finance provides support to the Financial Management Board. A government-wide issue for which the Financial Management Board has responsibility is the size of the public service. The total number of positions in the government continues to increase. The government's proposed 2023-24 main estimates indicate that there are approximately 5,430 positions in the government's departments and major public agencies and territorial corporations, excluding the Qulliq Energy Corporation. This represents an increase of approximately 73 positions over the number accounted for in the 2022-23 main estimates, and an increase of approximately 540 positions from the 2019-2020 main estimates.

It is important for the Financial Management Board to be mindful of the need to control the growth in the number of government positions being added to organizational charts at a time when departments, public agencies, and territorial corporations continue to face significant challenges in filling their existing vacancies. Mr. Chairman and members, it is also important to note that approximately one-third of the government's total operations and maintenance spending is now allocated to compensation and benefits for its own workforce. For the 2023-24 fiscal year, this amounts to over a half a billion dollars.

Ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Finance's Mandate Letter indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "work closely with the departments of Community and Government Services, Economic Development and Transportation and Human Resources to develop options, a workplan and a timeline for the realignment of the departments of Economic Development and Transportation and Community and Government Services." Mr. Chairman and members, the standing committee looks forward to ongoing updates on the status of this work.

The 2022-23 Ministerial Letters of Expectation to the boards of directors of the government's major public agencies and territorial corporations were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on June 13, 2022. The responses to the letters of expectation were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 8, 2022.

Mr. Chairman and members, the department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2023-24 fiscal year is to "establish formal memoranda of understanding between all territorial corporations and the Government of Nunavut to ensure efficient and effective administration of operations." Mr. Chairman and members, the standing committee will be monitoring progress in this area.

The Nunavut Household Allowance Program Policy sunsets on April 1, 2024. The program was originally announced in February 2008, 15 years ago. The amount of the allowance has remained unchanged during this time. The department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2023-24 fiscal year is to "undertake a review of the Nunavut Household Allowance Program as a tool to encourage employees to move from Government of Nunavut staff housing into private rental units or homes of their own." Mr. Chairman and members, the standing committee notes with concern that this review has been delayed and emphasizes the importance of its being coordinated with the Department of Human Resources' review of the Staff Housing Program.

On November 8, 2016, *Taking Steps to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harm in Nunavut* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The standing committee notes that the department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission is currently "researching and developing agency store models that can be used to serve smaller communities that choose to have local access to lower-alcohol content products. Mr. Chairman and members, members emphasize the importance of ensuring that any decision to allow in-person, over-the-counter retail sales of alcohol in a Nunavut community is based on the results of a formal plebiscite, as have been held in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet. The standing committee also notes that the department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that it "will be introducing territory-wide liquor import limits and is working with the Department of Justice to develop regulations for the new import limits."

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I would like to ask Minister Kusugak: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee?
Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I do, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Officials, please go to the witness table.

Do members have any general comments before we proceed? Sorry, okay, yes. I'm getting ahead here. Sorry about that. Minister Kusugak, please introduce your officials. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance, and to my left is Dan Young, Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do members have general comments before we proceed to the detailed questions? I see none, so we will proceed with the Department of Finance. There are four branches. The first branch is Corporate Management. I'll just give members a few minutes here to get ready. Corporate Management. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates on page 22 that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year was to "Undertake a review of the Nunavut Household Allowance program as a tool to encourage employees to move from Government of Nunavut staff housing into private market rental units or homes of their own." Mr. Chairman, the draft business plan indicates that this work has been deferred to the 2023-24 fiscal year. What specific changes to the program are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The priority to deal with that, we are currently working with the housing corporation and human resources to take a look at what possible changes we could have to have the best impact and benefit regarding that program, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that it's still under review, as the minister stated. However, this program has been under review for quite an extended period of time and I'm just wondering: what are some of the options that are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're very seriously looking at increasing that benefit. It hasn't been changed for a very long time and we're looking at increasing that and seeing what kinds of changes and additions need to be made to that. We want to make sure that if there is an increase, it is adequate and that the checks and balances and other programs are in line with that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that response. Mr. Chairman, to what extent will this review consider introducing down-payment assistance for Government of Nunavut employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some options we have in those programs, as I stated and we have heard from the Minister of the Housing Corporation that is talking about different programs that they would like to introduce in their bag of programs that they could administer. In conversation with them, we are trying to ensure that as much programs, such as down payment assistance programs and stuff are available to government employees to help encourage them to get out of staff housing and into their own homes. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sure there will be more questions under Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs on this topic, but we had an appearance by a minister last week when we were talking about the new associate deputy minister positions, stated that his department will not be availing themselves of that position or program.

What is the Department of Finance's position on hiring an associate deputy minister position and will it go out to competition or an internal opportunity for somebody already within the Department of Finance, or an opening competition, or a direct appointment? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate that question, Mr. Chairman, as my colleague would understand. Our department is currently in discussions around that whole position with Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, and our department is trying to see how best to handle it. It could be an opportunity for a training ground for deputy minister people, whether we want to see if we could bring someone up from within the department and then that would create an opportunity to fill an existing position that someone moves up to, or whether we would look outside.

We are still having that discussion to see how best to fill this position and the impacts it will have. We are still having that discussion, Mr. Chairman, and at an appropriate time, once those discussions are completed, I would be more than happy to share it with my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. I realize that Minister Kusugak is not the Minister of Human Resources, but the minister has been around for a little while, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to get, maybe more so for the members of the public and some of my committee colleagues that haven't been around quite as long; what is the process for a department to create a position working with the Department of Human Resources? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a couple of processes and procedures that we go through in terms of filling or creating a position. Sometimes we are able to create a position and use existing positions that haven't been filled and work to realign that position within the departmental employment graph, and sometimes we need to work with Human Resource to see what kind of position that we are going to create; in this case, the position my colleague is asking to.

We would see how it aligns with the existing programs and positions we have in our department. We then have a discussion whether we want to fill this position from within, or whether we want to fill the position at a target. Do we want to ensure that it is a Nunavummiut that is being hired, or Inuktitut and so on?

There are a number of steps, depending on how you want to create it, and through all of those steps, we work very closely with Human Resources because there are laws and policies that have to be adhered to when we are filling positions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for outlining that for everyone so that they can see the complexity that is involved in it.

Mr. Chairman, this isn't anything new. I have been a part of two different governments and associated with another government where numerous people have had opportunities to take advantage an associated deputy minister position and work their way into a deputy minister and we have deputy ministers in this government that have gone through that process. This is nothing new. We're not reinventing the wheel or anything like that.

I do have one kind of concern of having just a blanket process where... I guess my question would be: with the challenges within the Department of Human Resources right

now that we've talked about at endless discussions sometimes around this room, on meeting the needs of capacity of the departments, the job evaluation and creating job descriptions is a key component to that. I recognize there are some departments that have more technical knowledge needed than others. They all need excellent leadership and executive skills, but a department such as the Department of Finance has a higher professional need.

So when we are looking at creating job descriptions, is there going to be like a blanket job description for these associate deputy minister positions, or is there going to be recognition of departmental needs and abilities that are going to be needed to promote employment in a position such as this, which is going to lead to the highest level position within a department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate that question, Mr. Chairman, because I think it is very important for me, anyway, Mr. Chairman, and I know I have had the opportunity to work with my member at the cabinet-level, and it is also for Mr. Hickes that this position is a very good opportunity for individuals within Nunavut to train to get into that level of employment and also it becomes a stepping stone to possibly becoming a deputy minister.

In our sector, Mr. Chairman, as Minister of Finance, one of the directives I have given our department is to ensure that the individual that we select has to have qualifications that getting into that job will need requirements to qualify into that department is one criterion that will be there.

In short, just because you are a beneficiary or from this sect, that does not qualify you for that position, and that you will have to have the abilities and the drive and experience to be able to lead up and use it as an opportunity to build into a deputy minister level; maybe not within Finance, but maybe within another department or what have you.

We will ensure that there are qualities that we are looking for, and also in our department, we will ensure that the individual will also have training opportunities from that position to hone their skills for these positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As in the past, I think this an important step in succession planning so that we do know how difficult it is to hire people at the deputy minister level and if we can grow our own, I think it is a positive move. I do understand Mr. Chown has some big shoes to fill.

My next question would be: nowhere in any of our budget documents were there any numbers or budget requests for these positions, so I would ask who will be funding these

positions? Will it be out of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, or would it be by department, tasked with to try and fund from within? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For our department, we will be reprofiling and filling from within, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The next person on my list: Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and your officials. I have a question under Inuit Employment Plan. On page 34 of your department's draft 2023-26 [business plan] indicates that it currently has a total of 17 executive and senior management level positions. None of these positions are currently filled by Nunavut Inuit employees.

What accounts for the low level of Inuit employment in your department's executive and senior management-level positions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. That number glared to me. One of the issues we have there, the major issue is the technical and qualifications required for these positions are very high, and unfortunately, we have not been able to attract Inuit with these skills to our department and we're hopeful that in the coming years that we will have Inuit with this level of skills required to fill these positions, fill these positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the low levels, I would say with no Inuit in these positions in the executive, is your department looking at ways to develop a career within the Department of Human Resources to fill and find qualifications for Nunavut Inuit from our territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are. Our senior staff are at a deputy ministers' level and are constantly working within the Arctic College and other educational possibilities, to ensure that we have more Inuit trained in the field of accounting, fiscal management, and that work. The conversation continues. It's really important to move forward and try to get qualified Inuit into these fields. You know these are very highly skilled fields and they have a good benefit package within them and good financial compensation.

We are really hopeful that as we see more graduates coming out from our communities in Nunavut that they will begin to take opportunities to get into financial management because we need them here within the Finance department of the government. You see that in all the fields in the communities where they are senior administrative officers, finance clerks, and housing managers. They all need the financial background and it is a great opportunity for employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's good to hear, Mr. Kusugak. In the business plan, on page 30, the department's draft business plan indicates that it will have a total of 12 senior management-level positions as of March 31, 2024. The draft business plan indicates that one of these positions will be filled by a Nunavut Inuit employee. Which senior management-level position is planned to be filled by a Nunavut Inuit employee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate my colleague's comments on this. If I could, through you Mr. Chairman, have Mr. Chown respond to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These Inuit employment plans were developed and targets set several years ago. At the time we were setting these targets, there were a couple of positions in our department that we felt were the most promising to potentially having Inuit candidates in. We actually had Inuit candidates in them at times in the past, and the two positions that we have targeted most frequently have been our director of corporate services and our director of the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission. Both of those have within the last year or two, at one point or another, had Inuit staff in the positions. Currently neither of them do. However, the Director of the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission is currently not encumbered and we do hope that might be our best opportunity at some point in the coming year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just give me a moment, I'm flipping through my pages here. My apologies. Welcome, minister and your officials. Minister, your department's draft 2023-2026 business plan indicates on page 23 that one of its priorities for 2023-24 is to "Engage in stakeholder and targeted community consultations informed by the internal review of the *Liquor Act* and begin the legislative amendment processes." I am wondering what specific amendments to the *Liquor Act* are being considered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. There are a number of materials we are developing in the stakeholder communications. The policy intention paper is outlining our consultations with plans that will be shared with NTI through the article 32 Katujjiqatigiinni Protocol process. There is information we are trying to seek and in conversation with... , and if I could get the deputy minister Dan Young to respond in more detail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Young.

Mr. Young: Thank for the question. The *Liquor Act*, as you might know is quite old and it was based on Act that were developed in the 80s and 90s in the NWT. There are so many parts of that Act that are outdated and do not really apply to today's world, let alone to Nunavut specifically.

As far as the scope of this, we are looking at every single aspect of the Act. We are going through essentially on a line-by-line basis. We have been collecting comments over the last number of years from different stakeholders who come to us and say hey, would you like to change this?

So we have been collecting those comments, but we are going through them line-by-line, and essentially nothing's off limits on this review. Thank you.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked him questions related to these issues yesterday, and I am wondering whether or not there is a consideration related to harm reduction in changing the age limits for accessing liquor and alcohol and cannabis, whether or not there is a consideration of raising the limit from the age of 19 to 21 as in some jurisdictions across the world, which is meant to limit the harm that alcohol can cause on developing brains. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will take note of that and ensure that that very important topic will be part of the review. In turn, I think that would be a good opportunity to discuss with other provinces and/or territories that have a higher legal consumption limit, to see what kind of impacts both positive and negative that has, and see if that would not be of help to our policies, Mr. Chairman. It is a good suggestion and we will, for sure, ensure that it is included in part of our review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll trust you, Mr. Chairman, to let me know if I'm eking out into the next page, which is the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission. However, I am curious about whether or not those changes to the Act will also include a requirement to provide warning labels on alcohol. In some jurisdictions, the NWT, for example, has warning labels for the public on the alcohol that they sell, warning about the impacts on developing fetuses.

We know from our discussion yesterday, that consumption level advice has changed and whether or not there is thought being put into putting consumption advice directly on the alcohol containers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate the interest, and suggestions that my colleague is making. They are very important and I think it's very important that if there are these labels, that they be labelled in languages of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.

There will be consultations happening going forward on these policies. I will ensure that my colleague and colleagues are informed in terms of when those consultations are happening in the communities. It would be very beneficial, I believe, that we have inputs such as this, and will ensure that they are part of this process. There are some good ideas there and we will bring them forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. Just going back to the question earlier about the consultations on the *Liquor Act*. Through the Chair, can the minister tell us what the timeline for introducing a bill into the Legislative Assembly to amend or replace the current *Liquor Act* is? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Just one moment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your patience, Mr. Chairman. We are looking at probably, in the year 2025-26, in that ball park when this would be done, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, your department's draft 2023-2026 business plan indicates on page 23, that it will be "...*introducing territory-wide liquor import limits and is working with the Department of Justice to develop regulations for the new import limits, as well as increasing the cost of permits and changes to forms.*" What specific changes to the limits are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For those details if I could, through you, Mr. Chairman, have Assistant Deputy Young respond, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Young: Thanks for the question. We've actually done quite a lot of work on this already. We started with some input that we received pretty publicly from the RCMP and from NAM, the Nunavut Association of Municipalities.

We went back to our database and we pulled out all sales data for all permits over the last, quite a long period of time, the last year or two. We looked at what average buying purchasing behaviour was and tried to make a guess somewhere in between what was legitimate consumption and illegal activity. So we brought that back and we also have to balance that with, you know, we don't want people having to make liquor orders every single day by making the limit too low, but we don't want them so large that bootleggers can bring in large quantities and sell them.

We settled on a range that we thought was appropriate, and we have actually gone to the NTI and to Nunavut Association of Municipalities for feedback. They both have come back or at least some members of NAM have come back in support. Others we did not hear from and NTI has come back in support of what we are doing. So that has gone through the policy intentions paper phase through cabinet, we are now working with Justice to draft the actual amount into the regulation. We hope to bring that forward either in April or May of this year. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list under Corporate Management. Corporate Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$4,486,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members, if you can go to the next page. C-5. Fiscal Management. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for the minister. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2023-2026 business plan indicates on page 27, that one of the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission's priority for 2022-23 fiscal year has been to "Research and develop agency store agreements to explore new ways to serve smaller communities." What specific options are being considered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently we're reviewing all possible options from a store to an outlet to all options that are on the table at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During that review are you including the people that were charged under the criminal code and also for broken families? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Problems caused by alcohol; they are some of the things that we do look at when we talk about these things. When we talk to the communities, these things come up; all the hardships that they've gone through when alcohol gets into the communities. We ask them what problems come when alcohol arrives in the community, and how does the illegal import of alcohol hurt the community? What my colleague is talking about, we do hear those things and we consider them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Very many people have been hurt by alcohol, especially the children and parents. They become broken by alcohol. I think everything should be seriously looked at if they're going to allow the sale of alcohol in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with my colleague that we will need to review it. It has affected people a great deal in a bad way, and affected lives. Everybody in Nunavut has been affected by the bad effects of alcohol, which is really regretful. I agree with the member that it should be reviewed and we should just not hear what people are saying, we should accept what people are saying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reports are coming from the minister's department, so if you can imagine now many people have been charged under the *Liquor Act* and how many people have died as a result of alcohol, I would really like to see that in a report. That was my last one. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we're going get into the effects of alcohol, then we have to work with other departments. I'm not saying we shouldn't, I know it's going to be difficult and needs to be done, but we will do that. I just cannot say that it'll start tomorrow. I know where the member is coming from. We have

to be aware of the statistics on how the use of alcohol affects our lives. I agree with you on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to first get into the expenditure management and little bit touching on corporate services as well, I guess. When we look at the departmental budget process, I know in the last Assembly there were a number of questions by my colleague Mr. Lightstone, and I know the former minister of finance had a big push on departments to come in with budget appropriation requests more aligned with the actual expenditures.

When we look at how many departments surplus money each year for a number of different factors, we want to make sure that our budgets are aligned more with the actual, so there is not that big influx at the end of the year. Some people call it a slush fund almost kind of thing, right, where you know departments continuously surplus money and then at the end of the year it just shows up in the books at the last minute. There is not an opportunity to utilize that money appropriately.

I would just like to get an update on the minister. I know some departments are doing better than others, this year being included, and I do understand the last few years has been extremely challenging with budget forecasting with the global pandemic that we are hopefully at the very tail end of. I would just like to get a grasp of what type of directions are being given these days to departments, through the deputy minister's committee or through their finance directors at the different departments and crown agencies, to better align their budget requests with closer to the actual spending needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are still going down that path, and my colleague mentioned that what he did three and four years ago with this global pandemic really threw a wrench into what was already a difficult situation at the time. I think we're slowly working our way out of that situation, but the directive is still going forward, that was given by the previous minister of the day, to align our budgets better and be more reflective of close to actuals, and to get away from trying to spend funds before the year is over. That directive that the previous minister gave is still going forward, and I believe we are getting closer to getting real numbers than we used to in the past. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to a little bit off here maybe a tad, but it's appropriate. It talks about the government's insurance portfolio and corporate services. I am going to talk about our housing stock, which is not insured, and it's a rare opportunity that the Minister of Finance is also the Minister responsible for the Nunavut

Housing Corporation. Not that I'm asking him to wear both hats, but have a little bit of insight from his other hat maybe.

One of the things that's always concerned me, and I've just been kind of mulling this over in my head recently, where fire replacement; we have a fund that's set up through the Nunavut Housing Corporation budget appropriation to replace fire destroyed or fire damaged units. I understand the need to have that fund because we do self-insure our units, but technically we don't. We just have a fire replacement fund, so it's not really any type of insurance.

I'm just throwing this out there to the minister, and I'm not looking for a position today, but I'd just like to throw this out there that we do, especially through our staff housing, but also through our public housing, maybe have an opportunity to accelerate some of those fire replacement units across the territory by charging a small premium to our tenants to be able to gain some revenue to look at accelerating the replacement program. Then it truly would be self-insured.

I am not sure of the legalities of charging an insurance type premium. I know we are not an insurance company. I have not really thought this through, just like I said, I am kind of spit-balling here, looking at different ideas to help increase our available housing stock. I'll leave it as a comment. If the minister wants to address it, that's fine, if not that's fine. It is on record. I think it is something worth looking at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll allow the question. We're not dealing with Housing or burnt replacement, but I know the government does carry insurance. So in that aspect I will let the minister comment. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Very briefly, Mr. Chairman. I will take your comments, as they are in record, into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Next one on my list, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, on page 26 of the department's business plan there is a priority for 2023-24 to complete the review of the *Tobacco Tax Act*. If the minister could, through the Chair, tell us whether or not vaping products are part of the review of this tax Act, the potential to tax those vaping products. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the short answer is "no," because the federal government has a vaping tax Act, and we have got to align with that instead of creating our own, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If through you, Mr. Chairman, the minister can just tell us whether or not that federal vaping tax Act also includes limitations on the sale of vaping products to minors, as well as, in particular, flavoured vape products that young people might be more inclined to access because of the taste. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the federal vaping tax Act will be ready within the next year, but in saying that Mr. Chairman, we will be able to put in regulations and stipulations on our own. We could work in age limits and things like that, but that is within the health Act. Our government would be able to have a say in those. There are some aspects of the Act that we will not be able to have a say in. I hope that clarifies the question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. Minister, on the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission and the work that's being done to research and develop agency store agreements to explore new ways to serve smaller communities, minister, I'm wondering whether or not, and this might be a health issue, if there has been any thought put into creating medical marijuana dispensaries or opportunities in any of the communities. As of now, it is my understanding that those who prescribe medical marijuana are unable to purchase medical-grade marijuana or access prescriptions through existing cannabis dispensaries in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The marijuana dispensaries, we have a couple of applications and a couple in existence in our territory, but in terms of medical marijuana, Mr. Chairman, that is federally regulated, so they would have stipulations there. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the priorities for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission for 2022-23, there is priority "Take steps to further implement recommendations from the "Halting the Harm" report relating to the responsible sales of liquor."

I wonder if the minister, through the Chair, can just talk to us about whether or not that includes new territorial daily limits, new import forms and fees, and just give us a general update on the status of that priority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know Mr. Young talked about the limits, but if you could just elaborate a bit more there. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, maybe I could have, through you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Young elaborate a bit more on the comments he did make. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Young: Thank you for the question. There are a few parts to this. Harm reduction is the biggest focus. We are continually working to update our education materials. So for example, there were new Canadian guidelines on safe drinking and we are working with a consultant now to update our website and develop new program. It's only a few weeks old, but we have been in those discussions, so we should have new programs out soon.

We are also, as I said earlier, working to put limits on imports. We believe most bootlegging comes from these large imports are doing of hard liquor. We aren't looking at the daily limits at this time, but those things are in regulation and they are always subject to review if the need arises. Thank you.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that update and understand from having a peak at the *Blues* that that work to update the information about the revised daily limits that came from Health Canada or from the federal government is around about the winter sitting. So I just wanted to acknowledge that.

Mr. Minister, also on page 27 of the business plan there is a priority for 2022-23 to "Modernize the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission's approach to procurement." I wonder if we can get a little bit of an update on that progress and what that entails. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once a gentleman's on the roll, he's on a roll. I would like to ask Mr. Young to stay on the roll, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Young, if you're on a roll there, Mr. Young.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Young: Thanks again, for the question. This one is not as exciting as it sounds. It is mostly administration things that we do in the office, processes that were a bit too clunky. The Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission's purchasing needs are a lot different than most departments who are buying general supplies not being resold to the public.

So we have worked within the existing procurement laws and still matching those, but we have changed a lot of our processes to allow the commission to speak directly to vendors and talk about product selection and try get things that our customers want, rather than just what you would do with some of the goods, which is like lowest price gets the bid.

So we have worked in those laws to standardize that and bring a lot of the administrative process lower and to better track products when they get to the port to when they get here and where we store them in the warehouses so that there is a better control because it is a dangerous product if it goes missing. That is essentially it. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list under Fiscal Management. Sorry. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one or two questions, depending on my answer I get from the minister.

Under Priorities 2022-23, “Promote and implement the Ujjiqsuqta Community Grants and Contribution policy and funding to community organizations in an effort to broaden harm reduction initiatives and promote public education initiatives at the local level.”

The budget, to my understanding, “...\$290,000 in funding for community groups, schools and organizations through its Ujjiqsuqta Community Grants and Contribution policy and continues to review and receive proposals.”

Were there any proposals from any schools or any communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do get a number of proposals from different areas. We also have the Sober Graduation program that is out there, so we do get a broad spectrum of interest when it comes to this program.

Payments to schools, Mr. Chairman, and they are done automatically, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) The liquor dispensaries or bootleggers that sell alcohol make a lot of profit from sales, and further, the purchasers sometimes cause mischief or trouble due to their consumption of alcohol.

I would like this reviewed by the minister, and I believe we need to explore our options today as too many Nunavummiut sometimes overconsume and alcohol is usually the contributing factor. This is something I would like the department to consider, especially educational to lower the incidents caused by overconsumption.

Especially to our children, because they are too scared to tell their parents to stop drinking, nor are they confident enough to voice their concerns. These children are precious and require our compassion, and we should try to stop the bootleggers locally.

(interpretation ends) That was just a comment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and I'm done.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The next person on my list: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and your officials. I would just like to follow-up on the minister's opening comments. On page 26 of the business plan, under the last bullet there, in terms of the Nunavut Carbon Rebate Program and the determination of these programs, in the minister's opening comments, Mr. Chairman, he stated that there would be \$12 million for the proposed Nunavut Carbon Credit and one-time homeowner fuel rebate.

Let me focus on this question, Mr. Chairman. On the Carbon Rebate Program, it states here "*Due to changes in the federal carbon pricing regime, Nunavut was forced to cancel the Nunavut Carbon Rebate Program.*"

How is the department financing in collaboration with their federal counterparts when it comes to the changes? What kind of changes are we looking at in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The federal Carbon Tax Program that we were administering as a government; the federal government gives us funds and we would give the benefit at the pump, so that allowed the government to make the fuel prices at the pump smaller, but we are being told by the federal government that we cannot continue to do that because that is not an incentive to get out of using fossil fuels, in a nutshell. We have to find a different way to make that happen.

Mr. Chairman, what we will be doing is going to a new carbon tax regime. We were forced to cancel that Carbon Rebate Program that was provided at the pump. We will introduce a bill during this sitting, Mr. Chairman, and propose a new credit for individuals that will replace the Carbon Rebate Program.

In that bill, the rebate program, if I can be allowed in a nutshell, Mr. Chairman, to say that the rebate program will provide all Nunavummiut a quarterly benefit that will be sent out to all individuals. They will be given quarterly funds to compensate for that amount, Mr. Chairman. So approximately \$70 per individual and it will be sent to Nunavummiut on a quarterly basis and if this bill passes, it would start this summer, Mr. Chairman.

On the other side of that, we also want to give a rebate to homeowners because they will be affected; because we cannot allow at the pump a price reduction, it will mean, Mr.

Chairman, that the price fuel products is going to increase, and it is going to affect everybody, and we will be providing all homeowners \$1,000 fuel rebate through a fuel rebate program for all homeowners across Nunavut, Mr. Chairman.

So in a nutshell, it's like that, and I would like to get into more details on it as we actually go forward with the proposed bill during this sitting, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know this bill is scheduled to come before us. It's in Committee of the Whole, so we have not dealt with it yet, but I will give the minister just a chance here to clarify his statement there about all Nunavummiut getting some funds. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the funds would be through the income tax process. I will use myself as an example. Mr. Chairman, if I was a family of four dependent children; let's say they're 10, 8, 5, 4 ages, then in my family we would get a rebate for myself, my spouse, and my four children and they would get that pay cheque quarterly. It would be sent out through a federal program, but it will be our funds. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

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

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the minister is talking about this quarterly [payment], for constituents to clearly understand how this process would work, is it after the income tax season, or how is the process going to work with this quarterly payment in terms of amendments to the *Income Tax Act* Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I think we are going over and beyond the scope of this bill. This bill is not before us, I'll disallow that question. When we are dealing with the income tax bill, then we can ask all of those question. Do you have another question, Mr. Kaernerck?

Mr. Kaernerck: No, Mr. Chairman. It states here in the status part that they will be introducing an amendment to the *Income Tax Act* and I was just trying to have my question on the quarterly part of how this is possibly going to work. Will it be after income tax season or before the income tax season? Income tax season is right around the corner, so that is what I was trying to get at. Other than that, I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list for Fiscal Management. Fiscal Management. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$6,470,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sorry, I would like to reconvene our committee meeting. I want members to go to Finance. Page C-6. Comptrollership. Do we have any questions on that? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have a couple questions here. The Government of Nunavut's most recent annual report on grants and contributions indicates that the government spent approximately \$314.3 million on the grants and \$5.9 billion on contributions between 2004-05 and 2021-22 fiscal year. What direction has the Department of Finance and the Financial Management Board issued to departments concerning how to evaluate the effectiveness of grants and contributions spending, including spending on grants and contributions to for-profit businesses? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could, through you, have Mr. Chown respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to funding to for-profit versus not-for-profit organizations, the ability to do that or not do that would be in the individual grant and contribution policies of each department.

Generally that funding is to not-for-profit organizations. I have not reviewed personally, every single department under policy, so I cannot say that with a hundred percent certainty, but generally it is to non-profit organizations, and with respect to reporting on those programs, the financial administration manual lays out requirements for reporting of those programs, but is not specific to the reporting in the sense of economy efficiency and effectiveness. That's quite often something auditors general will look at, but of course the department should be routinely reviewing their programs to see if they're meeting the objectives of those programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the deputy minister for that response. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates on page 31 that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year is to "Update the Government of Nunavut's approach to grants and contributions, through a review of Financial Administration Manual Directive 801: Grants & Contributions." What specific changes are being considered? (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) That's my last question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're taking a look at all the different issues around that departmentally and see if there are any changes or adjustments or deletions we need to do in that manual. I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking at the business plan here on page 30 in the priorities for 2022-23, in the second bullet there, the Department of Finance is “In collaboration with the Department of Health” to “develop an employee survey for employee medical travel...” In the status part, it has been deferred to 2023-24. Why was that deferred to 2023 when there are a whole lot of problems with the medical travel? Is that one of the reasons? There are too many problems with medical travel. Is that one of the reasons why it has been deferred to the next fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The deferral of it had to do with resources, Mr. Chairman. We do have to get the staff and people to be able to do that work, Mr. Chairman. We had to delay it for that purpose. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess that would be a legitimate reason to defer it to 2023 when it comes to reducing the controllable expenses. I’ll leave it at that for now, Mr. Chairman.

Moving on to the next page of the business plan, on 31, the second bullet is that the department has “Review and revise the Government of Nunavut’s approach to honoraria payments” under the *Financial Administration Act*. What’s the revision there when it comes to honoraria payments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Financial Administration Manual directive on that was revised and approved by the Financial Management Board and they became effective January 2023. Maybe Mr. Chown could elaborate a bit on that through you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That directive received quite a significant review and overhaul and is now available on our website.

Some of the major changes to that directive, we split the directive out into two separate directives, one directive to deal more with honorarium related to boards and public agencies of government and we redefined the categories from the old directive. The old directive was quite simplistic. It talked about low, medium, and high responsibility and boards weren’t classified within those.

We actually took the approach of identifying all boards in government and went through and we have new categories. I don't recall them all off the top of my head, but there are quasi-judicial boards and different categories based on the legal form of those boards. We have set honorariums for those boards in accordance with those categories. As part of setting those honorarium rates, we also increased the rates for the honorariums for those boards.

We then did a separate directive to deal more with cultural matters and participating in board meetings as cultural participants, advisory participation at meetings, and whatnot, just not being part of the board. That new directive we worked on quite closely with departments who tend to use honoraria the most; Culture and Heritage in particular. We defined the categories within that directive much more than we had before and did significant increases to the annual honorarium.

We found the honorarium we had were not as competitive anymore, so quite significant increases for those new categories.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that information. On the third bullet there, with the grants and contributions, under the financial administration manual directive of 801 "Finance has completed its internal review of this directive and is consulting with departments to ensure that the directive will support departmental initiatives under Katujjiluta."

Looking at the main estimate there, under Grants and Contributions on page C-8, the total grants contribution total, Central Administration was \$20,621,000.

Does that mean that the department is in a review to amend this contribution agreement to increase it or decrease? What is the process there? Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Those funds are on the next page, but I will let the minister answer that. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The review was about administration, and not increasing, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have other questions, but my colleagues need room too, and it's almost lunch time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list for Controllership. Finance. Controllership. Total Operation and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$24,040,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: I want members to go to C-7. Centrally Administered Funds. I will give members just a few minutes here. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your departments draft 2023-2026 business plan indicates on page 32, that the Government of Nunavut's budget for the insurance is projected to increase from \$8,758,000 in the 2022-23 fiscal year, to \$10.1 million in the 2023-24 fiscal year. This represents an increase of 15.3 percent.

What accounts for this increase? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The cause for that increase is higher premiums, and as we add more assets, that also increases those numbers. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your departments draft 2023-2026 business plan indicates on page 23 that one of its priorities for the 2022-223 fiscal year has been to "...review the Nunavut Electricity Subsidy Program for residential and commercial customers." What specific changes to the program are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was all part of the QEC rate reviews that were done, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names under Centrally Administered Funds. Finance. Branch Summary. Centrally Administered Funds. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$73,290,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Now I want members to go back to page C-3. Department of Finance. Department Summary. Detail of Expenditures. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$108,286,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have concluded Finance?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak, do you have any brief closing comments?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I just appreciate all the input we have received during this discussion and we will continue to keep my colleagues informed. We've had some very good suggestions today and we will bring those forward as we discuss further those topics within our meetings and workshops.

I just want to take this opportunity to thank everybody in the Department of Finance and all those from other departments that have contributed to this.

Also, in the gallery today, we have Hillary Casey, Director of Corporate Policy. Thank you for being here. She didn't have to sit with the Chamber today.

I also thank Mr. Young and Mr. Chown for their very big support and being able to help us answer some of the very good questions today.

Let's have a good day and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity.

>>Applause

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The officials can leave now and we will break for lunch and come back at 1:30 while we go through the mains of Economic Development and Transportation. (interpretation) That's all.

>>Committee recessed at 11:37 and resumed at 13:29

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Economic Development and Transportation – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. Before us, we have the Department of Economic Development. I would like to ask Minister Akeegok if he has any officials that he would like to appear before the committee.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): If my colleagues will allow, I would like to have my officials accompany me at the witness table. Thank you.

Chairman: We will soon find out. Does the committee agree to let the minister's witnesses appear before the committee?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Mr. Akeeagok, please introduce your officials and then you can proceed directly into your opening comments. Thank you.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is David Kunuk, Deputy Minister, and to my left is John Hawkins, Assistant Deputy Minister.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to be here to present the 2023-24 operations and maintenance budget and the 2023-26 Business Plan for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

Looking ahead, 2023 will be another important year for the department. We will progress existing projects and improve operations and the delivery of key services. (interpretation ends) We have made meaningful advances towards our mandate to ensure economic opportunity for all Nunavummiut. This year we look forward to staying the course and letting new programs and services take root.

For 2023-24, the proposed budget is \$98,141,000, an increase of \$2,995,000, or in financial terms, 3.15 percent more than the budget for 2022-23.

Unusually, the year-over-year change is not due to new business cases or additional programming. The significant increase in the department's proposed operations and maintenance budget comes as a result of the increased fuel and energy costs as well as salary increases from the ratification of the new collective bargaining agreement. Fuel and energy costs have increased dramatically across the country as a result of global inflationary pressures. As the department maintains airport facilities in all 25 Nunavut communities, our budget is more susceptible than many others to price fluctuations in this sector.

Beyond this administrative increase, the department looks forward to advancing work on initiatives that began in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

A major success story from 2022 was the opening of the Pond Inlet Small Craft Harbour in July, and the arrival of the first vessel at the Iqaluit Deep Sea Port in November. The department will finalize operations plans for both facilities by spring 2023 and both facilities are expected to be open to public users for the entirety of the 2023 open water season.

Additionally, 2022 saw the approval of the proposed reorganization of the Motor Vehicles Division, including the relocation of divisional headquarters to Rankin Inlet. The department has secured office space and anticipates staffing key positions to finalize implementation of the plan in 2023.

Finally, the department continues to make progress toward goals set out in the *Katujjiluta* mandate. In particular the department was tasked with updating its sector-specific economic development strategies, and we anticipate presenting new documents covering the fisheries and sealing, arts and cultural industries, and mining sectors in 2023. These

plans, once approved, will further guide the development of our budgets and business plans for the remainder of this government.

Mr. Chairman, I'm sure I speak for my colleagues when I say I look forward to finding solutions to these complex problems and moving past the inflationary and economic pressures faced across Canada in the last year. With this proposed budget, we can continue to excel in our departmental mission to develop our economy and transportation systems in ways that support a positive, self-reliant future for Nunavummiut, our communities, and our land.

(interpretation) That concludes my opening comments. I am happy to answer any questions the members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the Chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development have opening comments? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. The department's proposed 2023-24 operations and maintenance budget is \$98,141,000. This represents a 3.1 percent increase from the 2022-23 main estimates. The number of departmental positions has remained unchanged at 160.0.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee. Ministerial mandate letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Economic Development and Transportation's Mandate Letter indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "Work closely with the departments of Community and Government Services, Human Resources and Finance to develop options, a workplan and a timeline for the realignment of Economic Development and Transportation and Community and Government Services." The standing committee looks forward to being updated on an ongoing basis on the status of this work.

The *Nunavut Economic Development Strategy* was released in June 2003 and reached the end of its ten-year life in the spring of 2013, almost a decade ago. The minister's mandate letter also indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "Finalize the Mine Training Strategy" and "Refresh strategic plans for sustainable economic development and diversification in all sectors, including the Fisheries and Sealing Strategy, Parnautit, the Arts and Cultural Industries Strategy and the Tourism Strategy." The extent to which the department has the capacity to complete this work within a single fiscal year is unclear, as is the extent to which the department will need to rely on outside consultants. The standing committee also notes that a number of the department's policies, including the Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy and the Country Food Distribution Policy, have expired or sunsetted.

On June 8, 2016 the Government of Nunavut's *Report on the Review and Reform of Income Assistance and Economic Development* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The report indicated that the Department of Economic Development and Transportation will "place a greater focus on job creation when reviewing departmental programs."

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation's proposed 2023-24 main estimates include a total of approximately \$22.9 million in grants and contributions expenditures for economic development. The standing committee notes that the department has made a number of significant changes in recent years to the administration of its grants and contributions programs.

The standing committee supports the department placing a greater emphasis on job creation in smaller communities, especially in relation to funding that is provided to for-profit businesses. The standing committee also emphasizes the importance of funding recipients being in compliance with the terms and conditions of their contribution agreements with the department.

The department's 2022-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year was to "explore opportunities to improve monitoring and reporting on economic development programs delivered by the department." A number of policies administered by the Department of Economic Development and Transportation contain specific annual reporting and tabling requirements regarding the administration of these programs. However, these reporting and tabling requirements are not currently being met in all cases. The standing committee applauds the department for having begun the practice of preparing and tabling comprehensive annual reports under its Strategic Investments Program Policy, its Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy, and its Country Food Distribution Program Policy.

The proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation include \$3,358,000 in core funding for the Nunavut Development Corporation and \$900,000 in core funding for the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation. The standing committee notes that the most recently tabled *Ministerial Letter of Expectation to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Nunavut Development Corporation* asked the chair to provide an update "on the potential for a new subsidiary in either the housing or health service delivery sectors." It is unclear what specific actions have been taken by the corporation in this area.

The Minister of Finance's Budget Address of May 26, 2022 announced a new mineral exploration program called "Discover, Invest, and Grow." This is a component of the department's Mineral Exploration Support Program. The standing committee encourages the minister to report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the administration of this program.

On September 9, 2019 the Government of Nunavut announced that the Fisheries and Sealing Division of the Department of Environment would be transferred to the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. The department's 2022-26

business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year was to “start a working group for Nunavut stakeholders and representatives to discuss and collaboratively work on advancing Nunavut’s access to its fair share of adjacent water allocations [and to] actively work towards repatriating fishing quota and buying new quota, where possible, including advocating to acquire Government of Canada financial investments for these purchases.” It is the standing committee’s understanding that the cost of such quota purchases would be very significant, and the standing committee notes that the department’s budget does not include any specific funding allocated towards this activity.

Members of the Legislative Assembly have been raising concerns for a number of years regarding the significant delays that residents of smaller communities experience in obtaining driver’s licences and general identification cards. The department’s draft 2023-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2023-24 fiscal year is to “review the effectiveness of the Motor Vehicles Information System in advance of the contract expiration in November 2024.” The standing committee will be closely monitoring progress in this area.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2023-24 Main Estimates and 2023-26 Business Plan of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. I welcome members to have any general comments to the opening comments. Seeing none, we will proceed to page K-4. Corporate Management. Economic Development and Transportation. \$6,647,000. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 234 of the business plan there, fifth from the bottom, the bullet, “In partnership with Community and Government Services, Qulliq Energy Corporation, and the Nunavut Housing Corporation, investigate the potential for alternative building technologies to be used and manufactured in Nunavut, with an emphasis on energy-efficient and climate-friendly construction.”

I would just like to know, that appears to be a housing corporation mandate, if we can just get an explanation on the rationale behind that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Nunavut, we don’t have any manufacturing at all for any types of products, and this was one as seen as a potential for Nunavut to start manufacturing our own, and this one of the priorities will continue that we work closely with all the entities to make sure that we can start that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister should be aware, Sakku Corporation is going to be manufacturing a building factory in Arviat. Has the minister had any conversations or contact with Sakku regarding that issue? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not formally, but discussions with Sakku is always... (interpretation) We do have discussion with them on certain things and we have been notified that they are going to be creating this and we are happy about it because these things need to be started in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What the minister stated is good news, so will the minister be formally making contact with Sakku Corporation and see what kind of assistance that the department can give them to setup their building manufacturing factory? It is one of their priorities. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sakku has formally invited our regional office for a working group and something that I'll encourage my staff to do. It's a critical one and I think seeing more jobs in our communities is always a benefit. We need to make these sort of bold investments in order for us to be self-sufficient, and I applaud Sakku for doing that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go back to Mr. Savikataaq, I would invite committee members to acknowledge the Chair if they want me to add their name to the list. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next bullet says support the Fisheries and Sealing Division to repatriate fisheries licence and purchase more fishing quota.

Can we get an explanation? And I can assume that these are offshore fishing, but if we can just get a confirmation from the minister what fishing quotas is being referenced. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This holds a number of activities that are taking place throughout our territory, and yes, the bulk of it is that offshore.

When Clearwater was bought out, there was an opportunity and I still think that we do have an opportunity to repatriate the licences that should be with Nunavut, not with other jurisdictions. For that particular one I'm working very closely with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to try and repatriate a lot of that.

For other quotas, for in-shore fisheries and that, we're doing a number of fronts in terms of trying to see if there's an in-shore fishery within our communities, and that work is being developed.

As we mentioned in our business plans in my comments that we are working towards a sector-specific strategy and I think fisheries and sealing is one that is probably one of the more advanced ones.

I will be very happy once we get through this, and to start sharing that strategy, which is going to focus on not just offshore fisheries. We do have in-shore fisheries that we need to invest in, and a lot of the communities need that too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Talking about purchasing more fishing quota offshore there, I am not sure if the minister remembers, can he enlighten the committee members on how much Clearwater sold their fishing quotas for? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. I know it should be in the back of my mind, because I deal with it and go and attend the meetings. I do not have that, its in the millions, that is for sure.

The approach that we are taking is that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, through their indigenous engagement, have funds available so that they can repatriate licenses and quotas. Nunavut has been exempt for so long, and that is the work that we continue to advocate for and something that I am going to continue to work hard to ensure that we repatriate our funds.

For the Clearwater being bought, that was \$1 billion, but the part I am not too clear on in terms of how much is our Nunavut quota that we are trying to repatriate. I do not have those specific dollars with me right now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe just the quota portion, I could stand to be corrected, but listening to the news, my memory jogs me and it was over \$100 million just for the fisheries quota. That is what I believe.

I agree with the minister, that the rules for getting federal funding money excludes land claims-settled Indigenous groups, but stating that: is the department planning to spend in the neighborhood of \$100 million at some point, to buy offshore fishing quotas? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Mr. Chairman. At this point, I am not planning that, but those are options that we definitely need to take. If I do need \$100 million, definitely I will be asking this House for it. It will not be a departmental decision; it will be a budget decision that through us we would try and get.

Right now, we need to try an exhaust the opportunities that are there, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have proven that they do support indigenous people through this program, but not where its land claims.

Our land claims organizations are working hard, as part of the reconciliation for indigenous people is to try and repatriate that through their own programs.

That is the area that I am focused on right now. I will not be seeking \$100 million for this year, but if and when we do need to purchase licenses, we will definitely, and if it falls under our department, definitely it will have to go through this House. It won't be a unilateral decision, buying those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems like the \$100 million request may be coming here, I know I am getting in too close to hypothetical here now, Mr. Chairman, and you will rule how you want. Let us say, if the \$100 million is approved, and this government bought \$100 million worth of quota, I am just curious as to how that would work. Would the government own the quota? Or, the \$100 million they spent, they would just give that to a private business, like a free gift of \$100 million worth of quota to a company. Thank you.

Chairman: I'll allow the question. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is a very hypothetical question right now. We don't know, I don't know. There are so many different mechanisms that we're trying in different angles and I think the best one is that the work that we're doing with Qikiqtani Inuit Association is the best option with the federal government through their reconciliation return our quota. That's the work that I'm going to focus on.

Whether to purchase licences at a later date is for future, or even if it's for future but there's so many options such as the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board probably is the best body that determines which quota would go. I don't want to get into those level of details at this point but it's something that I want to assure the House I am not coming back in this fiscal year for \$100 million for a fishing licence. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. If I may, Mr. Savikataaq, I think the minister had mentioned that an option on the table is for the government to purchase quota, I had never heard of a government owning quota before, may I stand to be corrected, but I'm not familiar with any scenario where a government owns quota, it's usually private industry or at least

some economic development arm. When the minister talks about different options, I think it would be fair to ask for a little bit more elaboration under a model where government-owned quota would be put in place on how it would be administered. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's why I'm very resistant on this, having government-owned quota, I just don't know how that model would fit. What I can tell you is in past history, our government has bought licences before from private companies that I think it was in the tune of \$1 million licences, and those were automatically given to the... That was not for the government to keep so that became part of the Nunavut quota, and that's sort of what we're asking the federal government to do is they buy the quota and redistribute it to Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I guess we'll cross that sea when we get to it. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. It's quite a difference between \$1 million and \$100 plus million, but I'll go on.

On page 235 of the business plan the top bullet says support Nunavut Housing Corporation to incentivise the use of Inuit labour in housing construction and maintenance.

I'm just curious, that seems to be treading on the Nunavut Housing Corporation's role as generally they have written in their contract a certain percentage of Inuit employment that they have to meet. So can the minister just elaborate on that line there? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through each of our departments and through each one of us, we need to support housing corporation get those in the labour forces. It's something that I think as a government as a whole that it needs to make sure that Inuit needs those jobs whether as an economic development hat with it where we can help out, we'll help out whether if it's in every way.

It is housing corporation that will do it, but in through this business plan what we're doing is putting our supportive role. I don't know if the Nunavut Nangminiqaqtunik Ikajuuti incentive part is, probably the next page, but it's one that through those lenses, we do help provide our expertise through this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just staying on the same topic, I'm surprised that it only singles out Nunavut Housing Corporation, I would've thought that projects like when they're building schools or community halls or whatever, any capital projects would've been part of the incentivization to use the Inuit labour force. Can the minister explain why it's only directed at the Nunavut Housing Corporation because we would

like Inuit to be employed as high as possible with every capital project the government has? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the sheer importance of Nunavut 3,000 needs government support and this is singling it out in a way that it's a huge project, it's a massive undertaking that our government is doing, and I will be very supportive towards this.

For others, that's our regular day to day work that we do, especially though our Nunavut Nangminiqagtunik Ikajuuti Program, the NNI program (interpretation) I apologize for the acronym. (interpretation ends) but those are very important and will continue to be important for any businesses. I hope that this does not single out anybody else but it is part of our business of making sure those do take place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the next bullet it singles out the housing corporation again, support the Nunavut Housing Corporation to prioritize projects and contracting methods that involve partner support local business at the community economic development customize approaches in response to local capabilities and needs. Can we just get an explanation on exactly what that means? It appears again to be Economic Development and Transportation going into the responsibilities of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The work when we're starting our business plans, housing corporation was developing the plan 3,000. As part of that, a lot of work needs to be done in order to support that. For what housing corporation is planning on doing, I really applaud it.

If we go through and make sure that there is housing being built in every community, that is a huge economic driver and this is one that will definitely make sure that we support them.

In some of our programs, we offer training and development as part of it, maybe some of our economic development programs will help shape through that but it's one that while they are in the planning stage, we wanted to make sure our support is there.

The emphasis seems to be on housing corporation right now because they do have a very huge plan to build houses in different shapes and forms and we want to be there to help. I think it's a government as a whole approach towards this, and I want to stress that.

For our regular programming, I continue to ask for your support through this budget. A lot of those budgets are towards those that are not being mentioned too, but it's something that we do as Nunavut businesses grow. If a huge entity starts showing up again, we'll be there to help support it too. I think we need more of this in order for our economy to grow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same page, still 235, the few bullets down says initiate discussions with Community and Government Services regarding a potential interdepartmental reorganization to align the GN's infrastructure, land develop and local government branches.

If we can just get an explanation of that because from reading that, it almost seems like they'll be combined, it'll be one super department. If we can just get an explanation. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the member questioned my colleague on Community and Government Services on their piece in terms of what the associate deputy minister will be doing, I think one of the directives that we got from our Premier is to explore this option between Community and Government Services and Economic Development and Transportation. That's work that we're going to need to do. That's part of our business plan planning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister is correct about Community and Government Services, about realignment and with Economic Development and Transportation, but it's very vague on exactly what is going to be realigned. I know that the CGS minister says they're working on it and they don't have any concrete objectives yet, it seems. Can the minister give us any clear objectives of what the realignment will be working on? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to preclude the work that's going to be done between the two departments. This is one that which is why we say to initiate discussions. As part of this 2023 business plan, we are going to get into those discussions and look at those options.

I don't want to pre-conclude to say it's going to be this or that. It's something that, as a government, we're going to need to make some determination, but through our business plans, that's one that we will initiate the work. We haven't started that work *per se*, but it's one that we're given direction to do and that we will be doing. As it progresses, I

would be happy to provide the progression through the House, whether it's me, my colleague, or the Premier.

This is a government-led initiative that we will need to do and I don't have any pre-concluded options. I do apologize, but this is something that in our business plan it says we will initiate the discussions. It's not a discussion if we would say, "Oh, it's going to be this." I just want to be clear on that and I do apologize for being very vague on this, but it's something that we need to initiate the discussions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It sounds a lot like, "Trust me; give me the money," but I'll go on.

In your opening comments there on the second page, near the end, it talks about "the department was tasked with updating its sector-specific economic development strategies, and we anticipate presenting new documents covering the fisheries and sealing, arts and cultural industries, and mining sectors in 2023."

I would like to get the minister's position on mining in Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. It's quite a general question. Would you be a little bit more specific, Mr. Savikataaq?

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Past governments have said that, I wouldn't call it pro mining, but they have always stated that as long as mining is done in a responsible and sustainable and the people of Nunavut want it, then that's a good thing. I just want to know if the position of the government is still the same. Thank you.

Chairman: I appreciate you clarifying that, Mr. Savikataaq. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that clarification. Mining is a very important part of our sector base within Nunavut. As long as it's done in a sustainable way, mining will be here in Nunavut and more mines will be needed if we're going to ever be self-reliant as a country. Nunavut holds a huge landmass that has a lot of riches that can help towards having Canada be self-sufficient. From my perspective, Nunavut has a critical part to play in this.

I think, through our *Katujjiluta*, we are going through sectors by sector. One of the sectors that we're updating is the Parnautit. It hasn't been updated in two governments. For this one, we have started to update it and we're at the consultation stage and we just recently did a roundtable during roundup on the strategy for the draft that we're planning. It is a critical part of my work that I'm doing as Minister responsible for Mines and something that this government will still continue to support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and your officials. (interpretation) Welcome.

(interpretation ends) On page 233 of the business plan, in the second bullet there, I just want information or clarity that the department wants to “Ensure departmental support in government efforts to enable elders to access more country food,” but on the Status part it says, “Corporate Management provided support to staff in the Business Development, Community Operations, and Fisheries and Sealing Divisions to identify options to enable elders access to more country food. Please see the Business Development, Community Operations...” Can you further elaborate on that, minister? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we get to the economic development side, there’s going to be a section on the Country Food Distribution Program. That’s the program that we’re referring to and it’s the country food program where we help communities get freezers and country food. That’s what this bullet is referring to as one of them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: My apologies for jumping the gun here, Mr. Chairman. I was looking at the priorities for 2022-23, but on the Objectives part it says that the department is... . On page 229 of the business plan, on the second part, it’s in the first bullet there, “Enable elders to access more country food.” That’s where my line of questioning was coming from.

The minister mentioned that these are community freezers. Can he further explain these community freezers that will be distributed to what community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck. I know there is a section further, but it is linked to the business plan under this division as well and so I will allow the question. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for allowing for this question. It is a very important objective that we have as part of our department. When the *Katujjiluta* mandate was being prepared, every department was asked how to support elders and what we are doing in order to help elders.

From the Department of Economic Development perspective, there are a couple of areas that will help and one of the critical ones is on the Country Food Distribution Program,

which provides community freezers and also provides funding to operate those community freezers.

With combinations of different departments and the fine Minister of Environment will also be a part of that, which is to provide country food programs. Doing combinations of that and focusing on the emphasis on elders, that is what this bullet is, is to help get emphasis on providing elders. Through this mandate and through this full caucus throughout, it is a top priority that we do help our elders, and this is one avenue that my department has stated that they are going to help out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope your colleague, the environment minister will be able to agree with you as to the economic development of your strategy. Very important strategy.

Also, on the same page about the business plans at 229, “Start with the enhancement support for harvesters and in combination of supporting these elders.” How is the department working with the environment minister in accordance with this enhanced support for the harvesters? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Its working very well with the Minister of Environment on those initiatives and that is something that will continue.

For this one, for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation, focus will be on fisheries and sealing and that strategy is... . (interpretation) How shall I say this? Once its concluded, we will look at enhancing the support for harvesters. That is one of our mandate commitments and that is what we are prepared to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister. (interpretation) When should we expect the delivery of the enhancements to the supports? Do you have a deadline set for when its going to be implemented? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) In regard to fisheries and sealing, we have almost completed the document. I have reviewed it and we will continue to review it. It is going to have an impact on the harvesters and we first have to submit it to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. The document is there now, and I have also received feedback from Nunavut Tunngavik. We are looking at spring, but it will be in the 2023-24 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps you can present the information in our spring sitting, because we do have to provide support to the harvesters in order to enable elders to access more country food. I am looking forward to reviewing the document.

Moving on to another subject, Mr. Chairman. Again, in your business plan on page 230, and I'll move on to the transportation portion. (interpretation ends) Let me focus on the transportation. On page 230, I was looking at the transportation section, bear with me (interpretation) I did see it earlier. Here. (interpretation ends) Is there a collaboration with organizations and other levels of government and agencies working on Economic Development and Transportation in Nunavut? And as the minister is very aware that I represent part of Igloolik and Sanirajak and they're pretty much close up. How is the department seeing this when it comes to Nunavut transportation sector? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Under this corporate management, our corporate division helps support both the economic development section in the transportation, so that's what's taking place.

In the transportation section, there's a number of things that we've done that helps support our communities, and one other area, when we get to the transportation section, I'll be seeking for \$1 million under community transportation initiative, which helps communities start to connect of whether they would want to build access roads.

That's one way and there will be different ways, we also under transportation we have airports in both communities and airlines are going back in forth into those communities. It's a very broad question and I can go through a number of things, but I'll stop at that for now, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Thank you, minister. I'm sure if there's more specific questions, we can wait for the transportation page. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'll leave that there for now and I'll probably have more questions on transportation sector. The minister just explained that he'll be seeking \$1 million, not \$100 million, no? Just a comment there and I'll stop there for now. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list for this page. Page K-4. Corporate Management. \$6,647,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page K-5. Transportation. \$54,274,000. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did ask these questions during my oral question period, and I would like to get confirmation for Nunavummiut that are listening. Your department's 2021-24 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2021-22 fiscal year was to "...monitor impacts of the Canadian North airline merger and provide analysis and advice." One of your department's employees sits on the oversight board that was established by way of a federal order and council.

As of today, what is the status of the oversight board's work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That oversight board that was appointed by the federal minister of transport reports to them, and that's the work that they do goes through that. In terms of our advisory board, that sits in there and is still an active member of the board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I had asked you during the oral question period time was because of my constituents, it's due to the high cost of airline tickets, and between my constituent communities, it's only a 20-minute drive, and for a one way ticket it's like over \$400 just for a person. Sometimes it can go up to \$700 or a roundtrip of \$1,500. To the other community of Gjoa Haven, when we travel there and back, it's the same thing. It's only a 20 or 30 minute [flight], and the cost of the airline ticket is in the amount of a couple of hundred dollars just for a 20-minute trip. It is something that I think the department has to look into.

Hopefully with your federal counterparts we can come up with an agreement or a policy or some kind of subsidy for Nunavummiut to have a lower cost to and from. My constituents had pointed out that in order to get out now days is through medical travel. In these trying times, for example, March and April, when the time is great to meet with other communities, all the events and all the hockey and volleyball tournaments, basketball and all of the drum dances, Nunavummiut like to gather together, especially after the lockdowns.

I think this area needs attention the most due to the high cost, so I will move away from there and I'm going to ask my question.

Your department's 2022-26 indicates that one of its priorities for 2022-23 fiscal year was to "...launch marine oversight and support function." In respect to the new ports in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, what specific port authority models are being considered for the two facilities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know he had commented on the high cost of the airlines. If I'm allowed, could I comment on his comment, Mr. Chairman?

We have our ongoing relationship with Canadian North and Calm Air in terms of their fares and we need to work together to ensure we help provide the public with having access of going back and forth in our communities because the airlines are our only road. I keep stressing to everybody that the airline is our only road system, and it needs to be affordable.

Through our health duty contract, we try to ensure that there are economic fares built into this for the public. In most cases it has, but the reality and something I mentioned in my opening comments was that the inflationary costs and the global costs all around, the prices just keep going up. Airlines are no stranger to that. I just want to be mindful of that. Those special fares, especially for beneficiaries, like the Pivut fare, is still offered by Canadian North. I know it's very difficult to get, but those offers are there too.

This is the result of the good work on our contracts that the government has with the airlines, and it is something that I will definitely keep and I applaud the members for continually raising this.

As for the two ports; the small craft harbour in Pond Inlet, I'll speak to that. That one is mostly for harvesters and for the sealift portion. That model, we will provide that. For the operations of it, we will run it through our Transportation section, or ask a contractor, like our hamlets, to help maintain that, but there is nothing elaborate that we're planning for Pond Inlet. It is a very good facility and it is something that I'm hoping that more and more communities get that.

For the port in Iqaluit, right now we do have a consultant, Advisian, that we hired and that is looking at different options because there are different options. One is on the extreme side where it is a port authority, and some federal regulations would need to apply and ensure scheduling and all that. I don't think we are going to go that far. It is a government port that is there and that could be used for sealift and for fuel. We are more looking into that, but we are asking our stakeholders which way would be the best and how we can do this.

It is something I committed to in the House that I would provide an update in the spring session, because I don't want to forego what our consultant's work is, but it stems from there. There are different ways to operate a port throughout the country, and we are looking at some of those models and I trust our consultants to do this, or help guide us to go which way we are going.

As I committed, I will report back to this House in the spring. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Or sooner, hopefully, minister. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to go back to the Canadian North airline. When it comes to country food, when they send freight or cargo to other communities, a lot of that country food spoils due to the fact that maybe there are no freezers at the airport. It makes the hunter that is sending country food look bad. For example, in my community we do get a lot of caribou and the west and the east, they want caribou. When they do send the caribou out to the buyer or to their family, a lot of that country food goes to spoil and it's making the hunter look back when the airlines should be responsible for that cargo and the freight.

Is it due to the fact maybe there are no freezers? I highly recommend the department check into this when it comes to shipping country food to other communities because it makes the hunter look bad and I think it's time the department look into this area when it comes to sending country meat. *Inuksiutit* food is muchly needed all over Nunavut. The hunters try very hard to provide the country food to the people who are in need of country food. So can the department work with Canadian North to make sure they have freezers in all Nunavut communities when it comes to the distribution and shipment of country food? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any spoilage or any damage on cargo needs to be reported to Canadian north. They do have forms and claims that they can have for anybody. Country food is no different. The country food rate is very very low and through the airline business they have different classes for cargo prices and for country food.

I appreciate the airline for keeping it low so that it's affordable for people in Nunavut to gain access. In terms of whether to encourage them to have freezers in every place, it all depends on the size of our buildings, especially terminal and our cargo space. Through our capital projects I have asked your support. Was it 10 or 7 communities; 7 communities that will be receiving the maintenance/cargo space. I will make sure that those do have freezers as a part of that, because that is one of the big things, whether it is an airline or even our government, we don't have the space to store.

I really appreciate your support for getting into that cargo/maintenance building that we are venturing into now. I hope that we do that to every community. I thank you for your support and I thank you for raising this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to assure the minister you have my full support on that, so hopefully every Nunavut community can receive their country food frozen, fresh, and *inuksiutit* food is much needed in Nunavut.

I'm going to move onto transportation to Motor Vehicles. Your department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates on page 239 that "*There was a re-organization of the division and relocation of divisional headquarters from Gjoa Haven to Rankin Inlet.*"

How many positions will be located in the divisional headquarters? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A total of six. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to follow-up with another question. How many positions are being transferred from Gjoa Haven to Rankin Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I recall is there is going to be one position that we've taken from Gjoa Haven and moved it to Rankin Inlet. That is the one position that is being moved from Gjoa Haven. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What specific issues was this reorganization undertaken to address? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My objective was to have Transportation Division more focused in one community and Rankin Inlet is ideal for that, so what we have there is we have the Director for Arctic Airports, which we will now have the Director of Motor Vehicles. That was one of the emphasis, but the biggest emphasis and the one I really want to stress is that we needed more regional support and having Gjoa Haven being a regional office made sense.

So we currently have three positions there that help that are part of Motor Vehicles that are going to focus on the regional, and it wasn't just for the Kitikmeot. It was for all of our territory. Some of my member colleagues and I have been this minister for the last government and this government and has always been emphasized that service delivery wasn't being delivered.

The driver examiners; we had one driver examiner that needed to cover the whole territory. That wasn't working. So what did we do? We reorganized this in order to

ensure that regionally, we would make sure that services are being delivered. So we have driver examiners in all of our regions now. From my perspective it has made a lot of significant improvements. We haven't hired the director yet, but it's one that we are working towards. My huge emphasis was that we need better support for our regions; we need better support for communities, and we reprofiled it to doing that and I applaud the work that my department has done to date on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To follow up with your response that you just gave me, minister. Your department's 2021-24 business plan indicated that, "Municipal driver examiners have been trained and appointed in Arviat, Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Sanikiluaq, and Kinngait. Depending on community interest, the department will expand the availability of municipal examiners to up to five more communities in 2021-22." Which Nunavut communities currently have trained municipal driver examiners? That's my last question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Training for additional, we've also trained... . You listed Arviat, Baker Lake, Pond Inlet, Cambridge Bay, Sanikiluaq, and Kugluktuk. We are also in additional training examiners for Gjoa Haven, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit, which is planned for mid-March. That's the work that we're doing right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had asked about Arviat's 70-tonne bollard, but we're not doing capital. I'll save that for when we do capital in the fall, if they're still not there.

Mr. Chairman, the minister and I in Question Period, had exchanged back and forth about class 5 driver's license in Nunavut. I would just like to ask an old minister study to look into it. Are there any obstacles, or reasons why all the examiners that are trained and approved by the department, can't do driver's license tests and issue driver's licenses that are non-restricted to Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think there are any obstacles that I know of, at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When are the examiners all going to be certified, or approved to give all the current examiners to issue non-restricted class 5 driver's licenses? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. through you, I ask that John Hopkins, the Assistant Deputy Minister to respond on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. You almost got a promotion, there, Mr. Hopkins. Please proceed.

Mr. Hopkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the practice has been that the driver examiners, who are employed by the department, have been examining for class 5 unrestricted. The practice of having a restricted class 5 came down from when the RCMP were conducting driver examinations.

When we started training municipal examiners, the feeling in the examiners was basically that we carry on with the way that the RCMP had been doing examinations. It has created some difficulties and we are looking at the whole of the class 5. Most class 5s across Canada are in a graduated, sort of method, where there is a restriction on it for a limited amount of time or until another examination is taken.

We're looking at ways to, sort of, to follow along with that, but we understand that there are some obstacles with the restricted licence and our intention is to eliminate those obstacles. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can we get a timeline of when those obstacles will be cleared and the examiners will be qualified to issue non-restricted class 5 driver's licences? I agree with the official that there should be graduations of different...like a learner's licence or for the first year, if you don't have an accident or no charges, you go on to the next step. I agree with all that, but I think we have to get away from the restricted and non-restricted licence. I'll ask again: what's the timeline for phasing out or eliminating the restricted to Nunavut class 5 licence? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. If I may add to that, are there any legislative changes or policy changes that would have to accompany that as well? Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 240 of our business plan, bullet 3 does conduct a review of our Driver's Licence Regulations. Both the Chair's question and the class 5 will be done through this bullet and that's something that I don't have an exact timeline, but it's one of the works that we want to do for '23-24. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I encourage the minister to get that as soon as possible. As I stated in our exchange before, it creates bad situations where someone might be operating a vehicle in the south where they actually do not have a licence if it's restricted to Nunavut and that is putting undue risk both to the Nunavut resident and to companies that may rent or lend or people that may lend them vehicles because there is no difference in colour. It's just the writing in the back and people may not look at the back of the licence, but the sooner the better.

I'll go on. On page 239, the last bullet for priorities for 2023, it says "Review Demerit Point assignments, including the addition of automated letters to clients at" certain numbers. I would just like to ask the minister how that is going by... . They're studying stuff and not so eager to give non-restricted, but they're very eager and quick to start giving demerit points to Nunavut residents. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Through you, could I ask Mr. Hawkins to respond to that? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think there was actually a question in there, but yes, the demerits are important as well and the enforcement part of it is very important as well. These all sort of come together on the same sort of timeline as we reorganize the division. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. At this time, before I go to the next name on my list, we will take a 15-minute break. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 14:48 and resumed at 15:13

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. The next name I have on my list: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome Minister Akeeagok and your team. I would just like to go back to the Iqaluit deep water port and just a quick question about the plans for 2023 boat season.

If through the Chair the minister could tell us who will be maintaining that launch during that season. I do recall there was a question in the House but I don't know if that was the question posed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I can assure the member that was not the question that was posed. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now, we have services with a consultant, Advisian doing the bulk of the work in terms of how the operations are going to work, and have committed to reporting back in spring, and as the Chair alluded; hopefully before spring.

That work is ongoing and I give trust to them to get that, but we our aim is that 2023 it will be open, as per my speaking notes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through the Chair, minister, can you tell us a little bit about the scope of the work that that consulting firm is undertaking in terms of you mentioned earlier a stakeholder consultation and commitment to update us in the spring? I'm just wondering what the scope of those consultations are and who are the stakeholders that are being consulted? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned earlier with authorities and operations of a port, it's a huge difference in terms of how a port would be operated, and that's one of the scopes that we have given to our consultant to help us go through this in order for us to determine. As part of that, we also instructed for the consultant to talk to the key stakeholders, and there's a number of them, coast guard being one of them, our shipping companies which are the two major ones that come on an annual basis, and our fuel tankers that come, and those are the main ones that we have engaged with.

There are some interests from industries that want to help contribute towards this, we received correspondence on that, and I've instructed my department that the consultant should add that as part of the stakeholders, and if anybody wants to participate, please let me know because I can definitely ask our department to arrange for to have those discussions, but our major ones are of those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know with an active port there, there are many issues that come up, safety issues, environmental issues and I'm wondering what the quality and safety or security systems models would be for that authority and if there are a number to choose from, whether or not that is within the scope of the consultant's work. If you could talk to us a little bit about quality assurance in ship management or port management, whatever applies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If folks that were given an opportunity to tour right before we enter, there's a gate and a building, and that's to

prevent the public from entering, and those are the safeties that will put in place and area that's all round there is designed so the carriers can deliver their cargo with safety in mind, but those are what level it's going to be will require a different level of safety and something that the consultant is working, sort of help us lead into which stage that we're going to get to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister Akeeagok. Are there different accreditation models to choose from that ensure that the operations of the port are in compliance with any kind of marine safety or any kind of federal statutes or limitations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there are different federal levels of regulatory instruments that are needed from time to time. It depends on what type of port it is and if it's to do with the port authority with very busy shipping, where there is high risk, then there are very stringent federal regulations that are in place.

From our current review of this, right now what we are anticipating is our annual sealift to come in, drop it off, and then leave and that's not as busy as if you go to Valleyfield, Quebec. The spectrum is different and we've got this challenge when the fuel tankers were coming in at the end of November is we needed to see whether we would be able to bring in those fuel tankers.

My staff had conversations with Transport Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in terms of do they need special regulatory exemptions to getting here. From the quick reactions, because we needed those 35 million litres of fuel into our tanks here, through that, it was deemed that since it's government property, no regulatory licences or procedures would be needed other than the current liability that the fuel tanker held and our own liability. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister mentioned the sealift and fuel delivery. I wonder if, through the Chair, the minister can advise us as to whether or not the port is capable of supporting tourism and offloading human beings and whether or not that's part of the consideration of what the overall port management will become. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: When we started this project, it was not the intent for tourism to get off at the same place where sealift barges are being done, it's something worth looking into the future, but when we did this, the intent was for that to be for cargo and

fuel delivery. We have also improved the causeway, which allowed for ramps. The cruise ships all have those dinghies that they bring back and forth to the shore. That improvement in the causeway will help the tourism sector on this front. I don't want to mix people and cargo. It is very delicate when it comes to safety of people and cargo being close together. I think some of our communities that experience where the sealift is right in the front of town with kids running around, it's always a safety issue, but I'm happy that we have it fenced in for the port here. It will prevent people and cargo interaction. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I appreciate that response. Given the responses to the last couple of questions, I would just like to hear from the minister through the Chair a little bit about the status update for the priorities 2022-23 on page 237 to "Corresponding with the completion of the Pond Inlet and Iqaluit marine infrastructure projects, launch marine oversight and support function." The status update is that the division has completed the job description for the position of marine manager.

I would just like to hear from the minister, through the Chair, how that job description was completed without full knowledge or planning for what this port authority will end up being and whether or not that position of marine manager will have a team that reports to them and has that gone for job evaluation? Where are we at on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The job description that is in place is to run what is there in terms of the current layout. With the work that our consultant is doing in terms of which spectrum the port is going to be, it might have to be adjusted, but I want to go ahead and be ahead of this and have the ability to hire the manager before sealift comes, which is why we have a job description that is complete with what is there right now.

If it will have to change, our staff have the ability to change the job description and work with the Department of Human Resources to evaluate that, but currently that is the initial plan I need somebody to manage that before the first sealift comes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister for that response. Your department's 2023-26 business plan indicates on page 241 "Conduct independent quality assurance audits at eight Nunavut airports..." and I'm wondering if, through the Chair, the minister can talk to us about what that quality assurance audit would entail, and again, what are the applicable requirements, standards, and procedures? I'm guessing these are

related to Canadian aviation regulations, International Civil Aviation Organization regulations, in terms of quality assurance systems and things that keep our flyers safe. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That bullet is ongoing; it's always in our business plan. If you go three bullets up, it also talks about "Conduct independent quality assurance..." for eight communities. We do it in eight communities for every three years to ensure that we look at all the regulatory requirements.

We work with Transport Canada, who is the regulatory authority. We travel to each community and see what their current lighting systems are, what needs to be repaired, and are we in compliance with regulation. If not, then a report gets issued and then we work for that.

This bullet will be in our priorities as it is a regulatory requirement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are those quality assurance audits done by current Government of Nunavut employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Transport Canada has their own quality audit assurance and they report on that. We also join in this because we need our own quality assurance, so our staff travel with them and produce a report on each of our buildings to ensure that quality assurance is there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to get too far into the leads, but can the minister tell us which employees do that? The reason I ask is, because I've brought up the issue yesterday about the fact that we know that we have 10,000 youth who are going to be reaching the age of 18 in the next ten years, and knowing that we need to really focus on creating jobs for these young people, who are coming into the workforce.

That this could be something that's really exciting for somebody to focus their education, and gaining basic knowledge of aviation quality systems, and really be part of that process.

Can the minister tell me a little bit about who on our team is responsible for that work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From our Airports division, would be the ones that would be attending. The one that you mentioned about the youth need's jobs, it's something that we've identified too, and something that we're trying to be proactive in it. On the same page as 241, I'm seeking approval for the Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship, that is a crucial scholarship that helps with aviation. In the aviation sector, it's not just for pilots, it's for aviation sectors.

I'd encourage, if you have young people that want to get into this, encourage that there is a scholarship program, and that we do support Inuit and our youth to get into aviation. Thank you very much, for one, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Akeeagok, in fact, my note of those 10,000 youth is written right on this part of the business plan that speaks to the Simata Pitsiulak Aviation Scholarship.

I did note that from 2022 to 2026, given the knowledge that we know, so many youth are coming of age, and maybe seeking opportunities for learning, in order to enter the workforce, I was really surprised that this number stays static. That it is the same amount that is \$30,000 every year. To me, seems a little bit odd, considering the potential impact on the workforce.

If you can explain that to me, through the Chairman, I'd appreciate it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think a number of our programs, if you look at the budgets there predicts that, including some programs that are oversubscribed. For this particular scholarship, once we start seeing the oversubscription of it, we'll definitely seek for more. We continue to make sure that we keep an eye on, especially the scholarships.

If there is a huge intake, then we'll definitely look at increasing it. Right now, for this fiscal year, throughout budgets, that's what I seek for approval. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that response.

How is the scholarship advertised to potential applicants? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of it is through our public service announcements for folks to get in. Typically, every school has a list of what scholarships are available, they do have the availability, and this one is also in that, and also through this House. I announced who are the winners and encourage folks that need to get into this field to apply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope you will allow me to ask this question because I'm asking it in relation to that Saimataq Pitseolak scholarship. To the minister's knowledge, have school career fairs started back up since COVID, and if so, do employees of Economic Development and Transportation attend those school job fairs in order to promote the scholarship that we are discussing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we do it when there are community visits for career fairs and that. I don't know if going back into the school fair is back, but if it was, if our staff are regular to this, I would call for them to be there. It's very important to connect to the youth at a very early age. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just looking at page 243 of the business plan under the Iqaluit international airport, there was a priority in 2022-2023 to undertake a structural and building envelope repairs of the old terminal building. It is my understanding that the work was cancelled due to issues with the contractor.

I would just like to have an update on what the way forward is in addressing those issues at the old terminal building, in order to turn it into a more useful and safer place, possibly a workplace. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. I think the bullet does speak that we are working with CGS to getting our engineering consultant again and we are hoping that we get this done by the end of 2023. It's unfortunate but it's something that we're trying to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first of all like to start off with the business plan on page 237. It indicates, I wrote it down somewhere, in regard to the airports and the infrastructure, it indicates here under priorities 2022-2023 which

shows the following language (interpretation ends) monitor the design, procurement and delivery of airport and marine infrastructure projects, including airport mobile equipment, shelters in seven communities, and the Qikiqtarjuaq port.

In the status, the division is actively involved in a range of capital projects, design is underway for the mobile equipment shelters in seven communities and the Qikiqtarjuaq port projects. The question is what has been undertaken? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of the capital planning, the work that needs to be done, in terms of the design and planning, for all of these seven communities, and for the Qikiqtarjuaq Port; the process has been started. They may be in different stages. They're starting on the design and planning stage. That work is proceeding. I am happy that portion of the work is getting done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also, under Nunavut airports (interpretation ends) in your business plan for Nunavut Airports (interpretation) specifically page 240, I want to ask about this in order to understand it better. (interpretation ends) Under Division Operations, the Nunavut Airports Division ensures safe and efficient airport services and facilities are available.

My question is: how often is the inspection required for every Nunavut community? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you. We inspect them in the spring and winter, twice a year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you complete all the air terminals, the mobile equipment, and the hangars? Do you inspect all the infrastructure located at the airport section? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you. I can respond in two ways. We do inspections twice a year, and that's for the government-owned infrastructure, whether it's in proper working form, and there are no safety issues. We inspect the fences, the

tarmacs, and so on. We usually try to do inspections in eight communities of the year, in cooperation with Transport Canada.

It is written here on page 241, that we worked on eight communities, and we're looking forward to doing an additional eight more in the upcoming year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now want to move onto another issue I wish to comprehend the situation better, and it specifically relates to your response. For the research findings, Mr. Chairman, the studies that pertain to the foundation of the air terminal, as I queried you earlier to you about the issues surrounding our local airport infrastructure.

They have a ramp available for wheelchairs, and the other ramp to bring in baggage which is important to our fellow residents who are mobility challenged, and elders and the people in wheelchairs. During your inspections, the hamlets can make a request from the government to build a ramp in their air terminal, but if there is no ramp going in and out of the terminal, I would suggest that they built without having to get a request from the hamlet council that a ramp would be mandatory. What is the situation with the ramp? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do apologize that we didn't include the ramps when we were building the air terminals, and I definitely know that building ramps into the new buildings will be mandatory. If there is a need to renovate a ramp and if a local company is going to be doing the renovation, we have monies available that can be requested. We're very slowly building in the requirements when it comes to air terminals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that information. All communities should have a ramp built as soon as possible, and I understand exactly where you're coming from. I would like to move on, on page 239 in your business plan, I have two questions with the first bullet. In English. (interpretation ends) To promote road safety awareness to reduce accidents and fatalities. (interpretation) Is this just available for roads within the hamlet boundaries or does it include access roads that are utilized by hunters and harvesters because there have been accidents outside of the hamlet municipalities and there have even been fatalities. Can we include the access roads so that they'll be safer? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you can understand me.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's only for roads within the municipal boundaries. With the access roads outside of the boundaries, they are seen as not approved by the government, and they're outside of our responsibilities. This is only for within the hamlet boundaries, the access roads are outside of our responsibility, and I'm very glad to see that there's going to be promotion of safety awareness and the monies can be requested so that they can do that at the community level. So it's sort of a two way answer that I provided, we're only talking about the limited to the hamlet boundaries. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I want clarification about is in your business plan on page 241 in your priorities for 2022-2023 that you had explained the second bullet. (interpretation ends) To identify two major rehabilitation priorities for submissions to Transport Canada airports capital assistance program, and your status states that Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet have been identified for runway rehabilitation and resurfacing projects. By saying that, do you have a list of who is next in line for the runway (interpretation) for runway rehabilitation and/or moving of airstrips for safety purposes. So which community would come next for being worked on? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you. We can't point at any communities right now but we have them studied, so we will have them looked at and then we will see which one is the absolute priority and that is what is usually done, and then we put it in a proposal. I can't really say which community will be next in line. If an emergency comes up or if the consultant tells us that one community is suddenly the priority, then we do that, and we work with Transport Canada on these matters too, so we don't have another community picked yet, but these are what we have put together for 2022-2023. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list under this page. We're on page K-5. Transportation. \$54,274,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page K-6. Economic Development. \$37,227,000. Perfect timing. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry I have my pages marked.

Chairman: My apologies, Ms. Brewster. I misquoted the main estimates. It's \$37,220,000. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 252 of the business plan, there is a commitment for 2022-23 to review the proposed Arts and Creative Industry Strategy. I'm just wondering if we can get an update on that strategy from the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is one of the sectors where I have been tasked to do a strategy and one that on page 253, and we will try and get this done within this fiscal year to try and get a strategy for the arts and crafts sector. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Malliki): Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the minister can just give us an idea of what the components are of the draft as it is so far and what stakeholders were involved in either consulting on the strategy or the creation of the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you. The work on the strategy itself is very preliminary. We haven't gotten to the consultation stage yet and the components within it. This sector is one that has suffered the most within all of the sectors in terms of the level of support that has been needed.

It is something that is one of my priorities is to revive what the arts and creative industries is needed in this territory. I don't have the specifics on it, but I want to assure the members that we are actively working on developing the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a lot of clicking. I don't know if it's pen clicking or people are typing, but it's very hard to concentrate hearing the clicking in this ear and words in the other.

Mr. David Akeegok, I know that when I posed the question last year we didn't have a full update on what ended up happening with the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association and that up until that point, the board hadn't submitted any finalized reports or any kind of action plan in terms of what was happening with the organization.

I wonder if the Mr. David Akeegok has an update on whether Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association has been fully dissolved or if they're back up and running in some other form. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have tried communicating with the arts and crafts association and to date we have not heard anything new. With that in mind and not being able to connect with any of the board members, or the previous or current board members, what we are doing now, is reviving internally through our government, in terms of how to support the arts and creative industries, and that is what I'm going to be focused on, whether the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association gets back or not. If they do, it's going through these kinds of sectors with an association that is the best route.

I hope that they do revive, but if not, I'm not going to wait for it anymore. The arts and crafts sector is suffering and they need government support. They need some form of support and our department is prepared to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with Minister Akeeagok; the absence of that organization has created a huge hole in the arts and the arts industry in Nunavut and it needs to be filled.

Having said that, the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association was receiving about \$550,000 annually to support its operations, and if Minister Akeeagok can tell us how that funding has been redistributed and whether or not it has been redistributed into arts programming, whether or not the grants programs that were available having been topped up a little, or any other way that that funding may have been redistributed focused on the arts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe it was a couple of years ago we bundled all of the program and partnership programs into one and Nunavut Arts and Crafts funding was part of that. That bundle is still within the department and whatever partnership is being done, that fund is available for that.

It is still within that funding program of funding associations, so the funds remain there, and are being utilized to help other association. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Akeeagok. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, minister for that response and thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also on page 253 of the business plan under the last bullet for the priorities for 2023-24 is a priority to commission a feasibility study to explore the concept of a central body to provide representation, coordination, expertise and support across the arts and cultural industries, and I'm wondering to what extent this entity is expected to be similar to the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is too preliminary to indicate whether it is similar or not. We want to do a feasibility study. If that doesn't work, we need to find something that will work; whether it is within our department or the form of an association or a corporation. We need to look at those options.

For this priority, that is what we are going to be doing for this if approved for this fiscal year, 2023-24. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, your department's draft 2023-24 main estimates indicate that there are 17 positions in the tourism and cultural industries division. I am wondering: as of today, how many of these positions are filled, and how many are vacant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation) Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Please bear with me, I need to get my other binder. I do apologize for the inconvenience, because I have to quickly count.

So far, we have the director filled one, two, three. Mr. Chairman, my information is within an Excel sheet, so if you do not mind, I will commit to providing that in writing, in terms of what our vacancies and what's been pulled. Just going through sectors of those, I do know that we do have a director hired for this and positions underneath. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster, is that satisfactory?

Ms. Brewster: Ah, sure. The reason I asked is because I am really interested in all these really great priorities that are set out for 2023-24 and I wanted some reassurance that the department has enough team members to implement those priorities. So, I do look forward to receiving that information.

I will move on. The 2019-2020 and 2020-21 annual reports under the *Tourism Act* were tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 1, 2022 and I am wondering if Minister Akeeagok can let us know when the 2021-22 annual report will be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tomorrow I expect that I will be getting the Inuktitut translations for that and I have plans during our winter session that I will be tabling the report. Various reports are also included. It is currently being translated into Inuktitut, so we are waiting for that to be completed. We have been

told that it will be given to us tomorrow, and we plan to table it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 252 of the departments business plan, there are four... . Sorry, I'll go back, priorities for 2022-23. There was an interesting priority; to explore options to develop an Inuit tourism business mentorship program. I would like to know, Minister Akeeagok: What was the outcome of the development of those options, and whether or not there is an evaluation or some sort of strategy or plan in place related to that program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the details I don't have in terms of what optioned have been done. As part of our status report, we are planning on evaluating the options in 2023-24, and so I am looking forward to doing that for this particular business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Part of the reason I am really interested in this, again, is with the knowledge of those 10,000 youths reaching the age of 18 in the next ten years.

I wonder if the minister can tell us whether or not the options include some sort of cultural industry training programs, directed specifically bringing youth into the world of arts and tourism. We know that tourism and arts have a huge impact, not just financially, they have the ability to create and express is very important to mental health.

I would just like to know from Minister Akeeagok, whether or not, youth are being targeted for this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When COVID hit, this sector got hit the most. That also included some of our own staff. This is one division that is starting to re-vamp. I have just been told that it's 3 out of the 17 positions that are filled.

So that's the situation we're in right now. These are very important work that need to get done. I think, as part of hiring those 10,000 youth, tourism plays a big factor. We're starting to see more and more tourism into the communities. Let's take that advantage and let's encourage our youth to get into that sector.

I am confident that my department will be able to help in that, whether through a mentorship program, or training programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, Minister Akeeagok, I would like to encourage participation in youth job fairs, and career fairs, and the like, in order to make young people more aware of the incredible possibilities for, not just a career, but for personal growth, and making stuff help me keep sane. I'd like to see more youth being brought into the arts.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will end my questions on this section. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: No. I'm good.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to get clarification and ask a question. I didn't write it down. I apologize. It was in the priorities, somewhere.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee, I can return to you. Maybe after you can find your documentation. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 257 of their business plan, one of the priorities right down at the bottom, third from the last is continue to collaborate with other GN department and partners to develop policies that would inform the Nunavut protected area strategy. I would just like to ask the minister under which department is the Nunavut protected strategy held? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Department of Environment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that there's been a lot of marine protected areas that been established in Nunavut in these last few years, and I would just like to get the minister's position on the protected areas within Nunavut. I myself believe that we can't turn Nunavut into a park, we need to use its resources whether they are marine or terrestrial and their minerals to benefit Nunavummiut and for Nunavut to become sustainable, and I heard the minister state that on mining, but I would just like to get the minister's position on protected areas within Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. I will ask members to please make sure your phones are on mute, although it is entertaining when a phone does go off, but it does disrupt the proceedings. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a very important initiative and something that we're exploring. In the coming days, I have prepared ministerial statements specifically on protected areas that I'll be releasing along with I'll be meeting with the federal minister of Environment on this issue again with the recent announcement that Canada is about to sign off on marine protected areas where the world is looking to make 30 percent target, and that translates to a lot of water within Nunavut, and something that we need to be part of in terms of the discussions and deciding where those happen. So that's the positions that have currently taken place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister didn't state what minister's position in our protected areas, but just correct me if I'm wrong, minister. Did the minister state that through a minister's statement, the minister of Economic Development and Transportation will be stating that departments or the government's position on protected areas within Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you. Sometimes having too many portfolios, you mix them up, and sometimes being in Environment and Economic Development and Transportation as some of you know have a very lively active discussions with the minister, and I just want to clarify that the one that I mentioned is for the department of Environment as a minister that will be making a statement on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes it does get confusing when they start with E, I know that. I'll ask the minister again, and the minister of Economic Development and Transportation, what is the department's position on protected areas in Nunavut, both terrestrial and marine? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When a protected area is being identified in our territory, we need to ensure that we have economic benefits to it and if there are any protected areas or marine or terrestrial that are being considered or are being implemented, is that our territory benefits from that and to ensure that there is an adequate balance in terms of protection and the jobs that are needed within our territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still did not hear the minister's position on protected areas within Nunavut. The minister stated that they make sure that there are

benefits for Nunavummiut if there is a protected area, but I didn't hear a position. Is the minister for protected area, or does the minister believe that sustainable development in Nunavut is good, and that would be the minister's position? If I can get the minister's position. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my perspective, we can do both. It is one I think, as a territory, we need to be involved in identifying protected areas. We also need to be part of where the mineral extractions will be.

Currently, we are part on the mineral extractions, but when it comes to the federal government's commitment to the world that they need to identify so much protection, we haven't been part of that conversation and a lot of protected areas are being asked for within Canada, and without us being engaged in part of this, and without us taking assertive action to say "these are the areas we need to protect."

From my perspective, we can do both, and one where we need to find that balance, but without being a part of that conversation, and as most of the folks know, the federal government, any minister with the stroke of their had, can just say "oh, here is the protect area now." We need to be involved. We need to be part of that discussion and we need to be part of that decision making. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My pages were all over the place and I finally found my question. Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

This was a question that was brought up earlier regarding Country Food Distribution Program. You indicated that you were going to be dealing with freezers. Is that under your department, the construction of community freezers? Is funding provided for the operations and maintenance of those community freezers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it falls under our department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just to clarify Ms. Killiktee's question to the minister, the member had asked whether the capital as well as operations and maintenance was included in funding models. Minister.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, both of them are as part of that program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to first start by querying you about community freezers, and please censure me if I mistakenly go past my limit. You can turn me to the right path, and I will stop if you tell me.

Now, in asking about community freezers, back when we were still part of the NWT, and in the transfer to Nunavut, many community freezers were left in a lurch as nobody knew who was actually the owner or which department was responsible, either in Nunavut or federally.

It kind of fell through the cracks, but everyone thought they were still owned by Nunavut, and that they would be operated and owned by the communities, and it seemed to have just gone with the flow. It should be clearly outlined exactly which level of government or department that owns these community freezers. Did this area kind of get forgotten?

Has this ever been properly investigated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. David Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This, starting from today is now part of the process under our department, and for a new community freezer project, the hamlet can submit the plan under capital plans, and to include the operations and maintenance costs.

This is generally placed on the local hamlets, as it falls within their purview if they want to get a community freezer, and they can do so. With respect to the other parts, the previous community freezers that are older had the paperwork lost and nobody could determine who actually owned the freezers.

In some cases, there are still some freezers where the paperwork does not indicate whom the actual owner is. Everyone is just pointing the finger at each other. The hamlet points at the government, while the government points at the HTO, and the HTO points elsewhere so this still applies to the older freezers that I know of as nobody knows who the actual owner, so that can touch the operations and maintenance costs. If they do not want to run it, we can provide O/M costs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that assertion is very truthful, since this is what we ran into after our community experienced a fire. What we found out, was that it required tremendous amount of work both to figure it out, and to lay the new foundation and this was a very good local work project.

I just wanted to say that because I wanted some background to better understand the issues surrounding community freezers as the local Inuit place great value on keeping their foods frozen...actually, the hamlet usually operates the food program which

distributes food bought with funds from your department, and they received the funds after applying for it, and the local people really take advantage which is quite obvious.

I wanted to ask about this matter and what status it lies in now to understand it. Hopefully, questions will disappear when the project is known to be moving ahead, so this is my last question: in your business plan, with your personal involvement and responsibilities in taking initiatives as the minister, do you believe that these monies are adequate so that programs and services can be realized at the community-level.

Are the monies you are requested adequate to provide those types of services and programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the funds I am trying to get approval from members is adequate enough for me. The funding has exponential benefits that will be used for different programs and development and services.

I enjoy being the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. At times we get help from the federal government, from the hamlet councils and from the hunters' and trappers' organizations, and I know that the money will be utilized properly. If you would like to start a business, you can access funds either from the territorial government, the federal government or the designated Inuit organizations, and I do enjoy working with those entities. I'll make sure that you keep updated on our programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee, (interpretation) is that all? Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me start out by asking on the business plans on 246 on the Country Food Distribution Program. Why hasn't budget changed for a number of years? It's been at \$1,576,000. Can the minister further elaborate on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think most of our programs or all haven't changed in terms of dollar-wise. In most cases have been sufficient. The way we do planning of our budgets is that we provide that number and whether that number stays the same, if there's an oversubscription of that, I seek assistance from my colleagues to move money around, and if it's within our budgets and our programs, we're able to do that.

So from my perspective, the dollars that I'm asking for through this budget is sufficient. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to perhaps reallocate across Nunavut rather than focus on one regional hub, and this must have a good community economic benefit to those communities when it comes to distributing our country food to all 25 Nunavut communities.

So when it comes to extra opportunities to monitoring the Economic Development and Transportation programs delivered by the Economic Development and Transportation, how can the department enable these communities when it comes to distributing such as perhaps let's say with the food processing plants? So is the department at least looking into these other communities that can actually prosper from these harvesters program when it comes to distributing country food? Is the department looking into other additional communities to fund them to increase the distribution to those communities which are much in need? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A lot of collaboration takes place within the government, within the Inuit organizations, and when it comes to a program like this where it's dire, a lot of collaboration does take place. Something I'm very proud of that our department is very good at is building partnerships with other organizations and other departments for any distributions along with our airlines.

So those are a number of factors that take place when it comes to try and deliver country food, so I'm very confident with what we're doing and I seek your support for continuing this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the minister could have an agreement with me, if for instance, you just elaborate on who are we working with when there is whole lot of finger-pointing that "the hamlet is not doing this. No, it's the HTA that is doing that; the hunters and trappers association." When it comes to the final decision, it is Economic Development and Transportation that decides who gets this. So would the minister be in agreement with me, if there could be such a plan, not within the capital ten-year plan, but perhaps with say, the five-year capital plan that there will be a food processing plant in my riding of Amittuq. Would the minister be in agreement with me? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to elaborate for the old facilities, I was saying that there has been a lot finger pointing as to who owns the facilities. With this country food distribution program, there is no finger

pointing. We know who's applied, we know who we're giving the money and who's going to be operating it.

I applaud each community for taking the initiative of doing that. When it comes to food processing, that's not part of the country food distribution program. That's through another business arm of ours through the Nunavut Development Corporation. I leave that to the board's discretion in terms of where those food processing, if we needed them, for process foods. I'll leave it at that for now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Guess I'll try to clarify. I was not making any finger pointing. I was just clarifying that when it comes to this program, it's owned by hunters and trappers. That's where I was coming from on this.

How does the department work with federal partners to expand opportunities for country food processing and distributions? Looking at the business plan here on page 247, the very first bullet, it says that there's been a bilateral meeting in Rankin Inlet. On the next bullet and on the third bullet, it just mentions one specific community. How does the department categorize, or at least prioritize, when it comes to these initiatives that these other there should be an expand opportunity? How does the department look into this when it comes to expanding the economic development under the country food processing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we, as a government, or an individual would like to start selling country food as a processed food, a federal regulatory system kicks and that's where work closely. The one that's specifically mentioned here is we do have a meat plant in Rankin Inlet and they need to abide by federal regulations. We do that through that. Also, in Cambridge Bay is another meat plant that is required federally. So if any communities want to start selling, those need to be taken into factor. From how I've been doing it, is that the Nunavut Development Corporation is the body that creates those opportunities. We have done that in Pangnirtung for the fisheries, when it became so successful, now the community owns it. That doesn't stop any community of trying.

We do have Community Economic Development Officers in every community. That's the right avenue to start having these discussions. You'll find support through that. When it comes to trying to process meat, there are huge federal regulations that are in place, which is why our business arm has been the ones doing it, because our business arm is not necessarily for profit, it's for opportunities. For a business to thrive, you need profits, and it hasn't taken place yet. It's huge opportunities that are here. I'm glad that the member is raising it. If a community is interested, then they should put a business case together for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the information. I would like to see an economic prosperity in my riding of Amittuq. I am very, very interested in sustaining their own economy locally. I have been trying to be an advocate for them, when it comes to these economic development opportunities. These are smaller communities, I would suggest that they can be a very, very sustainable, once this process is planned and stuff.

In saying that, Mr. Chairman, under the department's policy, there are a number of policies that have been expired, including the Community Transportation Initiative Program Policy, and not to mention, the Community Food Distribution Policy. They're all expired, or sunsetted. On the other number of policies, including the Grants and Contribution Policy, and the Strategic Investment Program Policy, expired or sunsetted. There are a number of policies that are expired and sunsetted.

With these other policies that I mentioned, they'll be expired within the next year. As of today, what is the status or your department's work to revise or renew these policies? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is this year that we're definitely revising a lot of our policies. They're all under the works. I thank the House for reminding us that they have sunsetted. It's work that we'll continue to do. I hope that all of policies will be up-to-date this fiscal year, 2023-2024. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The policies need to be up-to-date. A number of the policies in the Department of Economic Development have been sunsetted, and are already about to expire. That's why I decided to mention on the Community Country Food Policy Program.

On the same page, Mr. Chairman, that the department is exploring option for the integration of Renewable Energy Initiative in existing economic development infrastructure, such as the community freezers.

When it comes to a community country food distribution program, how is the department exploring when it comes to economic development infrastructures or opportunities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Delving a bit into the capital side of things, but in the interest of getting the information out there, I will allow the question. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As started on page 247, this division is looking at the renewable energies and the scope and the policy, whether its going to fit within the infrastructure that we put into the communities. We tried to standardize the

community, what we bring to the communities so it makes it easier. So, if we need to change into this type, then we should be able to do that. I applaud our department for looking into this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it was listed on page 247 of the business plan, that it says infrastructure, but trying to be very careful not to go onto the capital part there. I appreciate the minister's clarity on this page.

Mr. Chairman, still on the same page: How can the department explore into more options for these communities that can actually sustain themselves when it comes to providing these country foods? Perhaps you know, pay those who are harvesters as an employee within the department.

How else would the department be willing to explore opportunities for those communities that can actually try and sustain their, sustain them and run them: How would the department be able to support those communities, such as in Amittuq? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Having country food distribution programs available for the communities starts giving opportunities for those communities to start exploring what they can offer in terms of their country food. Whether they want to share it outside of their communities or within their communities, that option is now becoming available through these programs.

I encourage each community to look at what they can do in terms of their opportunities, economic opportunities, and I want to stress that we have community economic development in every community that we task them to try and help facilitate that within the communities. I will continue to encourage our *Nunavummiut* to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is time that the department and the government look into these alternatives, and how they can actually expand their opportunities when it comes to economic development because looking at these two pages: 247 and 249, all of it is pretty much focusing on Rankin Inlet. Rankin Inlet this, Rankin Inlet when they are supposed to be looking into it Nunavut-wide.

So, can the minister be in agreement that they will be focusing on more of these communities, not just the three regional hubs, but at least start focusing on these communities that they can actually sustain their local economy and make a good living out of it.

Would the minister be in agreement with me when it comes to expanding the opportunities to those other communities that are needed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I kind of take offense that we are focusing on Rankin Inlet.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. David Akeegok: Rankin Inlet here on page 247; that is where the food processing plant is, and there is one in Cambridge Bay.

For others, a lot of work has been within Rankin Inlet, but our focus, especially for the country food distribution, it's available for all communities. Every community has that opportunity to apply.

For any business opportunities, every community has economic development officers, along with monies set aside for hamlets to look at economic opportunities. That's available. I encourage everybody to take that.

Our department thrives on partnerships and working together in funding economic opportunities. I want that to be the focus. I don't want to say, this community is getting more, this community is getting less. We have to stop that and work on focusing on advancing all of us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list. I'll make one comment, I do have a question as well that I would just like clarification on.

I just wanted to follow-up on Mr. Kaerner's question about the different sunsetted and expired policies. At the end of this month, in March, there will be eight expired policies, or sunsetted policies. I am sure that the minister is aware of which ones they are.

I would like to get a clarification. I know Travel Nunavut used to be funded through the grants and contributions. Yet, I don't see Travel Nunavut anywhere in the summary of the grants and contributions. I would just like to get a clarification on the relationship. Thank you. Minister.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I might need to be corrected by my staff, but Travel Nunavut is under the partnership program envelope. We do have a very good working relationship with them. We do provide core funding for them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. You confirmed what I was thinking. I even have a little mark here. So the program partnerships is \$3,820,000 being requested this year. How much of that goes to Travel Nunavut? Minister.

Hon. David Akeegok: Please bear with me. I'm just going to try and find the information.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's \$1 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just some further clarification. I know the roles and responsibilities that used to be Nunavut Tourism and is now Travel Nunavut, has changed a few times over the last number of years. I believe at one point they were getting \$2.7 million, if my little calculator in my brain is correct. They have taken on a lot more responsibility. If I recall a couple of years ago, some of those responsibilities devolved back into the department.

I would just like to get maybe a clarification on what role that the departmental staff has to play in tourism in Nunavut, versus the Travel Nunavut role that they play in promoting tourism across the territory? Just so people can get an understanding of where the responsibilities lie. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, could I ask my deputy minister to respond to that? Thank you.

Chairman: I knew we would get Mr. Kunuk in here, at one point. Please proceed.

Mr. Kunuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try and reply to the question. Yes, I agree with your comment. Yes, they did. Nunavut Tourism held more responsibility roles. Due to mismanagement, they returned the responsibilities to our department.

What we're looking at that now, so that we can try and revive Travel Nunavut, so that they can enhance tourism. We have funding of over \$300,000, that was allocated to them so that they can advertise and promote themselves for the world tourism. We're still using the Inuit cultural values. This is just an example of \$300,000 to test them, on top of \$1 million.

I hope I responded to your question properly. Thank you.

Chairman: It'll do for now. Thank you. Page K-6. Economic Development. \$37,220,000. Agreed.

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Please go back to page K-3. Details of expenditures. Economic Development and Transportation. Amount that has been appropriated, \$98,141,000. Agreed.

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister, any closing comments?

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you very much for your support. I know that this is going to enhance the department. I know that Inuit knowledge and traditions are very important for Nunavut. We feel the impact when you're supporting us. We appreciate you for approving the main estimates.

I also would like to thank my officials on the witness table, and also our finance officer, who is a good worker, but he hasn't been able to appear at the witness table. Those people who work in the communities that we can't see them, but at least I appreciate them. I appreciate the support here, because you provide more support to community economic development, so that they'll be more opportunities for economic development. Thank you very much for working closely together.

With that, I'm going to try and make my closing remarks brief, because we've been sitting here for so long. I can talk endlessly, but we get too exhausted with long meetings. So I'll conclude with that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you minister and your officials. We'll have to think up some questions to get Mr. Fisher to the table next time.

>>Laughter

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses. Members, please remain in your seats. As soon as we clear the witness table, we'll move onto Nunavut Arctic College opening comments. Thank you.

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Nunavut Arctic College – Consideration in Committee

Thank you. We will now proceed to Nunavut Arctic College. Minister Gross, please proceed with your opening comments.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. I am pleased to present to you Nunavut Arctic College's 2023-24 main estimates and business plan for 2023 to 2026.

Nunavut Arctic College maintains the operations laid out in the business plan based on its proposed budget. The college's budget is comprised of a base contribution from the Government of Nunavut and third-party funding.

For the upcoming fiscal year the college is seeking approval for \$40,318,000 from the Government of Nunavut.

This amount represents an increase of \$2,393,000 from the previous fiscal year. This increase is being proposed to base fund six PYs, and to cover additional salary dollars across the result of the new collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union.

The college's health and wellness budget, specifically, the social service program budget has a slight decrease due to the completion of its first cohort of the Bachelor of Social Work Program. The college is excited to be adding to its organization. Of the six PYs, four are new, with three being dedicated to the Student Services Division in Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and Iqaluit.

These new positions tentatively titled student life coordinators will work with other student service members, within and across campuses to support non-academic activities, such as student councils, campus feasts, and cultural and land-based activities. These positions will organize and help oversee these events but also collect information like statistical data, feedback and evaluations, recommendations, and keep track of expenses. The college understands the importance of supporting life-school balance within our schools and these PYs will support students in this, while also supporting the college's goal of unifying student services across its locations.

The final new PY will be with the Nunavut Research Institute in Iqaluit. The proposed laboratory coordinator will oversee the college's laboratory spaces to ensure they are functional and safe spaces. This PY will work to ensure safety protocols are followed, training is provided, and inventory is managed.

The college is also proposing two existing PYs in the policy division be base funded. The senior and junior policy analysts provide critical supports to the college's senior management team. The existing PYs were previously funded through the college's surplus funds.

The college has several important priorities identified over the course of this government mandate that align with *Katujjiluta*. For the 2023-24 fiscal year, the college will work to meet the following mandate implementation goals by:

- Continuing to offer its range of preparatory certificate, diploma and degree programs along with its trades and cultural programs. This includes its health programs, early childhood education, and teacher education.
- Continue to review and update its programs, such as management studies, Inuit studies, and the Interpreter/Translator Program.
- Explore options for expanding programs into community learning centres and expanding programs within its Construction and Industry Trades Division.
- Continue to work to build research capacity at the Nunavut Research Institute.
- Expand student services across the territory.

I am proud to confirm that the college continues to work with other Government of Nunavut departments in much of this work.

The college continues to draw from key supports, including its board of governors and its partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. As outlined in the business plan, there are several opportunities for continued collaboration and development.

The college continues to work to improve its digital supports. Information technology continues to be a cornerstone for its program delivery, whether in person, remotely, or a blended delivery. The college continues to be committed to developing a digitally inclusive post-secondary community.

Nunavut Arctic College continues to act on its commitment to Inuit employment and these efforts continue to pay off. The college's Inuit Employment Plan currently sits at 61 percent. As shared within this House, I am proud that the college's academic leadership is all Inuit. The college continues to focus its efforts on filling positions at the administrative, paraprofessional and professional levels and encouraging existing Inuit staff to continue with professional development.

I appreciate this appearance is to approve the activities related to funding from the Government of Nunavut. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the college's third party funding, which equals \$32,956,000 for the 2023-24 fiscal year. This funding, along with the proposed base funding from the Government of Nunavut, means the college's total operation budget for the upcoming fiscal year is \$73,274,000.

Third party funding allows the college to support and supplement a wide range of existing programs, including its Nunavut Teacher Education Program, Practical Nurse Program, Computer Systems Technician Program, and offer a range of adult and preparatory programs, such as pre-trades and college foundations in different communities. Thanks to third party funding, the college can host an additional 70 PYs to the organization.

Mr. Chairman, these opening comments are intended to provide you with an overview of the key themes as they relate to the college's 2023-24 main estimates and the 2022-26 business plan. I am pleased to take your questions. *Quana, qujannamiik*, thank you, *merci*.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development, I am pleased to make opening comments on the government's proposed 2023-24 budget allocation for Nunavut Arctic College.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of Nunavut's proposed contribution to Nunavut Arctic College is just over \$40 million for 2023-24. This amount will be combined with third party funding as well as revenue from tuition fees and other sources for the college's total anticipated budget of \$73.3 million.

Mr. Chairman, many Nunavummiut rely on the training and certification opportunities provided by Nunavut Arctic College at its regional campuses and at its community learning centres. The committee continues to support the college's efforts to align training and certification programs with specific employment opportunities across the territory. The committee encourages the college to continue working with the private sector, industry partners, government departments, and other potential employers to develop initiatives in these areas.

The committee has been given to understand that the college will also be working more closely with high school students to provide opportunities for them to earn class credits while gaining hands-on work experience within certain industries. Members look forward to further details on this and other initiatives which will support our youth to train for and enter career paths.

Mr. Chairman, community learning centres play an important role in providing access to courses and programs at the local level. Members continue to have concerns regarding course options that are offered at community learning centres and whether the choices offered reflect the needs and wishes expressed by the community during the assessment process. Some communities have expressed interest in having more academic courses made available as well as courses focused on promoting the Inuit language, specifically in the field of interpreting and translating. The ongoing delivery of adult basic education, foundation programs, and pre-trades programs are also important at the community level.

Nunavut Arctic College currently offers degree programs in the areas of education, nursing, and social work as well as a number of trades programs. The committee recognizes the efforts being made to expand the Nunavut Teacher Education Program across Nunavut's communities for delivery at the local level. Members encourage the minister in her efforts to expand the delivery of other programs to more communities outside of the regional centres.

Mr. Chairman, the committee appreciates the additional supports being provided the students at Arctic College's regional campuses, including elder advisors and tutoring services. It has been noted that, despite successful completion of their studies, a number of graduates struggle to pass their national certification examinations. The committee strongly encourages the college also explore options to provide additional support to graduates to help them succeed in the final steps necessary for them to enter their profession of choice.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. Individual members may also have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress and it's non-debatable. All those in favour. Opposed. Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18 and would like to report progress and one committee motion was carried. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: The motion is in order. To the motion. Oh, is there a seconder? My apologies. Mr. Quqqiaq. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Ball.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Ball: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for March 10, 2023:

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 12
- Bill 14
- Bill 16
- Bill 17
- Bill 18
- Bill 19
- Bill 20
- Bill 21

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Speaker: Thank you. In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), this House stands adjourned until Friday, March 10, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:13*

