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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Tony Akoak, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeagok

(Quttiktuq)

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Hon. P.J. Akeagok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut)

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs

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(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Education; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for Seniors

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(South Baffin)

Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council

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Mary Killiktee

(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

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

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

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

Karen Nutarak

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(Hudson Bay)

Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

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Bills

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Community and
Government Services – Consideration in Committee.....4496

Iqaluit, Nunavut
Saturday, March 2, 2024

Members Present:

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

>>House commenced at 10:00

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak) (interpretation): Good morning. Before we proceed, can you say the opening prayer, please, Mr. Simailak.

>>Prayer

Speaker: Good morning, everyone. I recognize the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickers.

Mr. Hickers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 20 on the order paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 20 on the order paper. Are there any nays? There are none. Item 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 37, 38, 39, and 40 with Mr. Hickers in the Chair.

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

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Hickers): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following bills to deal with: Bills 37, 38, 39, and 40. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to commence with the review of the 2024-25 operations and maintenance main estimates of the Department of Community and Government Services, followed by the Department of Education, the housing corporation, and the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Do committee members agree that we proceed with Bill 37?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié, do you have witnesses that you would like to appear before the committee with you? Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to allow the witnesses to appear before us?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Thank you. As we already went through the opening comments yesterday, I'll ask the minister just to introduce the witnesses for the record. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Good morning, Nunavummiut. With me here today in front of you are my Deputy Minister, Kyle Seeley, as well as Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Services, Mandy Hickey. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Before we proceed directly to specific questions, I'll open the floor to any general comments to the opening comments. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, minister and officials. Thank you for coming in on Saturday morning to present the

Department of Community and Government Services' budget.

There were just a couple of items that I wanted to bring up during general comments to give some advance notice about some of the topics that I would like to focus on during today's discussions.

One issue that I would like to raise is I would like to thank the Minister of Community and Government Services and the department for piloting the student employment program. I was very excited about the announcement about that initiative and I'm very curious to find out more about the policy, rollout, targets, and success related to that initiative.

Another area that I would like to focus on is the department's pilot or testing of low Earth orbit satellites to offset our extremely expensive bandwidth that's currently provided by Telesat.

Another area that I would like to focus on is the old res. and the other assets which are currently surplus. The last I recall, I think there were 16 properties that were surplus that were in the control of the Department of Community and Government Services, so I would like to get an update on that.

Another area of concern is remote work and more specifically, a response provided to written questions that were put forward by Member Savikataaq. It's very interesting to see the responses provided by all departments, the number of GN employees who had requested remote work and how many were approved, as well as contracted-out employment roles.

One thing that really stood out was in the Department of CGS' response, there was very little information provided and the information that was provided was only partial, up to September 2021, and excluded all of 2022 and all of 2023 information that was requested. The response was CGS does not have a policy on tracking remote out-of-territory workers and there are no mechanisms in place to report this outside of January 2021.

CGS references again with contract positions that CGS-HR does not have a means to determine if an employee is working outside of the territory. Further, CGS-HR does not have a means to report on positions filled on a contract basis by external consultants. This is an issue that has been raised for several years, which I think really deserves some consideration.

Lastly, the issue of the Petroleum Products Division, which has received considerable attention in more recent times, and the issue of the significant deficits that the Petroleum Products Division is currently in is a major issue. The Petroleum Products Division is currently non-compliant with the Petroleum Products Act and the Stabilization Funds Act. In essence, the Department of Community and Government Services is breaking its own law and I think that's something that also needs additional consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for an opportunity to add some general comments, and I just wanted to give some notice of these issues that I would like to bring up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Any other members wishing to provide general comments? Seeing none, please go to page J-4. Directorate. Community and Government Services. Total Operations and Maintenance. Amount being requested, \$2,337,000. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have many questions. Good morning, minister and your officials, and welcome to the committee.

(interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that it "has identified options to realign key functions that would support realignment efforts with [the Department of] Economic Development and Transportation. The departments have developed a timeline to inform the planning to initiate the realignment." What are the changes expected to be made? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member. On that one, the realignment options that our department, in conjunction with Economic Development and Transportation, is looking at, for example, we are looking at how each department serves the public, but also internally to other government departments. That's an example of if we can realign those functions into one as opposed to another. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The government's most recent quarterly employment report indicates that the majority of the department's positions in decentralized Pond Inlet and Kinngait are currently vacant as of June 30, 2023; 22.0 out of 33.0 positions in the Pond Inlet office were vacant and 16 out of 24.0 office positions in Kinngait were vacant. What accounts for these high vacancy rates? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of those vacancies are more long-standing than others. However, we do recognize that this has been a challenge for two decentralized offices in particular. However, in my department, we are looking at them and trying to put those competitions out for applicants and some are at different stages.

We do, of course, have other factors at play whereas, for example, staff housing availability as well as some of these positions are quite highly technical in nature, and it's a matter of what is the labour pool availability, either within the territory or outside. That's something we're trying to figure out in this case. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) To what extent will the government's realignment of your department include a review of decentralized positions?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you. Overall we don't anticipate moving positions. We want to maintain what positions we have in those decentralized offices. We are not looking at any major adjustments around that, the positions that are located out in the communities and headquarters here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Premier is looking at what he can do for non-decentralized communities. If the government decided to put non-decentralized communities into decentralized communities, would these positions go to wherever the government decides to decentralize? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question in that I know many communities do want additional employment opportunities in their respective communities.

Of course, through this realignment process and on an ongoing basis, we do try to factor on how we can better serve communities and with the new policies that are coming out through the human resource department on Nunavut-wide work. As an example, we're looking at office spaces that are available or might be needed in certain instances where we will be coordinating with Executive and

Intergovernmental Affairs, who is the lead department on decentralization, and we will continue on the same path. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'll move away from that. The Remote Work Policy stated that there needs to be adequate office spaces. Are you guys looking into office space availabilities in all the communities right now? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes and there has been a needs assessment done around office space availability, what are the current leases that are in place, looking at how long those leases are valid for or need renewal, or if there is additional space needed. We're considering those options as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Can the minister tell me how many office spaces are available in my constituency? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that it's very limited for both Naujaat and Salliq. As for the details, I'll have to come back to

the member on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go back to Mr. Malliki, I would like to remind committee members to acknowledge the Chair if you want me to add your name to the list. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In that case, if it's very limited, we're foreseeing no employment will go to my constituency. Is that right? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you. I suppose, just to put it in a way that we do have kind of a flexible workplace policy wherein we're looking at different communities that do have office space and whether or not there are positions that can be assigned to those from whichever department. Based on the community of Naujaat and Coral Harbour, if I can say that there are going to be no additional employees assigned, I can't say that for now; that's still yet to be determined. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Do you have a timeline for when it will be determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't have a specific timeline for that. However, we are

looking at the reorganization and realignment of Economic Development and Transportation and what impacts on both departments that will have. Again, I think we're trying to look at if there are opportunities for employment across other communities. We will keep that open. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have too many, but one of them is on the 2024-25 priorities. It says, "Ensure the prioritization of projects and contracting methods that involve partners, support local businesses, add to community economies, and customize approaches in response to local capabilities and needs."

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to know what is the procurement process now that Community and Government Services is following, as we know that the Nunavut Housing Corporation has entered into an agreement with sole-sourced housing units. The Qulliq Energy Corporation also entered into a sole source to possibly get a power plant in Kugluktuk. Can I get the minister's position on it and clearly state what the procurement process is today? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My department is in charge of public procurement process and as such, we lead that. Whenever there is a project through our capital plans, for example, if we're tendering it out to the public, it goes through the public

procurement process. If it steers away from that and, for example, the Nunavut Housing Corporation was used as an example, they lead that charge under the department or in this case, an agency, so they can come forward with a negotiated contract and if it receives the support, then it goes through and that's the case in that sense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Qulliq Energy Corporation are corporations and it's their contracts and they will speak for it, but I was just using those for example and what I wanted to know was: what is the procurement process for CGS that takes care of all the capital projects? Is it still everything goes to tender or are there more sole-source contracts coming for capital projects or large O&M projects? Just the minister's position on procurement, are all projects going to a public tender or are there some projects that have been or will be negotiated contracts? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. In addition, if I may add, it might be useful for the minister to explain the difference between a negotiated contract and a sole-source contract in addition to responding to Mr. Savikataaq's question. Minister.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Being an open, fair and transparent government, the public procurement process is there. That's the main avenue that the government uses for its contracting processes. We do have alternative tools, so to speak, where if there are limited options and if there are

no bids, for example, that are coming through or bids are coming way higher, then we have to reposition ourselves and/or look at other alternative means of getting the job done, so those options are there for us.

If I may, maybe, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow my deputy to specify what the difference in details on what a negotiating contract and sole source would be. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Within the *Financial Administration Act* and the Financial Administration Manual, there are provisions for sole source contracts. There are two provisions that allow for sole source contracts; one is an emergency where there is a risk to persons or property and the other is when there is only one vendor available to provide that service. Those sole source contracts are administered as the exception under those two exceptions by each department.

Separate from that, there is a provision available for the Executive Council to approve departments to enter into negotiated contracts based on the rationale provided by a department or by the government. I think that the member's questions were about the negotiated contract piece, and there are processes in place to escalate those requests to cabinet for their review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: *Ma'na*, Mr. Chairman. Just going on to a different matter, the

Legislative Assembly passed amendments to the *Consumer Protection Act* back in 2017 and a lot of that had to do with cheque-cashing fees. Can we just get an update on whether the minister's position has the desired effect? Are cheque-cashing fees regulated now? Are Nunavummiut being charged less for cashing cheques? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you can give me a second.

Sorry, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow my deputy to respond on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there has been a variety of measures put in place since those changes, including more consumer education through our Consumer Affairs Division of the department.

With some of the additional controls that are put in place, we do believe that there is more control on cheque-cashing fees. This is going to be an ongoing work for the department in years to come. We continue to monitor it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Seeley for that explanation, but my question was: does it have the desired effect that it intended, to alleviate large cheque-cashing fees? Can I get that answered, if possible? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: I think, overall, I can say that the department does believe it has done its desired effect, so it's going towards protecting the consumer better. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are there any other amendments that could be introduced or will be introduced to the *Consumer Protection Act* in the life of this Assembly to help Nunavummiut? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be a major legislative initiative if we are planning to reopen the *Consumer Protection Act* and it would entail a comprehensive consultation plan as an example. We are also looking at other pieces of legislation alongside this. Within the life of this government, I think it might be tight. I can't say if we can do it right now within the life of this government, but I think, if anything, it might be where we initiate and the next government picks things up where things left off. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I can just get an explanation because generally, legislation proposals don't carry on from one government to the next government, can I get an explanation on how that's going to work? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: I suppose similar to the petroleum products commission that was brought forward in the last government and died on the order paper at the end of the last government and we're still trying to pick things up where things left off kind of thing. A similar thing might happen to this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I asked is because the minister stated that the cheque-cashing fees, the amendments that were made to the *Consumer Protection Act*, mainly did take control of the huge cheque-cashing fees that were there.

There's another thing that's just as bad as the cheque-cashing fee and it is the We Card. The customers that use that are charged to put money in, they are charged to check their account, they're charged to take money out, and there are so many charges on there. Does the minister have any idea about looking into that because it affects just as many people today as did the cheque-cashing fee back in 2017? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for bringing it to light. We do have the Consumer Affairs Division and we do try to track and monitor what types of issues consumers are facing and whether or not our government has controls that we can put in place to better protect the customer.

We encourage Nunavummiut to contact our office and file complaints if necessary or if they so choose and think that they're being treated unfairly in the market. There are established processes for that and I would like to get Nunavummiut more informed on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get the minister's position on whether the Nunavummiut customers are treated fairly or unfairly with the We Card. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. To be honest, I have to look at that in specific. I'm not too familiar with what the issues are in terms of the details on what people are experiencing with We Card transactions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go back to Mr. Savikataaq, wouldn't the division of Consumer Affairs be tracking those types of products and being able to provide some information to the minister? I would just like to get clarification on that. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If there are complaints, I'm not aware right now of any that have been put forward through Consumer Affairs at this point. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get a commitment from the minister that Consumer Affairs will

look into this? A lot of my clients and I'm sure in all the other communities, this is the credit card of the last resort for a lot of customers in Nunavut that can't qualify for the major credit card names. It's not that hard to get this credit card, but the service fees and the conditions in order to use this are quite money draining. Can I get a commitment that they will look into all the ins and outs of that particular credit card? We should be helping the ones that have no choice but to use that card. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can commit to having this looked into. Again, I do encourage Nunavummiut, including our members, to contact Consumer Affairs to see what further avenue they can take if they feel like they're being treated unfairly in the market. There are tools for them that they can take and I think it's a matter of informing each other better on both fronts. I encourage that information sharing. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just been handed a note by someone that's more familiar with that card than me, and it just says it is static; the charge is 20 percent interest, which seems very high. I'll go on because the minister said that Consumer Affairs will be looking into this.

Also, in the department's 2024-26 business plan, they propose to work on repealing and replacing the *Lotteries Act*, but this work is being delayed, so can I get an explanation? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there have been delays and of course, we are still trying to proceed with that to establish and prioritize a cohesive consultation plan along with other major initiatives, such as the *Consumer Protection Act* as well as the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*. We want to ensure that there's fulsome consultation taking place with all stakeholders and we are aiming to modernize and improve clarity in the legislation. We are still trying to truck on, although there have been delays. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know the minister and I have gone through lots of back and forth a year ago on lottery stuff. He's got one more year of experience as the minister now, so I'll ask him again: is selling spots a lottery? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The *Lotteries Act* and the regulations also entail what is a form of licensed lotteries in terms of who can get a licence. There are unlicensed lotteries, including what the member is asking, what a spot is, so those are not regulated under the *Lotteries Act*. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will just be a statement. I'm glad that the department is looking at updating the *Lotteries Act* as many

things have changed since it was passed. There are different types of unlicensed gaming activity, such as spots. Sometimes there are fundraisers like a penny sale and it's for a good cause, which is very understandable and a lot of people support that, but it is also used as an unlicensed lottery to sell stuff as big as a snowmobile and a boat and a motor.

I'm looking forward to when the department will have this update and have a little bit more guidelines and a little more control of what gaming activities happen within Nunavut. I'm also aware that a lot of this is online, which can happen outside of Nunavut, so it's quite complicated. I encourage the minister to keep on updating the *Lotteries Act* and come up with a new Act that is more current and up to date. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the comments. We want to ensure that we do have a more modern look at how things are done right now. Currently, there's online gaming that's happening too. That is something that is also unregulated. We need to factor those in.

There's also the factor around some communities that have the authority to issue licences and in some communities, it goes through the department. We want to ensure that everyone is on the same page moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

Staying on the subject of consumer protection, Mr. Savikataaq came very close to my line of question here. Technology is changing very fast. I'm wondering: has the department or the Consumer Protection Division begun looking at what Nunavummiut need to start looking out for? There's stuff happening out there online; online gaming was mentioned. I have heard of Facebook bingo. I don't know what else is out there, but has the division begun looking at what they need to work on to protect Nunavummiut from this part of consumer protection? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. The Consumer Affairs Division has been pushing forward on trying to get more information out to the public. For that very reason, there are malicious activities that could prey on Nunavummiut and we don't want that to happen, so it's best for people to keep informed of what's real or not, especially in this day and age online. Keep yourself informed.

There's a lot of material that Consumer Affairs has provided and it's available to the public. There's a consumer complaints process if they think there's unfair treatment that they're being preyed upon by the marketplace, for example. I encourage, again, the member as well as Nunavummiut to look at those more clearly, especially online. There's a lot of phishing or different malicious

activity going on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'm wondering: how is the department or the division getting the word out educating Nunavummiut? I have seen a few advertisements saying, "Be careful, double check," but there's not much education. All it is saying is "Be careful."

I myself have almost fell prey to that. I saw a nice parka that fit me on a Facebook page, and there were a few comments. I was told that it's a scam, that they're not even in Nunavut. Luckily, seeing a few comments, I was warned, but that's from friends of mine, not the government.

I haven't seen any real education coming out from the department. How is the department getting the word out to educate people that they have to be more careful? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. It's a very good line of questioning, Mr. Simailak. There are a lot of bad actors that are really preying on people right now. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that goes back to being informed for yourself and verifying what is being... . If there's a product that you're interested in online, you need to verify who the vendor or the seller is; if they're trustable. There are ways where you could try to obtain that. If you don't have that, then there's a

risk. I again encourage consumers to be informed.

Our division tries to provide either training or we do public service announcements. As an example, I can use last year for the Arctic Winter Games. I know there was a false Facebook page set up to lure people in to sell a product where they're trying to get credit card information. You really need to be careful and mindful of what people's intentions can be online. Verify and make sure you know what you're doing and ask around and connect with the Consumer Affairs Division. There's a lot of information that people can obtain, again, so I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked: how are they getting the word out? How are they educating Nunavummiut? He's saying here, "Be careful, be careful," but this is in here. To the people that are watching TV, they hear it, but it is Saturday morning. I'm sure there are thousands of people still sleeping or hunters out hunting already, so they're not watching us.

There are elders getting used to Facebook, getting online, and learning how to be online. We've got teenagers that are now getting on Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and whatnot. My twins will be 14 in a couple of weeks. We finally allowed them to get Facebook, and Marilyn and I make sure we see what they're looking at, but that's just between Marilyn and me.

I'm wondering: how is the department getting the word out? How are they

educating Nunavummiut that they need to be careful? Can the minister explain how they're getting the word out? How are they educating Nunavummiut?
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: If Mr. Simailak will allow, I would also like to add to his question. How often does the Department of Justice make the Department of Community and Government Services aware of ongoing bad behaviour and some of the tactics that are being used? How often is there communication between the two departments? What are some of the current ploys? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Joanasié.

>> *Laughter*

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Laughter*

Again, going back to how the word is going out, we do issue public service announcements, and I think this goes not just beyond bulletin posts but online social media. Also, we do mail-outs and training or provide opportunities for lottery and/or gaming literacy, for example, so that they can better know what's a good practice and a licensed gaming practice or a licensed lottery.

Also, I think, at the same time, there's information out there, and I'm putting the plug in here for Consumer Affairs. People can call 1-866-223-8139, which is the toll-free number, or email consumerprotection@gov.nu.ca.

Again, I think your constituency office is another good avenue to get the word out. I'm sure our government liaison offices

can also share further information if information is requested by the constituent around this. Thank you.

Sorry. On your question, Mr. Chairman, regarding communication with the Department of Justice, I believe it goes through Justice that reports to the RCMP. I don't think there's a direct line put from Justice when there are those types of gaming or consumer protection concerns or if somebody is breaking the law around that. I don't think it gets funnelled to us at Consumer Protection. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I'm hoping Mr. Simailak will ask what that triggered me to think about, but go ahead, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most likely a different line of questioning from what you were thinking, but your question on Justice and the Department of Community and Government Services relations triggered another question for me.

Are there any talks between the communities... ? It's a bit outside-the-box thinking, using *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*. Has the department begun looking at possibly collaborating with the Department of Education and Arctic College to maybe perhaps throw a plug in there into their curriculum as part of life skills? These are very young people that are entering the workforce, and it would be a very good idea to have better collaboration and help with the curriculum on life skills. Is there any collaboration going on right now and, if not, would you consider it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're always open to collaboration and partnerships on this front, and I think it will serve for a better informed public. If there are those opportunities, we're open to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Community and Government Services. We're on the page J-4. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start off with asking some policy-related questions.

I'll start off with the development of the student employment program. Like I said, I was very excited to hear when this program was announced. I was wondering if you would be able to provide our committee with additional information, how long it has been in the works, how many positions that you would like to see hired, and I'm also curious to find out what sort of compensation will be provided to students. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the member's interest in this. If you will have Assistant Deputy Minister Hickey respond on this. Thank you.

Chairman: I knew we would get you involved at some point, Ms. Hickey. Please proceed.

Ms. Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The program has recently been launched and currently only one student is working to date with the program, but we have

prepared information documents and advertisements to send out to the high school here in Iqaluit.

Our Inuit Employment and Outreach Program manager plans to attend high school to promote the program and we've got a video that's created as well. There is a career fair that's coming up in Iqaluit, I believe, this month now in March. We are planning to attend that and this program will be showcased there as well.

The payment of the students follows the same payment methods that the summer student employment program follows during summertime. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Hickey. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Hickey. The compensation for the summer student program is a percentage of the position that they are working in. For a finance officer, that's pay grade 13. In their first year, they would be eligible for something like 60 or 75 percent of the salary, if I remember correctly, for the summer student program and then that increases every year that they participate in the program.

Will all students entering this program be set up at that bottom tier that summer students start at, and in addition, can the minister clarify the salary range for the summer students? I'm just recalling off my best memory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, in short. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, minister. My last question on this line of topic is: have you set a goal or some sort of target as to how many students that you would like to see hired as soon as the program rolls out, and in addition, do you have any plans for expansion target-wise for the number of students in future years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Iqaluit is a pilot project at this point. We do want to get as much enrolled as we can allow for. We will be looking at this and reviewing it on an annual basis and it's with the intention that we would like for it to succeed and we hope that this pilot will be well received in Iqaluit and then see where we can take it afterwards. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Again, I would like to thank the Minister and Department of Community and Government Services for initiating this pilot project. I think it will have tremendous long-term benefits to the department and the government as a whole.

I would like to move on to my next line of questioning. It's relating to legislation and there's reference in the business plans to amendments to the *Lotteries Act*.

As we only have a year and a half left, can the minister provide an update on this piece of legislation and any other pieces of legislation that are currently being reviewed by the Policy and Legislation Division and highlight any sort of timelines, approximate timelines or estimates as to when these pieces of legislation will be introduced?

As I mentioned previously with the Department of Health, we only have a year and a half and five sittings and it's important that the standing committee has sufficient time to review complex pieces of legislation. With that being said, I really hope that anything that is complex will be introduced during or prior to next year's winter sitting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Aside from what I shared earlier to Mr. Savikataaq's question, maybe if you will allow my deputy to elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. ...in terms of an update as to where things are at.

Chairman: Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The department is now working on a couple of different legislative items referenced both within the business plan and in correspondence.

Starting with the *Planning Act*, public consultations have been underway on that for quite some time; a very high level of engagement territory-wide.

Earlier questions on the *Lotteries Act*, I think, underscored the importance of advancing consultations on updating the legislation. As the members point out, it's very complex legislation that needs to be modernized.

Another key piece of legislation that we are working on right now that is in the preliminary stages is the *Hamlets Act* and the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*, starting with consultations on the key points that the municipalities, elected officials, and administrators would like us to prioritize within that consultation.

I think the committee has also been notified by the minister on plans to re-evaluate some previous legislation that was proposed in a prior government regarding petroleum products. That is another piece that the department is working on.

This is in addition to a variety of different regulatory changes that the department has been advancing and in addition to repealing a couple of key pieces of legislation that were outdated and needed to be repealed.

With that, that's a bit of a highlight of some of the items that we're working on and we do look forward to returning at earliest to the committee so that they can have a fulsome, detailed review to make sure that we can advance these important pieces of legislation.

I just remembered the *Emergency Measures Act*. There are a couple of outstanding sections of that piece of legislation that are not brought into force yet. The department has initiated some of the remaining operational measures that need to happen across all GN

departments and agencies in order to bring those remaining sections of the *Emergency Measures Act* into force, with each of those on our list, I guess our work plan, to make sure that we get fulsome consultations underway.

I hope that answers the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Seeley, for that information. That's a number of very complex pieces of legislation that the department is currently considering for amendments. I just want to again ask that, it is just a comment, asking that the minister sort of prioritize this so that the Standing Committee on Legislation will not be swamped or overwhelmed towards the end of the life of this government to review and pass legislation.

My last comment is when it comes to the *Lotteries Act* review, I just hope that the minister will ensure that video gaming will not be a part of that or at least will be excluded or otherwise from any sort of video gaming here in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié, did you have a comment? No? I have no more names on my list, so Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be talking about the Inuit Employment Plan. Your department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that it currently has a total of 25 executive and senior management level positions. One of these positions is 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: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. We are trying to advance on Inuit employment initiatives and we do have a new director of human resources that is tasked with filling vacancies but also try to include or look at Article 23.

In terms of why things are the way they are in the senior management, I can't say what exactly accounts for it. There could be factors such as the highly technical nature of our department. In certain divisions, you need the requirements or degrees or what have you, engineering certification and that kind of thing in order to be in these roles. Also, at the same time, some competitions, perhaps, didn't have any Inuit applications in, as an example. Those are just things that I could think of at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. I'll probably be following up with more lines of questioning in the future to assure that Article 23 is fulfilled and for Inuit employment. I'll move on, Mr. Chairman.

Your department's draft business plan indicates that it will have a total of five executive-level positions as of March 31, 2025. The draft business plan indicates that one of these positions will be filled

by Nunavut employees. Now the question is: which executive-level positions are planned to be filled by Nunavut Inuit employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is the associate deputy minister position, which is still vacant, and we are trying to recruit into that position at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. Mr. Chairman, this will be my last question. Your department's draft business plan indicates that it will have a total of 25 senior management level positions as of March 31, 2025. The draft business plan indicates that two of these positions will be filled by Nunavut Inuit employees. The question is: which senior management level positions are planned to be filled by Nunavut Inuit employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last question.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: If you will give me a second.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have a specific position that we're targeting at this point. However, we are trying to make opportunities available, either through advancements of current Inuit employees or having a training plan in place, or the other avenue is potentially for a direct appointment. If there's a suitable candidate to fill a

senior management position, then we will be looking at that as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister a question regarding the main estimates. It states that (interpretation ends) "Consumer Affairs provides consumer protection services..." (interpretation) I would like to ask the minister a question based on that. Have you as the minister witnessed some people in the communities who are in real deep poverty? They want to advance themselves and they feel that they should be able to do more help.

You provide the hamlets with policies that they have to follow, although they run sort of independently. They sort of base their decisions on the policies because they're intimidated by your department. There are concerns that something will be taken away from them if they speak up, but as the minister, I'm asking you to have programs that are based on Inuit culture and values. You give directives and because of that, do you make sure that they are put together properly? Have you noticed anything where the Inuit culture and values are incorporated? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize if I didn't understand the member's question properly. As the people of Nunavut, we are daily consumers. If we're going to go shopping for anything, we have the right to do that and we need to be able to understand what our rights

are based on. Whatever we want to buy, is the documentation true or not, or is some law being broken, all those things have to be properly understood.

I would like more information on the question. Is the member asking about consumer protection or people who try to make money? There are many different kinds of people and some people get licences that enable them to do certain things and some people don't get licences but still make money, which is not allowed by law. I'm asking which aspect of it that the member is asking about, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a deep matter. I know you don't understand what I'm saying, but I will want to have a conversation with the minister at a later date.

Let me move on to something else so that we don't stay on one topic. This was asked earlier about senior management positions for Nunavut Inuit employees. As you are setting this up and the main estimates or the budget for that purpose that you're asking for, I'm wondering why there are only two positions. Why is it so low? There are only two positions being filled by Nunavut Inuit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. If I understand the question correctly, the directorate is to request less money because we have the Corporate Services Branch now in our department and trying to get Inuit hired

into those positions in our department. Right now, there are 480 positions that can be filled by Inuit. If Inuit are interested in trying for them, they are open and we try to have a plan for some of our workers in our department, our fellow Inuit, who are interested in trying for higher positions. We try to accommodate them and have training available for them, and that is what we want to do, so that they are able to do whatever job that they are trying for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you. That brings up another question. What kinds of training programs do you have available, either online training or other means? What kind of support system do you have in place and what training? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. It can include setting up a training plan, for example, and we usually set up the training plans where they can advance in their career. We also have mentorship programs available so that they can advance in their career. If there is a need or desire, we are available to help advance them in their careers. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In those mentorship programs or other means, if there was a training program either online or for the week, are there any monies made available for the hamlets to access so

that they can set up training programs in the communities so that there is advancement? Are there monies available to the hamlets for training purposes? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you. If I understood your question, the hamlets can use their monies to provide training programs for their employees and if someone was interested, there are monies available either from their own budget or there are monies that you can access from Community and Government Services. We would do a review and see if there are monies available and there might be monies that are proposal based and a pot of money that might be available. For example, there is Makigiaqta, which goes through the Inuit organizations, but there is also the Municipal Training Organization that has monies available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that information, but we have to plan for the future so that there are succession plans for the employees and it would also increase Inuit employment in these organizations to have those monies easily available and that there is a desire to advance in their careers. That's just a comment. It would be a very good program. That's not a question. Thank you. I'll leave it at that.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you. That's a very good comment. We have wanted to provide more support for the hamlet councils and with that, we have increased the budget from \$2.6 million that is available for the hamlets. Our department works with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities to implement those monies and what they can be used for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I said that was my last comment. The hamlets are provided support by your department and in the smaller communities, they employ the most people, but there is a need to make it better or see an improvement. I'm very happy that the hamlets are provided a lot of support. That's my last comment once again. I just had to make that comment. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Killiktee. I have no more names on my list, but I just want to get clarification on something. The term "debt forgiveness" was in one of the responses earlier to one of the questions, and the minister and I had some recent correspondence on that subject. I would just like to get clarification. There was some recent media coverage on a corporation asking for the City of Iqaluit for some debt forgiveness. I would like to get the minister to explain to all those that are listening how that process could work or how that process works with hamlets and cities on how debt forgiveness can be applied for. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am a little aware about that

too; however, if you will have my deputy maybe respond on that detail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Each municipality manages its own finances, including revenue streams like its water sewer fund, for example, or in the case of the tax-based City of Iqaluit, through local tax revenues. In cases where there is a debt built up or a bill owing to the municipality, the municipal council can entertain a request for write off or forgiveness. There are very specific scenarios where at year-end or in the case of people passing on, municipalities will write off certain expenses. It is unusual for municipalities to do an outright forgiveness of bills.

A significant and recent example was during the water emergency here in Iqaluit where the municipal council did make a decision to, as I recall it, forgive water bills during the period that the “do not consume” was initially put on. That’s an example of when forgiveness on these sorts of water bills could be put in place. In any of the cases where an existing bill is out there, the council can put by by-law, I guess, or a request in place to forgive a particular debt if there is support of that from council.

I hope that clarifies your question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We’re on page J-4. Directorate. Community and Government Services. Amount being appropriated, \$2,337,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page J-5. Corporate Services. Amount being requested, \$12,583,000. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin with some IEP-related questions under the human resource division. Last year I had identified that there were a number of communities in the Department of Community and Government Services that actually had zero Inuit employees working for the department.

Looking at the most recent Towards a Representative Public Service quarterly Inuit employment statistics report, there are still six communities that had zero Inuit employees working for the Department of Community and Government Services as of June 2023, and that includes Chesterfield Inlet, Gjoa Haven, Grise Fiord, Naujaat, Resolute Bay, and Sanikiluaq.

The material included within that June report is quite outdated. I would just like to follow up on that specific matter if those communities highlighted or identified still have zero Inuit employees working for the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow Assistant Deputy Hickey to take the question. Thank you.

Ms. Hickey: Those communities do have casual employees working in some of the positions that are there and they are Inuit casual employees. One of the things the department is doing is we

have been charging forward with a lot of direct appointments of Inuit employees. We have done ten to date so far this year; we have another five that are in process of being approved and another three that are in progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Hickey. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Ms. Hickey. I will leave that for now. Hopefully some of those direct appointments will be for casual Inuit employees in those identified communities. I'll raise the matter again and follow up on it next year.

Another area that I would like to follow up on is transfer assignments. The Department of Community and Government Services has had a relatively low number of Inuit employees participating in acting assignments and transfer assignments. Last year the minister had indicated that of the 21 transfer assignments, 11 were Inuit employees, and that was great to hear, so I would like to request an update on that.

Last year, the minister was unable to provide information on the number of acting assignments. I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide an update on that as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So far right now, there are 17 transfer assignments, three of which are Inuit employees. As for acting assignments, I don't think we have that

level of detail here. I can bring it forward when we can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for providing the updated information on the number of transfer assignments. Three out of 17 Inuit employees are really low and very disappointing. This is a matter that I have been identifying for a number of years.

It is crucial to provide training opportunities so that Inuit employees may gain experience, move up the ladder, and assist the department and government in reaching its representative public service obligations. I will just flag that as another matter that I will be following up on at a later date and just ask the minister to pass on to the senior management team in the Department of Community and Government Services that this is an important matter to the Assembly that Inuit employees do receive these unique training opportunities, whether it's transfer assignments or acting or internships, which is my next question.

The majority of Sivuliqtiksat intern positions are vacant. I would like to ask the minister if he would provide an update on the Department of Community and Government Services' interns, whether it's through Sivuliqtiksat or internally, and if there aren't any, if he can provide information on progress towards getting Inuit interns. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm aware that there are no Sivuliqtiksat interns in place at this point. Of course, part of it is that if we are going to put interns in place, they need a manager to mentor them through that process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If there are opportunities around that, again, we're open to that and we try to promote these advancements or opportunities for any of our Inuit employees where there's an appetite. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to encourage the minister to continue progress in that area. I think it's important. I think every department really should have at least one Inuit intern working within the department. I do note that 26 middle management positions are filled as well as 57 professional positions are filled to provide mentorship opportunities.

I would like to move on to the next issue and the department had identified succession planning as a previous priority. I was wondering if the minister would provide an update on that, recognizing that there is a considerable amount of employees at or reaching retirement age, given the average age of a GN employee. I would like to ask: what positions or potential areas have been identified for succession planning? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't have specific examples at this point, but again, I think

this is where, if there's a position and we are trying to be mindful and looking at some positions where they know there is a retirement coming. If there's someone in the department that is interested to fill that role, again, if there's that appetite, we want to support that and have someone succeed in that.

If you will have maybe my deputy to expand on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley, please proceed.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Succession planning is just a good and essential practice to any organization's forward planning.

We do have a senior management committee meeting planned later on this month. This is one of the important discussions that we're having around that table regarding succession plans and opportunities both at the senior management level but also at those operational position levels in the communities.

Certainly, where there is a position in the community that has a very hands-on operational role and the opportunity where a long-term employee does signal that they are retiring, we do have the opportunity to double-fill. We do promote that opportunity to make sure that we maintain that corporate knowledge.

The second piece to that is that as we move forward with the double-filling options with positions where we know that people are retiring, we're also looking at opportunities to do cross

training and cross-function training within divisions and different branches of the department. We do think this is our best chance to maintain our existing capacity and grow it in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Seeley. I've got two lines of questioning remaining on two topics. The first that I would like to ask about is the number of positions in the department that are qualified trades positions, positions which require certified journeymen. In addition to those positions, does the department currently have any apprentices? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize; I don't have the information, but we can come back to the member on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for committing to follow up on that matter.

My last line of questioning is regarding the technical professional studies scholarship. I do applaud the department for this initiative. I did receive this myself a very long time ago. I recall the last time I was asking about this scholarship, I believe the number of applicants was at, near, or beyond the actual allotted amount or budgeted amount.

Would you be able to provide an update today on the number of applicants that the department had received for this scholarship, how many scholarships were paid out, and whether the entire budget was utilized or exceeded? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you for the detailed question. If you will allow Assistant Deputy Hickey to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed, Ms. Hickey.

Ms. Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. There were 26 recipients, 20 of which were beneficiaries, and the full entire \$80,000 was spent. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Hickey, for that information. There were 26 applicants and the entire \$80,000 budget was utilized. Did all 26 applicants receive the scholarship? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié, are you prepared to answer?

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, all 26 received it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

(interpretation ends) I want to touch base under your business plan and the topic is assistant deputy minister. (interpretation) The first budget for this division is set for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Will it be located in Nunavut or will it be done through contract? How is this set up? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To clarify, this new corporate services division was part of the directorate, but it's now a separate division. They separated the functions of the corporate services and directorate divisions, and the assistant deputy minister position is included, which is filled by Ms. Hickey, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that. However, my next question is still under the same branch. I would like to expand on the question that my colleague asked earlier, but for (interpretation ends) community planning, this is under the Technical Professional Studies Program, (interpretation) I just wanted to hear what kind of plans there are for community planning, if you have any information on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$80,000 scholarship program is for various higher education programs under technical studies, such as training to become a consultant. This funding is to

provide support for the students taking the training on an annual basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to know if it's part of it. I just recall it started quite some time ago, but currently, the buildings that are constructed and operated by the hamlet have different operating components and heating systems. For example, a red tag is required to work on heating systems. Although there are tradespeople in the communities, with infrastructure management being different than the south, it seems like it is being run by professionals. Can this be included as part of their training? I hope you understand what I'm getting at, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the red seals and journeymen, they can also have apprentices. As she stated, hamlets have to consider the buildings or infrastructure that they have, whether they are housing units or office buildings, and there's legislation that they have to abide by when they are constructing the units. I think the member is alluding to the National Building Code. I may have misunderstood the question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Yes, that's exactly what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the red seal. The

components and heating systems of infrastructure being constructed in communities are evolving. With the new requirements, especially when the communities don't have people who can manage the buildings, I believe that we don't have enough training programs at the community level for those kinds of services. I would urge your department to consider those requirements to train them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, with the \$80,000 scholarship program, I think that could be included there. With respect to the National Building Code and with regulations currently changing, we would try to support communities to ensure that they keep up with the regulations, as we use the most current practices. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has to go in accordance. In the communities, there are Inuit who could be working and they need to have steady jobs. The Inuit employment rate should not be decreasing. It's good to hear your response. This is not a question; it's just a comment. I don't have any other questions. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on Community and Government Services. Corporate Services. Page J-5. Amount being requested for appropriation, \$12,583,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page J-6. Local Government Services. Amount being appropriated, \$103,871,000. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-25 main estimates and draft 2024-26 business plan indicate that the budget for the Municipal Funding Program will increase by 8.4 percent, from \$54,231,000 in the 2023-24 fiscal year to \$58,821,000 in the 2024-25 fiscal year. How was the amount of this increase determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Hold on a second.

Thank you. Sorry, Mr. Chairman. The bulk of the increase from previous fiscal, the \$3.6 million, was for the Municipal Funding Program to allow for additional employees. There is a \$1,319,000 fuel price increase that's for municipal support; grants in lieu of taxes, \$1.92 million. There have been those types of adjustments made, and the collective agreement, \$338,000 increase. There is some internal realignment too as well and reductions, for example, the Arctic Winter Games budget due to timing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for clarifying that further. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2024-25 main estimates indicate that the \$1.79

million budget for the Fire Prevention Strategy grants and contributions programs have been transferred from the Safety Services Division of the Infrastructure Branch to the Local Government Services Branch. Why was this responsibility transferred? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow my deputy to respond to the question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. The decision to transfer the Office of the Fire Marshal as well as the contribution program from the Infrastructure Branch to Local Government was meant to achieve a couple of objectives; the first one was that local firefighting is administered and managed by municipalities. They manage the assets, they often manage the payment for the staff for the fire departments, and they do take on ownership of the asset of the fire hall.

The second piece to that is that the Local Government Branch of the department is responsible for administering grants and contributions to municipalities and non-profit organizations across the territory, including the Municipal Training Organization, who provides firefighter training to all municipalities.

Two primary objectives there: one, to bring the fire departments in to the Local Government Branch because they're

being managed through the municipalities; and the second piece is to put one point of contact for municipalities and the MTO for grants and contributions programming to support fire prevention and firefighter training.

We think that consolidating those functions will be more efficient and clearer for our partners at the municipal level, as well as allow for additional agility within the budget process in-year in the event of emergencies or any training requirements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your response. If I'm mistaken, as I understood it, it is being transferred to the Local Government Branch. Let's say they need equipment for firefighting. When they require it, would they request it from you? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Again, if you will allow Deputy Seeley to elaborate. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The grant and contribution funding that has been transferred to Local Government would be administered through the Office of the Fire Marshal, no change there, to the Municipal Training Organization to provide training to firefighters across the territory in each of the hamlets, and from the Office of the Fire Marshal directly to

the hamlets for work that they need to do. There may be cases of unique prevention work going on in a particular community that the hamlet might apply to the Office of the Fire Marshal for. In other cases, there might be situations where they need equipment replaced in-year. They would be still accessed through the Office of the Fire Marshal within the Local Government Branch. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for clarifying that further. (interpretation ends) I have a few questions under the Emergency Management Division. Your department's draft 2024-25 main estimates indicate that the number of positions in the Nunavut Emergency Management Division is increasing by 63.6 percent, from 11.0 in the 2023-24 fiscal year to 18.0 in the 2024-25 fiscal year. What new positions are being created? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are no new positions; it is a transfer of the Nunavut Fire Marshal's Office under this division. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) How many of the division's current positions are vacant? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have as of November 30, 2023...sorry; if you will give me a second.

In Nunavut Emergency Management, there are five vacancies, and I stand to be corrected, but I think it's at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. With these positions having an impact in every community, are there attempts to fill the vacant positions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow Assistant Deputy Hickey to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hickey.

Ms. Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Yes, we are trying to make efforts to staff those critical positions. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Maybe, Ms. Hickey, if you could just outline a little bit more detail on how you're looking at filling those positions and what status some of the job actions are at. Ms. Hickey.

Ms. Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Most of them are with the Department of Human Resources through various stages, so either screening, interview, or posting stages right now. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The 2021-22 Annual Report under the *Emergency Measures Act* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 1, 2023. The 2022-23 annual report has not been tabled. When will the 2021-22 annual report be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We anticipate that report to be tabled in the fall. That's the target. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that clarification. (interpretation ends) Nunavut's *Emergency Measures Act* was passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2007. Sections 5 to 9 of the legislation provide for the preparation of emergency management programs on the part of government institutions and municipal councils. However, these sections of the legislation have not yet been brought into force. What is the government's current timetable for bringing these sections of the *Emergency Measures Act* into force? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We did engage a contractor to support this work and we're preparing for that. I believe that as of next month,

there is a final report that's to ensue. Based on that, it will help determine our next steps. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. Before I go back to Ms. Quassa, I'm going to recognize the clock and we will break for lunch and return at 1:30 with Ms. Quassa first in line. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 11:58 and resumed at 13:28*

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Good afternoon. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. We're here to deal with Community and Government Services under the Branch Summary of Local Government Services and we will just continue where we left off. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I say "good day" to everyone.

(interpretation ends) My next question is: as of today, which municipalities have not finalized and submitted their emergency management programs? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. None have outstanding plans, so all municipalities have submitted their emergency plans. Thank you.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's great news. (interpretation ends) On November 17, 2022 your department issued Request for Proposals 2022-69: Emergency Response and Business Continuity Planning. The request for proposals closed on December 15, 2022. As of today, what is the status of this work? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Hold on a second.

Sorry. If you allow, maybe you can get Deputy Seeley to respond. Thank you.

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

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The business continuity planning contract was awarded based on that RFP. The contractor has been working with each GN department and agency, all 15 of them, to work through a five-phase planning exercise that starts with impact assessment and a series of meetings with the department on what the impacts of interruptions to business continuity would be. After that, they move into post-work and then recovery strategies. The outcome of those four steps is to develop the actual business continuity plan.

Currently we've got two of the 15 that are in that final stage, four of the 15 are in the fourth stage, and the remainder are in the third stage, which is the post-work stage.

This project has taken longer than we originally anticipated and that's because of the amount of detail required and the level of information required from each of the departments to complete a detailed business continuity plan to inform emergency response and recovery to their business functions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) If I could just remind you about acronyms, RFP is request for proposals. Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for explaining that clearly. However, that is all the questions I have to this point, so I'll stop here for now. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Next name on my list is Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the topics I mentioned during my opening comments was the old residence and other GN surplus assets. I'm not sure if that is under this branch or the next, but if you allow, I would like to ask those questions now. The old residence was surplus a number of years ago and it has been sitting vacant and heated. The government is still paying bills for that asset. I would like to ask the minister for an update on that specific surplus asset. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) It is probably under infrastructure, but if the minister doesn't mind, then we can deal with it now. It's going to come up sooner or later. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that asset, we are still trying to determine what the best purpose for that is. I think there has been some interest on different agencies or at one point the City of Iqaluit was looking at it as well, but in terms of what we're going to with it, that's still to be determined. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing that question. Thank you, minister, for that information. I do have follow-up questions in regard to the old residence as well as other surplus assets. I'll return to that under the Infrastructure Branch.

One item under the Local Government Branch budget is the grants in lieu of taxes. I do note that the budget has a substantial increase due to the transfer of the budget and expenditure line from the NHC over to Community and Government Services, but I do note that there is a significant difference between the NHC's reduction and Community and Government Services' increase for that exact same line item. I would like to ask how that amount allocated to the Nunavut Housing Corporation's grant in lieu of taxes was determined. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: My apologies, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this accounting is being done through Community and Government Services. On top of the taxes that Community and Government

Services pays for, all the Nunavut Housing Corporation assets are now folded in with that, so that is added into the amounts here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Just a follow-up on that, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's budget for grants in lieu of taxes was \$4 million, which was reduced down to \$245,000. What I'm trying to get at is that the Nunavut Housing Corporation's grants in lieu of taxes budget decreased in excess of \$3.5 million, while Community and Government Services had increased less than \$2 million. I just want to get a better understanding of what is causing the difference between the two line items. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Hickee): Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since Iqaluit is tax based and we're looking only at transferring those taxes for Nunavut Housing Corporation assets here in Iqaluit, that's why there is only \$1.6 million in taxes reflected for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister Joanasié. I'm not sure I quite understand, but I will move on.

Looking at the grant in lieu of property taxes, the policy itself, which was recently revised as of November 2, 2023,

I was doing a comparison of the previous Grant in Lieu of Taxes Policy and the revised version. One item that stuck out to me was property eligible for grant in lieu of property taxes. In the old policy it states that staff housing owned and leased by the Nunavut Housing Corporation was eligible for the grant in lieu of property taxes, but the new policy is just Nunavut Housing Corporation-owned properties. The first question I would like to ask is why the change in that specific eligibility criteria. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow, I'll have the deputy dive into that point, please. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That change is...I'm just going to take this back a step.

The *Property Assessment and Taxation Act* determines taxing authorities within the territory. In this case, it was identified about a year ago that the city couldn't actually tax under the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, that those taxes couldn't be levied to the NHC. Further to that, we identified that the current Grants in Lieu of Taxes Policy didn't allow for CGS to issue grants in lieu of taxes to the City of Iqaluit on behalf of the NHC, so two things happened.

A discussion between the Department of Finance, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Community and Government Services took place. We

recognized that rather than having a stand-alone Grants in Lieu of Taxes Policy on behalf of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, it would be simpler to simply amend the Community and Government Services' Grants in Lieu of Taxes Policy to allow us to cover off the Nunavut Housing Corporation's grants to the city in lieu of their taxes, so two things happened there.

The Department of Finance transferred over approximately \$1.6 million to this department as part of this year's main estimates so that we would have the funding proportionate to last year's assessment levied toward the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Secondary to that, there is also the increase that Community and Government Services is paying the City of Iqaluit because of changes in the tax bill that the department gets from the city for all other GN-owned assets within the city of Iqaluit.

The combined total that you're seeing there is the \$1.6 million from the Nunavut Housing Corporation assets being charged towards CGS and then the additional tax bill to the department. I hope that answers the member's question. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Seeley. That does satisfy my question as well as assurance that the prior year tax rates were utilized to determine this amount.

One last question with regard to the policy itself, it states that the Department of Community and Government Services will work with the Deputy Minister of

the Department of Finance to “ensure that adequate funds are included in the budget process...” to cover the grant in lieu of taxes to ensure “...fair compensation for municipal services...” With that being said, it leaves me to believe that the budget will not be an issue.

The last question I would like to ask is: have there ever been challenges between the city and the government with regard to the grants in lieu of taxes, whether it's the assessed value or the final amount owing? To tack on one more somewhat related question, aside from the NHC, does Community and Government Services pay grants in lieu of taxes on the other corporations, such as Arctic College or the Qulliq Energy Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow again along the same lines of questioning to Deputy Seeley. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From time to time, there are disagreements on the assessed value of different asset types of Government of Nunavut assets located in the city of Iqaluit. There's an established process for complaints within the city's structure to deal with that, much like the Territorial Board of Revision and further to that, the tribunal at the territorial level. From time to time, those assessed values might require further discussion, particularly where new assets are being built.

I apologize; I may have missed some of the questions in there, but I think that as far as the other assets that the department currently pays the grants in lieu of taxes for, I believe that it's Nunavut Arctic College and the Nunavut Housing Corporation that are both covered under the Grants in Lieu of Taxes Policy. However, Qulliq Energy is a corporation that I don't believe is one of the groups that we pay for here in the city. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to just continue where Member Lightstone left off. I'm just curious as to why the decision was made to start paying grants in lieu of taxes for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the rationale behind a system that appeared to have been working where the Nunavut Housing Corporation just paid their taxes and now there is a middleperson doing it. Why was that decision made? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: My apologies. I understand that there was no mechanism for that to happen, so now this system that Community and Government Services pays the grants in lieu of taxes to the city is an established process and whereby now the taxes that the Nunavut Housing Corporation pays are funnelled through here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I'm not sure I understood, but it almost sounds

like the minister said that there was no mechanism for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to pay their taxes, therefore they weren't paying any taxes to the City of Iqaluit, so therefore it's being funnelled through Community and Government Services for grants in lieu of taxes. Explanation or clarification? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow Mr. Seeley to make the clarification. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. On one condition, that he slows down a little bit for the interpreters. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nunavut Housing Corporation had been paying its taxes to the city, as the member pointed out. Under section 73 of the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, it was identified that the Nunavut Housing Corporation property should have been exempt from city taxation. At that point, the decision needed to be made to either cut that revenue stream from the taxes for the Nunavut Housing Corporation's significant portfolio here in the community or to find a different mechanism to continue paying those taxes off the GN to the city.

At that point, to continue that same level of taxation, the decision was made to incorporate the Nunavut Housing Corporation as one of the eligible asset classes under the Community and Government Services' Grants in Lieu of Taxes Policy. It was that ineligibility under the Nunavut Housing Corporation that led to the transfer of the

responsibility over to Community and Government Services. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will that be done for the Qulliq Energy Corporation? I'm not that familiar with how corporations work, but Nunavut Housing is a corporation and Qulliq is a corporation. Would they also be exempt and their taxes will have to be funnelled through Community and Government Services for grants in lieu of taxes? I imagine that their power plant is valued pretty high. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. As we're still on the same topic and line of question, I'll go directly to Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a series of exemptions under the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*. Qulliq Energy or its subsidiaries could be eligible under that same exemption. At this time, we have not been approached by the corporation for any kind of change in the payment mechanisms. The city has the taxation revenue for the footprint of their assets here within the city, so it could, but at this point, it's not something that has been advanced to the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Staying on the grants in lieu of taxes, the minister or Mr. Seeley stated that sometimes there are discussions on the value of an asset to get its valuation for grants in lieu of taxes. I'll take the port for example. I believe it was \$80 million something. Is

it the value that is put for grants in lieu of taxes or does the assessor come and tell what the value is? If we can get an explanation on how a value of a government asset is figured out. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's based on the improvements made to that piece of land. It's assessed that way. I don't know if that answers the member's question. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if the minister or the officials would have this, but the contract for the port was \$83 million or \$86 million, so that is the amount of improvement that was put in it. Would that be the value for grants in lieu of taxes? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Can we get how it's assessed for value then? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understand it right, it would be any buildings on the property. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister, I'm not sure if you do not understand the question. The calculation on the valuation of a property on the improvements that are made on the property is not a budgeted amount; it's a valued amount. When you mention just buildings on the property, there are other infrastructures in the port, as an example, that would contribute to the value of that property. I think what the member is looking for is a breakdown of how that calculation is made and how that valuation is determined. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The mill rate is the total property tax revenue requirements of the municipal taxing authority for the property type divided by the total assessed value of all properties of this type on which property taxes and grants in lieu of property taxes may be collected in the municipal taxation area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. What is the assessed value of the port here? There are no buildings on it. There are, obviously, improvements, so it has a value, but I'm just trying to figure out how is the value of something calculated. Who does the calculation? I know that Mr. Seeley said that sometimes there are issues between the city and the government having issues about the value of something. Using the port for example, there are no buildings on there, but there were \$83 million or \$86 million spent to improve the location. What is the value for the mill rate purposes? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if you will allow Deputy Seeley to chime in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The property assessments are done through contracted services around the territory and the greater taxation area. Community and Government Services manages a contract with an assessment firm that provides those assessment values and those are, of course, open to challenge by any property owner or lessee. Here in the city, it is managed internally.

I think that the subtlety in relation to the Iqaluit deep sea port is that it was built on Commissioner's Land and it's not an asset type identified within the GLT policy. Because of that, only the buildings on the port site, while substantial in size, only the buildings are incorporated into that assessed value. In 2022-23 that comprised a total value of about \$4.7 million of the value of the new buildings that were built on that site, which would have informed the total change in the grants in lieu of taxes payable to the city in that year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If my memory is correct, wasn't there a bill in this House last year where the entire Commissioner's Lands were turned over to the municipalities? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not all Commissioner's Lands were transferred to municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Staying on the topic there, grants in lieu of taxes is only in Iqaluit because it's a tax-based municipality. What is the value of the old res. there for the mill rate purposes? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: My apologies. We don't have that with us here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Just to confirm then, it is a building, it is a derelict building, not sure what happened, but it's an asset that grants in lieu of taxes are being paid on currently to the city. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Going on to a different topic, we have seen and heard here a few places where, unfortunately, fire has destroyed a community hall in Naujaat, it also destroyed a community hall in Sanikiluaq and damaged the arena.

I know the hamlets are covered under their own insurance plan, but I'm going to assume that Community and Government Services works with them on replacing the asset. Are the hamlets strictly responsible to rebuild their assets through their insurance or is there some assistance that Community and Government Services gets or is it on a case-by-case basis?

I know that the hamlet office in Sanikiluaq which blew away was a government tender and project to replace it, but I have never heard anything about the community hall in Naujaat or the community hall in Sanikiluaq. If we can get an explanation on when and what criteria where the government takes over replacing a municipal asset that is covered under their insurance. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the level of questioning from the member. I know that the municipalities have a high level of interest around this as well. If you will allow, maybe I'll have Deputy Seeley to explain the inner workings of that process on municipally owned assets and the insurance coverage that they have in that program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Go ahead, Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for this question. Given losses like the one in Naujaat, I think it is a timely one. In cases where an asset is lost in the case of a situation like a fire and that asset is owned and insured by the municipality, the

municipality works directly through their insurance policy, which is referred to as a reciprocal, to get coverage. They can then receive the funding to identify project managers, site assessors, and general contractors to actually manage from start to finish the replacement of their hall.

The most recent scenario that we have seen like this was the loss of the parking garage in Baker Lake about six years ago now. In that scenario, the Hamlet of Baker Lake managed from start to finish the replacement of that garage. In a situation like Naujaat, not that dissimilar, they would work directly with the finances that they get from the insurance coverage to manage the replacement of the hall. In the scenario that the member mentioned, in the case of Sanikiluaq, it was a little bit different in that it wasn't a municipally-owned asset that was damaged in the storm. It was a space that the hamlet leased or rented. The new hamlet office in Sanikiluaq is being managed, planning and design through to construction, by the department because it is a capital project being managed by the GN. There are two differences there.

To the member's second question about what is the difference or at what point does the department take a bigger role or engage with the municipality, it depends a lot on the needs of that municipality and the sophistication of the project and the asset that they do need to replace. In the case of something like a parking garage, a relatively simple construction, in the case of Baker Lake, that municipality was able to manage the replacement on its own. Perhaps in a more complex replacement job like a community hall, the department is of

course available to work with the municipality to identify the supports it needs to get that important piece of infrastructure replaced. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Thank you or the explanation as the hamlets should be aware and know what their roles and responsibilities are when unfortunate things like this happen.

Going on to the business plan here, there are lot of searches and rescues that go on. I know there's a budget, but I have never heard of a search not being done because there are budgetary restraints. How much of the search and rescue budget is usually used up in a year? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: If you will give me a moment.

My apologies, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the question. The budget for that is typically used up and in cases where there is additional need for air support, for example, the department does try to supplement that on a case-by-case basis to fund for search and rescue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. I know the firefighters in all the communities are all volunteers and they all do great work when they are called upon. I was just curious about...long time ago, there used be where the firemen would go into houses and make sure that they had fire

extinguishers in all the houses, whether they were privately owned or public housing, and look at their fire extinguisher and see if it was up to date. I myself have not seen that done in Arviat in a very long time. Are there any policies about where the firemen should be checking fire extinguishers within their communities? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. That is initiated at the local level and managed there, but the Office of the Fire Marshal also does inspections and we do try to keep on top of those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be just a statement. I think it would be good for the firemen in communities to go into all the houses like they used to, just to make sure that there are fire extinguishers and that the fire extinguishers are operational, that smoke detectors are there and that they work because we want to make sure that, God forbid, someone's house goes on fire, they can either be alarmed by the smoke detector early or shut it off with the fire extinguisher. (interpretation) That's it. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on the business plan, perhaps regarding the (interpretation ends) Community Planning and Lands Division. (interpretation) I know that we have no

employed people working in this field in the communities and when this is not being operated at the local level due to lack of capacity of hamlet councils for community land preparation, what happens there? Do we use the government employees to work on that? That's my first question; I'll start with that. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the municipalities don't have an employee in that area, we have training programs that are made available through the Municipal Training Organization to start planning and how the land will be used. Usually the municipality takes the lead on that, but we do have staff that can provide support if there was a request made by the municipality. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for your response. The reason why I'm asking this question is that the land lessees, such as us homeowners, were given over \$2,000 that was paid late and due to lack of capacity, I'm sure the payments are late. This is a serious issue, so I urge your department to consider this very carefully. We need a land planner in our communities. That's just a comment.

Moving on to another question, in your business plan, (interpretation ends) Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Tax Relief, (interpretation) something that is related to that, (interpretation ends) it's a burden. (interpretation) I

mean, (interpretation ends) in the area by reducing the municipal tax, it's a tax burden on the owner who is occupying the home. My question is: (interpretation) when an Inuk homeowner passes away, who is responsible for taking care of that before the Public Trustee takes it on? Do they have to collect all the payments that they have to do? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Tax Relief (interpretation) is only for Iqaluit residents as the city collects taxes from homeowners. To date, that's how it is, but I believe I have to get further information and understanding of how the process is outside of Iqaluit, but I can look into that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe this is a very good question that I would like to pose. When homeowners pass on, and I have mentioned this quite a few times in the House in regard to the Public Trustee because their work is very behind, the property tax people or the hamlet councils, I'm sure, are given funding to pay for the bills. I would like to hear more about it because it requires more work. I would like to hear about it because there have been some concerns about those, that there are empty units and they have to pay for the bills and they're still under the Public Trustee. I hope that's understandable, Mr. Chairman. I'll leave it at that.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for her comments because she has given us some ideas to consider. The Public Trustee and the Department of Finance might be responsible for this, so we will work closely with them and consider the aspects of what the member has talked about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you. I want to move on to another question under the (interpretation ends) Municipal Funding Program. (interpretation) According to your main estimates, if they go ahead, whoever applies first gets the first right when they apply for funding, (interpretation ends) for allocating the “core funding that assists the community governments to deliver municipal programs and services.” My question is: is it a first come, first served core funding? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The municipalities receive their funding annually. It’s not given through an application form. We just increase the funding for that according to the formula. I hope that’s understandable, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do they have the

same percentage for all of the hamlet councils? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The formula will be used. All the communities differ from each other and the infrastructure is reviewed and the formula was set up. We work with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. We won’t require applications, as it is just added to the operations and maintenance funding for municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that. That’s very good to hear. I’m sure that the hamlet councils will be very happy to hear about this and I understand that they will be happy about this.

Moving on to another question, in your business plan, (interpretation ends) under the Nunavut Emergency Management Division, (interpretation) this is regarding (interpretation ends) “modern alert and tracking devices such as Spot units and satellite phones...” (interpretation) With that, I know that the population is growing in the communities of Nunavut. Do you monitor to make sure that we are up to date? I hope that’s clear. That’s it.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think they are called “uvaniippungaarutiit” in some communities, the SPOT devices.

Sometimes it's obvious that the SPOT devices are made available in every community. For example, when the HTOs and other local organizations are provided with these devices and if there is a shortage, we can be notified and sometimes we have individuals who are lost. We would like to make these devices more available to individuals who are involved in search and rescue operations, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for clarifying that for us listening here. I would like to move on, in the same page, concerning the Fire Prevention Strategy Grant and Contribution. With that, perhaps I'm asking a capital question, but you can correct me. In some communities, for large vehicles like fire trucks, when you have fire safety here, I'm asking the question, when you have one large entrance and a small door but with no extra door and the need for fire prevention, have entrances been considered if any new buildings are going to be constructed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the fire department and fire trucks and the garage used, CGS always plans in advance and each community is looked at and what assets they have, if they are old and whatnot. These are reviewed annually and we try to plan ahead to access, perhaps, capital funds.

Regarding the entrance and the garage doors and how they are factored in when

buildings are constructed, they are constructed under the National Building Code and it will continue to be so and that's part of the review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I agree and I also believe the use there, but many of the garages are pretty old, mind you.

I would like to move on again and as my questions are running out, under Priorities (2024-25) on page 207, the second-last bullet states, (interpretation ends) "Commence review of *Hamlets Act* and *Cities, Towns and Villages Act* to highlight key focal points to consider during the consultation process."

(interpretation) My question is: are communities going to be visited? Where and when will this be initiated? Perhaps in the new fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In areas where we are reviewing the Acts and looking ahead, with our partner, the Nunavut Association of Municipalities, we want to move forward with this and look at different organizations in Nunavut towards that. I can't say which communities will be visited, but the Nunavut Association of Municipalities will definitely be involved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you. Is

it via public meetings or with the hamlet councils only? That's my last question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the intent to change several Acts, we try to visit the communities as the government and when we solicit views from the public, it will be the process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. Your department's 2022-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year was to "Continue to work with lead agencies and other stakeholders in the development of a solid waste strategy and solid waste management regulations." Your department's 2023-26 business plan indicated that although a regionalization study has been completed, "Further progress on this project is delayed due to capacity restraints held by partner stakeholders." Who are those partner stakeholders and as of today, what is the status of this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working on this and we do have other partners that we're trying to work with and are continuing the work. It includes the departments of Health and Environment. We do want to make headway, but those are the two

government departments that we're working with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the status of this work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. If you will allow Mr. Seeley to respond on that. Thank you.

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

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The status on both of these interdepartmental initiatives is that they're moving ahead. In the case of a solid waste management strategy, determining what the regulations will be will determine what the build standards will be for new solid waste sites in the territory. In anticipation of those regulations being developed, it has led to some delays, I suppose, on the design of some new solid waste sites.

Secondary from that is managing the existing solid waste sites, cleaning them up or remediating some of the sites, putting in some lined cells in specific areas of the existing waste sites, and those sorts of things. It also includes some discussion on things like backhaul strategies and, perhaps, incineration on a small scale. Again, until those regulations are in place to inform design standards, we are still in the working phase to inform the design and the planning process.

On the drinking water piece, it is a more eminent and daily concern than the solid waste; far more pressing. The Drinking Water Strategy does detail, I think, a multi-point set of goals for us to pursue as far as the capacity to produce and sustain safe drinking water in each community. Our department is currently working on an action plan to address the operations of CGS-owned and operated water treatment plants.

We will continue to work with the Department of Health on Drinking Water Regulations in the coming months and years. This will be ongoing work as regulatory requirements change, depending on source water conditions and treatment technology. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When do you expect for this work to be done, to get it rolling and such? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. As it's a follow-up to the previous question, I'll go directly to Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This work is underway, it is rolling, and it will be ongoing work. The completion of a document like a strategy simply informs our next steps and actions. Similar to the Drinking Water Strategy, as soon as there's a deliverable prepared and suitable for sharing with members, we will be sure to make sure that you have that information straight away. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would that be this calendar year, perhaps, or next calendar year? Do you have a definitive date or guesstimate? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: That's the official term we're going to use now, "guesstimates"? Again, because it's related to the previous question, I'll go directly to Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will commit to providing ongoing updates on our progress this year and providing the final documents when they are completed. It's too early at this point to know what "finished" will look like on interdepartmental documents like this, particularly given the regulatory piece. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Getting back to the solid waste portion, you mentioned the partner stakeholders being Health and Environment. I'm wondering: are you also working with each individual hamlet with regard to their solid waste facility because they're the ones that know or they have a pretty good idea of how good or bad their garbage dumps are or solid waste area, I should say? Are you working with each hamlet and how often are you communicating with them on this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Again, as it's a follow-up, Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that follow-up. Two different things here. In developing strategic documents and frameworks, we

work with our interdepartmental partners and other agencies and consult with groups like the Nunavut Association of Municipalities and definitely open to input from municipalities.

On site-specific projects to be located within a specific community, that engagement and that consultation with that municipality is one to one and very regular, straight from planning through to design through to the solid waste site management plan once it is commissioned and operational. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Seeley mentioned one thing that I want to bring up, the subject of a backhaul of materials that could, perhaps, be recycled or reused somewhere outside of Nunavut. I have noticed in Baker Lake, since the mine opened up, there have been a lot of very good disposable income, but with that comes new toys. I'm talking about pickup trucks, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and whatnot and eventually they do end up in our solid waste facilities. It could be used or recycled, perhaps. Are there any talks of sending backhauling materials down south to recycling companies, even if it's at a break-even point where we don't make any money, as long as we get it out of the territory and off our lands? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do on a case-by-case basis, looking at these options, and I understand that some municipalities are

taking it upon themselves to do some of this work. We want to support that and I believe around volume, too, that could play a factor in making the arrangements for which of the... I'll just stop it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: If I may, Mr. Simailak, a number of years back, Community and Government Services purchased a metal shredder and was moving it around to different communities to do just exactly what Mr. Simailak is bringing up. Maybe if the minister could update us on the status of that project, how many communities it has been to, and where it's anticipated to be going next and where it is now. Minister.

Hon. David Joanasié: Mr. Chairman, if you will clarify, was it the baler or the shredder? The shredder? Members, I have a little bit of information from since it was placed in my constituency in Kinngait. I believe it's still there, but in terms of whether it was transported to another community, I believe it has not. We can bring forward some information around that project and provide an update to members here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that. If I recall correctly, it was brought up when the school had the catastrophic fire to get rid of a lot of the metal from the remnants of that piece of infrastructure. As we all know, anytime there is equipment that goes out to communities, the longer it sits there, the less opportunity it has to be used again. It deteriorates or gets to a point where there have to be some major repairs.

The whole purpose, if I recall correctly on that, was to have that piece of

equipment rotating through different communities, through different sealift seasons to be able to get rid of metal in the community. I think it's very important that these types of projects don't drop off the radar of the department because, again, that piece of equipment has probably been sitting there for four or five years now and if it gets broken or deteriorates to the point where it's not usable, then what's the point of doing these types of projects?

Sorry to interrupt your line of questioning, Mr. Simailak. Please proceed.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister and deputy minister. You mentioned regarding backhaul that it's on a case-by-case basis. Are you saying that you wait for a hamlet to ask for assistance in backhauling materials, or what do you mean by case-by-case basis? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When a landfill is experiencing capacity issues and if there's the type of material or waste that's there, again, we work with any municipality that would like to try to backhaul or remove that waste from their site. Maybe I'll use an example. I think it was the Department of Environment around batteries; the corrosive material. I think there's a program there that hamlets initiate and/or try to get and send it out safely so that it doesn't pose further risk to the community's landfill site. We try to do those types of things and again, case by case, but if a hamlet says, "We would like to try to get this

out of the way in our landfill," we will look at that and work to see if we can make it happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My personal opinion is that I think it should actually be part of the Solid Waste Strategy. Every community has all these old vehicles, batteries, lubricants, oils, and whatnot that could eventually contaminate our lands and waters. I'm surprised that it's actually not part of the strategy. I would just strongly encourage you to include it in there and make it a part of it.

We do have good corporate citizens that could help out Nunavut. A number of years ago, Agnico Eagle actually transported 13 whole 20-footlong sea cans of old solid waste down south just out of Baker Lake in one summer. That's in every community where it could be done and I would strongly encourage you to do that.

I'll move on to my next question, unless the minister wants to comment on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe Baker Lake is fortunate to have that and the corporate citizens offered to do that. Unfortunately, every community doesn't have that level of either mineral or business presence. If the member can help us convince those corporate citizens to do that across our communities, I

would sure appreciate their support in that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the minister is saying that he will fly me down to the North West Company's headquarters to go do his work, I could do that if you want me to. I'll give it a good chance there, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is putting words in my mouth, maybe to put it in a sense, but I think we're kind of on the same page, though, that we're trying to work best for our communities on their solid waste capacity issues. If there are other partners that can play a part in addressing those needs, then we would like to talk to them as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was just a suggestion to put it in there. The department knows who all the corporate citizens are and whatnot. It's worth discussing with them. Calm Air, Canadian North, they could fly stuff down at a discounted freight, maybe. There are other options to look at, but I'll move on to my next line of questioning, Mr. Chairman.

Regarding search and rescue, does every community have a search and rescue organization and are you up to date in keeping them informed on what's available to help out with search and

rescue operations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. As I understand it, locals around search and rescue is locally driven and as I understand it, some communities have an established group and some are more of an ad hoc and rely on either the hunters and trappers association, the Canadian Rangers, or what have you, but I think every community does have some form of search and rescue group and how they can respond to incidents is dependent on the resources that they have at the local level. Of course, we do try to provide assistance where they need it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the department reach out to each hamlet to ensure that these services or assistance is available into every single hamlet in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do work with each municipality and all municipalities around this and that if there is an area that they need or would like to see more on around search and rescue, and whether it's training or other resources that are necessary for a search and rescue group. We do have a policy that is under review and we will want to improve upon that policy and working with communities to ensure that they have something in place for them to be

able to activate in cases where a search is required. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My question is on human resources for the operations and maintenance division, including the PPD. I'm just wondering if there are any staff vacancies in the regional hubs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Sorry, Mr. Sammurtok. Can I just get clarification there? Are you asking under the PPD or are you asking under the current page that we're on, Local Government Services? Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Local Government Services. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification because I heard otherwise as well. For local government, as of November 30, 2023, the vacancy is at 35 or so person years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question, I believe. When will all these vacant positions be filled? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope they can be filled as soon as possible and similar to a question that was posed earlier, these are in different stages in job staffing action, whether it's interview or screening or being open for competition. I think it's up to 38 if I'm not mistaken, not 35. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my opening comments, I did identify a matter regarding out-of-territory work, which I intended to bring up over the Corporate Services Branch of the Human Resources Division, but as the majority of the department's positions are under the current and the following branches, I think the questions still remain relevant.

As I indicated in my opening comments, the government's response to Member Savikataaq's questions related to remote out-of-territory work. He indicated that there were a significant number of employees working outside of the territory and the majority of those employees were working for Community and Government Services. However, in the notes provided by the Department of Community and Government Services, the information that was provided was quite out of date.

I would like to ask the minister if he would be able to provide an update on the status currently or as recently as possible how many employees within Community and Government Services have been approved to work remotely outside of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow Deputy Seeley to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. I understand that there have been a couple of reports issued at different times, I guess, with some different metrics reported in them. I think that as we move into this new era of increased request for remote work, we will get into more of a cycle of regular monitoring and reporting of these things to provide consistent information within a span of time.

To clarify, the teleworking arrangements that are currently approved for CGS staff, we have approximately three staff currently on approved teleworking arrangements. In addition to that, we do receive requests from time to time for staff to work for a time from another community and those requests are all reviewed under the teleworking policy directive.

Separate from that, the Remote Hiring Policy direction does provide specific positions that could be hired remotely. We have not advanced that initiative as a department yet, and then separate from that, we do have a variety of contractors under contract by the department and some of them do work outside of GN offices, as many contractors do.

As far as departmental staff actually working on teleworking arrangements, the current number is quite low. That does change, though, when family

circumstances or other circumstances come up that justify a staff person working outside of the office for a period of time. The current arrangement under any approved teleworking is that they will be called back this summer for review. That will be the end, the latest date. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Seeley. I have learned a new term, “teleworking arrangements.”

Looking back at the information that was provided by the Department of Community and Government Services, there were 84 employees approved to work remotely outside of the territory. When did these 84 employees return to work in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will again allow Mr. Seeley to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify, that number sounds a lot like from the COVID era, when we reported on staff who were working during the time that they were in isolation hubs on the way back, in or out of the territory, whatever direction they were going, and some other arrangements where people are required to isolate, perhaps, in the territory. That reporting, those metrics, and what was actually being measured in that report, I think, gave us some numbers that were

not very high during that time frame. I think that our more recent numbers are substantially lower than that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Seeley. I would like to return to the previous comment made about the number of contractors employed by the department. I do understand that there are very difficult positions to fill that require stringent qualifications, and under extenuating circumstances, governments do tend to contract those out. However, there has to be a point where it must become an issue and it's unclear when to draw that line, but the next question that I would like to ask is: how many contractors are currently employed within the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow Assistant Deputy Hickey to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Go ahead, please, Ms. Hickey.

Ms. Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. We currently have 49 contract resources working in the department. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Ms. Hickey. Forty-nine contract positions. Can you provide us some examples of some of the higher-end contracts, what sort of worker are they contracted to do, and over the 12-month duration, what is

the total cost of these higher-end contracts? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you and apologies, Mr. Chairman. Some contracts are not necessarily filling for a position *per se*, but more so and I'll use information management and information technology as an example regarding maintaining our network security. There's a contract resource that could be in place for that purpose, so it wouldn't necessarily be a full-time job in that sense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page J-6. Local Government Services. Amount being requested to be appropriated. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$103,871,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sorry; just one moment, please.

Just before we go to the next page, we're going to take a 15-minute break and I will ask that all members proceed directly to the Members' Lounge immediately. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 14:55 and resumed at 15:36

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order, please. Thank you. Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress and it's not subject to debate. All those in favour. Motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. The witnesses can be excused. Thank you.

Speaker: Item 21. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been reviewing Bill 37 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Joanasie. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

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

Item 22. Third Reading of Bills. Item 23. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a meeting of the MSB at four o'clock in the Tuktu Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for March 4:

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. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 30 – 6(2)
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 37
 - Bill 38
 - Bill 39
 - Bill 40
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 4, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 15:40*

