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HANSARD

Monday, April 25, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2022 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Highways and Public Works; Environment
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Minister of Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, April 25, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper.
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Could we please welcome to the gallery today for our tribute to Agnes Seitz: Agnes's partner, Gertie Scharrer, Al Foster and Claire Desmarais, Linnea Rowlett, Sue Meikle, Michelle Christensen and Graham Van Tighem, Jess Sellars, Elena Robertson, Brigitte Parker and Brad Barton, Lisa Chevalier and Rob Scoble, Shiela Alexandrovich, Linda Anderson, Astrid Vogt, Michelle Clusiau, Dawn and Dave Bouquot, Werner Rhein, Michelle Harper, Christel and Peter Percival, and Karen McKenna — if we could welcome them to the gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I ask my colleagues to help me welcome today Jillian Hardie, who is the executive director of Opportunities Yukon, and Cynthia Lyslo, the manager of Residential Services. They are here for the ministerial statement today. Welcome.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Agnes Seitz

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Every Yukon community is unique. They are full of character and characters, and the community of Mount Lorne is, I think, the earthiest of our Yukon communities.

Late last summer, Mount Lorne unexpectedly lost Agnes Seitz. If you had to pick one person over the past decades who was at the heart of the earthy community of Mount Lorne, it would be Agnes, so it is with sadness and respect that I rise today on behalf of the government and the Official Opposition and all the folks of beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes to commemorate Agnes for how she helped grow the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, you may know Agnes, or at least her voice, as she was, for many, many years, CBC's community reporter for Mount Lorne. Every few months, CBC would have Agnes on the morning show to talk about what was happening in Mount Lorne, and it always seemed that there was a lot happening in Mount Lorne.

If you met Agnes in person, the first thing you would see was a smiling, welcoming face and greying, curly hair. You would probably have been greeted with some delicious local food made with ingredients out of the garden, presented to you

at the community centre — maybe even Agnes' famous German chocolate cake.

Agnes ran the community centre. This was why Mount Lorne had so much going on. It was because Agnes was amazing at coordinating volunteers, involving youth, and building community. I met Agnes when I was running the Marsh Lake Community Centre, and we worked together to coordinate events across the Southern Lakes.

Organizing a community centre is one of the toughest cat-herding jobs I know, and Agnes was the executive director of the Lorne Mountain Community Association for a decade and a half. She was so organized, so welcoming, and so efficient. To say that she will be missed is a bit of an understatement. Whether it was TED Talks or fiddle dances, the Mount Lorne ski club annual loppet complete with cookie medals, Agnes made it happen. Whether it was wellness cafés, community summer markets, Canada Day celebrations, youth cooking classes, or the always fun New Year's Eve skate where they would turn off the lights and give everyone sparklers and it felt you were a bit like shooting stars in the Yukon sky, Agnes always made it happen. Whether it was youth astronomy, the delectable Ingestible Festival, Ember Fire Academy training, paper lantern walks, craft fairs, or a forest skating path, Agnes made it happen.

Last fall, Agnes was awarded the 2021 community recreation leadership award posthumously. Al Foster and Lyndi Proudfoot accepted the award on her behalf. As Lyndi said — and I quote: "She has shaped the Mount Lorne community as the water has shaped our valleys. She will be deeply missed by her community and the Yukon as a whole."

Agnes and her partner Gertie lived off-grid in a little cabin down the Annie Lake Road. Their simple homestead was surrounded by a garden — a garden that, in fact, spilled into the boreal forest. Agnes loved growing things. She was a proponent of permaculture and she was working with the boreal as a way of hosting and promoting more edible things and living respectfully on and with the land she loved.

Agnes was a master gardener. She grew sorrel, burdock, mint, and nettles, gooseberries, currants, haskaps, and saskatoons, sour cherries, pin cherries, Siberian pear, and Manchurian plum.

Agnes and Gertie partnered with the Yukon Literacy Coalition to create a learning garden to teach Yukoners to plant, care for, and harvest from a garden alongside workshops and teachings about traditional healing plants. My wife, Susan, and I were enlisted as volunteers to help build the Mount Lorne community teaching garden just behind the community centre. The last time I saw Agnes, she and Gertie were at the community centre garden. I remember that a few kids were there doing crafts — making hearts, I think — to decorate the garden fencing out of material salvaged from the free store at the Mount Lorne transfer station.

Agnes asked me to look at funding models for the Agriculture branch to support community gardens. Agnes made it happen.

Mr. Speaker, this past Friday was Earth Day and I find it so very fitting to commemorate Agnes today, given her deep love for growing things, sustenance, and a nurturing planet.

In honour of Agnes, I would like to read a short poem with some small adaptation by Marianne Williamson: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of [creation]. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you ... We were born to make manifest the glory of [creation] that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

Mr. Speaker, Agnes will be missed by Gertie and by the Yukon.

With apologies for my German: Wir haben unser Herz in Mount Lorne verloren.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of my colleagues and myself and the Yukon NDP just to add a couple more thoughts. It’s a true honour to remember the beautiful force of Agnes Seitz and the impact that she has left behind.

Anyone who ever had the pleasure of meeting Agnes will have distinct memories of her because she was memorable — from her contagious laughter to her love of community. My colleague’s earliest memory of Agnes and Gertie was from when they first opened the Cranberry Bistro and of the blueberry scones. She still talks about those scones.

We know that Agnes had a lasting impact on those around her. Moments in the garden, the kitchen, or over laughter and food — each memory that she helped create are all dear.

Thank you, Agnes, for sharing so much of yourself. Our condolences to Gertie and to everyone who misses her.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling a page from the Conference Board of Canada’s website from June 18, 2020. It notes the Yukon having the strongest growth in more than a decade.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I have for tabling, pursuant to section 39(4), *Environment Act — Performance Audit 2015-2018*. This audit will be available on www.yukon.ca as well.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Pursuant to section 55(2) of the act, I have for tabling a review of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* interim progress report.

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a letter from the Mayor of Carmacks, dated April 4, 2022, regarding the Carmacks grader station remediation.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the *Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees*, dated April 25, 2022.

Speaker: Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 12

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I have for presentation the following petition that reads:

This petition of the undersigned shows:

THAT residents of the Raven’s Ridge and Fish Lake areas of Whitehorse are growing increasingly concerned about road safety on the Alaska Highway in the Rabbit’s Foot Canyon area;

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Yukon to:

(1) reduce the speed limit in the areas of Raven’s Ridge and Fish Lake Road from 90 kilometres per hour to 70 kilometres per hour;

(2) install signage and physical barriers at each end marking the turning lanes; and

(3) add southbound right hand turning lanes off the Alaska Highway at the Fish Lake Road and Raven’s Ridge intersections.

I would note that this has 71 signatures.

Speaker: Are there any further petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to respond to the 110-percent increase of harassment, vandalism, and violence against Jews in British Columbia and Yukon identified in the *Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2021* by condemning anti-Semitism and all forms of religious discrimination.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to work with the agriculture sector to respond to the closure of the abattoir operated by YBAR Meats by finding solutions to provide year-round abattoir services and increase livestock processing capacity.

Ms. Tredger: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Village of Carmacks to implement their official community plan by:

(1) planning for the soonest possible removal of the decommissioned Government of Yukon Carmacks grader station; and

(2) planning for the timely environmental remediation of the grader station site.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to subsidize the cost of period products for Yukoners in need by providing free menstrual products in all Yukon government-owned buildings.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support food security in the Yukon by:

(1) ensuring a more robust mobile abattoir capable of travelling to all Yukon communities multiple times per year for inspected, certified slaughter;

(2) create transport incentives to help bolster sales of inspected Yukon-grown meat products between communities;

(3) increase access to resources for equipment and training to support food-safe and ethical on-site slaughter; and

(4) work with local meat producers and abattoirs to ensure the viability of year-round slaughter.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Opportunities Yukon Cornerstone project

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today to speak about the Cornerstone project by Challenge Disability Resource Group, now known as Opportunities Yukon.

Opportunities Yukon is a not-for-profit organization that provides employment, housing, and inclusive programs to people with diverse needs and abilities.

Their recent name change signals a shift to recognize the positive nature of their work. Words matter, and this organization has taken that to heart and is embracing their positive potential as Opportunities Yukon. Their people-centred approach to their services makes sure that their clients have the tools they need to live fulfilling, rewarding lives.

Opportunities Yukon is growing and integrating its services into our community like never before, in partnership with the Yukon government. Between 2017 and 2019, the Yukon Housing Corporation provided \$1.9 million to purchase the land for the project, as well as for the project's design and development.

Between 2020 and 2022, Yukon government provided an additional \$5.77 million in capital grants and \$3 million in loans to support the project's construction.

The Cornerstone project is designed to be a unique mixed-use, 53-unit building. Forty-six of the units will be affordable rental units and seven will be market housing units. There is also commercial space on the ground floor. The intent behind the commercial space is to provide business opportunities for local not-for-profit organizations. This concept presents an opportunity to involve the greater community and speaks to the collaborative nature of this project.

Our government has supported Opportunities Yukon with this initiative for several years, and we are excited to see it take shape in the downtown core. Completion of construction is imminent, with the first residents planning to move in next month.

In addition to providing funding and support for the new physical space, our government supports Opportunities Yukon programming. The Department of Health and Social Services works with Opportunities Yukon to support clients and we look forward to continued collaboration on a range of programs and services. The Cornerstone project is a unique mixed-use property that represents our continued commitment to collaborating with local organizations to promote, protect, and enhance the well-being of Yukoners and improve our communities.

Thank you to the staff of Opportunities Yukon for their work on this project and the work that they do every day to inspire and make a difference in the lives of Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to begin by congratulating Opportunities Yukon on the construction and completion of a much-needed supportive housing project for the Yukon. The Cornerstone project at the end of Main Street will provide 45 supportive housing units to the market. Our caucus and staff had the chance to tour this beautiful building late last month, and it seems to be a very well-designed and well-planned structure. It will provide stable and supportive housing for tenants in need, as well as office space for non-profit groups, and, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners are looking forward to eating at the new Bridges Café.

We are pleased that this new facility is ready to serve the community. However, the minister's statement today has drawn attention to a number of concerning elements of this project. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this Liberal budget was out of date before it was even tabled. We have demonstrated, earlier in this Sitting, how the Liberals failed to introduce measures that help Yukoners with the massive inflation spike that is seriously harming the finances of Yukon families. In fact, the Premier failed to even mention inflation even once in his budget speech, but the Cornerstone project is another example of how this Liberal budget is already stale-dated. We were surprised that there is no budgeted funding for the operation of the new Cornerstone supported living programs. During the tour of the building, we learned that the government is negotiating with Opportunities Yukon to provide funding to supply the new programming.

So, it appears that this Liberal government funded the capital build on an important new piece of infrastructure, but failed to budget the O&M, purposefully opening this year. We

are disappointed that the minister felt it was appropriate to do a ministerial statement on this project and simply re-announce details of the capital investment, instead of bringing news of the O&M funding.

As the minister noted, clients are supposed to move into this facility next month. You would certainly expect that Opportunities Yukon would be provided funding certainty well in advance of the May 1 move-in date.

So, can the minister tell us if there is a funding agreement in place, and if not, when can the clients moving into Opportunities Yukon expect those services to be available?

In closing, we are supportive of this new project that will provide homes for Yukoners who are in need of supportive housing, and we want to thank all those involved from Opportunities Yukon, the planners, and construction crews for this work on this project.

Ms. Tredger: The Yukon NDP caucus and I were lucky enough to tour Cornerstone both during construction and then again last month, and both times, we were blown away. The building has been designed with such thought and care to create beautiful, accessible apartments and vibrant community spaces. Every detail, from the stovetops to the shape of the balconies, is intentional and well-thought-out. A piece that we are particularly excited about is the thought that has gone into how to support the tenants, how to build skills and create community. We hope the standards set by this building for accessibility and community support will be incorporated into future projects and that the Yukon government will take an active role in making that happen.

We want to extend an enormous thanks and congratulations to Jillian Hardie and the whole team at Opportunities from staff, to board, to volunteers. You saw a need, you saw a gap, and you moved to fill it. You have worked so hard to get this wonderful space to where it is, and it is so appreciated.

Somehow in the midst of this massive project, they found time for a rebranding from “Challenge” to “Opportunities”, and I have to say that I love the new name. The name “Opportunities” evokes empowerment, social justice, and an inclusive society.

I would like to end with a quote from Jillian Hardie — or at least my memory of a quote from Jillian Hardie, Opportunities’ executive director — during the tour that has really stuck with me. As we toured the building, we heard story after story of people who had fallen through the cracks, and each of the people we were told about now has an apartment with their name on it — a beautiful, bright, sunny apartment and the supports they need to stay there. As Jillian said during the tour: “Do people need beautiful living spaces? Maybe not. But do they deserve them? Absolutely.”

Hon. Ms. McPhee: For over 45 years, Opportunities Yukon has worked to end stigma, promote inclusion, and help to empower Yukoners with the skills they need to find meaningful employment, to live independently, and ultimately to strengthen our communities.

The organization works with employers across the Yukon to connect them with an untapped workforce of people who have diverse skills and abilities and will be offering an opportunity for Yukoners to gain work experience and expand their skillset.

The Cornerstone community will provide an avenue for an inclusive space that will house Yukoners with diverse needs and abilities with a place to be safe, to learn life skills, and to contribute to our community.

We know that providing a secure home is the foundation of a better life and opportunity for growth. For some residents, this will be their first home of their own. The positive impact and the opportunities that can come from this are countless. The unique multi-use concept of this beautiful building is the future of supportive housing in an equitable, integrated community. I look forward to seeing future projects that follow Cornerstone’s example.

When we give people the tools that they need to succeed, we strengthen our communities, we create more jobs, and we build a stronger local economy. We should all be proud of this project and supportive of this new living and community space for Whitehorse and the Yukon. I would like to acknowledge the undying commitment of Jillian Hardie for her leadership and dedication on this project and to thank the board of directors for Opportunities Yukon for their vision and perseverance. This has not been an easy road, not to mention COVID, supply chains, the invasion in the Ukraine, and all the effects that they have had on this unbelievable project.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to recently see this beautiful space and to hear about your programs and operations. We continue to work to support Opportunities Yukon. Seeing this project come to life is a great achievement and will contribute to the strong community in Whitehorse for generations to come.

On behalf of all of us here, I would like to welcome all the Yukoners who will begin moving into the Cornerstone building next month. I hope that they enjoy their new homes, that they gain the valuable experiences that are awaiting them, and that they find employment that will support them and their future.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: RCMP funding

Mr. Cathers: Last week, the chief superintendent of the Yukon RCMP told local media about the lack of adequate resources that this government has provided. Instead of agreeing to support the RCMP, the Deputy Premier dismissed the facts and criticized the RCMP CO, suggesting that he must be confused. This is the same Deputy Premier who tried to blame the RCMP for the mishandling of the Hidden Valley school situation and her own failure to ensure that families were notified. At the time, the RCMP said that they were getting used to being thrown under the bus by this Liberal government. It is clear to anyone who has been following that the Deputy Premier has a strained relationship with the RCMP.

Can she tell us today what she meant when she said that the RCMP was confused and what aspect of the RCMP's budget she is claiming that the chief superintendent is confused about?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't think that it will surprise anyone that I don't agree with the preamble of what has been said at the beginning of this question. I am very pleased to indicate that I have spoken with the chief superintendent. I think I said this last week, but I'm happy to repeat that. We have had a great conversation. We definitely spoke about the important items that are in the 2022-23 budget for the RCMP and to support them going forward. We spoke about the resources that have been put in place over the last number of years to support the RCMP.

I continue to support them, not only in my conversations with the chief superintendent and his officials with respect to M Division here in the territory, but I have said that publicly on many, many occasions.

The opportunity for the Department of Justice to support the RCMP, both financially for their resources and with respect to how they have been carrying out their work, particularly in response to the substance use health emergency, is always a proud moment for me as I have the opportunity to stand here in the House and repeat that.

Mr. Cathers: Well, unfortunately for the minister, dismissing the facts doesn't change the facts. Here is what the RCMP superintendent said: "We haven't kept up with the cost of policing. And it's all sort of coming to a head now. We need an injection of O&M and we need more members."

In response, the Deputy Premier picked a fight with the RCMP and suggested that they are just confused. She said that they are wrong and that the RCMP do have adequate resources.

So, who should Yukoners believe — the RCMP, who say that they are in desperate need of more resources, or the Deputy Premier, whom this Legislature has already asked to resign and who is clearly deeply out of touch with the needs of those on the front lines of policing?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Department of Justice and this government work to ensure the provision of a professional, accountable, and appropriately funded territorial policing service that is responsive to the priorities of Yukon citizens and worthy of the public's trust.

Despite the conversation that is coming from the other side of this Legislative Assembly, we are deeply committed and trustworthy of the Yukon RCMP M Division.

Our government funds significant ongoing investments in police resources through a territorial police service agreement with the RCMP. The Yukon has a territorial police service agreement of 20 years that will expire in 2030. The RCMP forecast and anticipated human resource and operational funding is a topic of conversation quarterly that the Deputy Minister of Justice has with the chief superintendent.

This government is supportive of the RCMP financially and supportive of the work that they are doing to make our communities safe.

Mr. Cathers: Here's what the chief superintendent of the Yukon RCMP said: "... just to make ends meet. We've

been running vacancies for years just to pay the bills. So, it's been really, really tough. But we spoke with the Justice Department and we said, listen, we can't go on like this."

It's clear that the RCMP have been asking for more resources and more support from this Liberal government. What has the response been? Well, according to the chief superintendent, the response from this government has been to play silly little games with the RCMP's request for more resources.

Instead of playing silly little games and picking a fight in the media with the RCMP, why doesn't the Deputy Premier actually take the needs of the RCMP seriously and provide them the support that they are requesting here in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Yukon government, under the agreement that I have just noted with the RCMP, are contractually obliged to pay for every position that is filled by the RCMP M Division here in the territory. We reconcile every June of the year, including the O&M increases for those individual positions at M Division, which are across the territory. We have \$1.1 million in the 2022-23 budget for the purposes of administrative costs. That amount went into that budget after extensive conversations with the RCMP.

What I can also advise is that we have increased the budget of the RCMP over the last five years — every year, with the exception of one.

What I can also indicate is that there are additional positions at the RCMP now as a result of decisions made by this government, including staff for the historic case unit and, in this particular budget before the Legislative Assembly now, the crime reduction unit.

I very much look forward to the members of the opposition supporting this budget so that those funds can flow to M Division RCMP.

Question re: RCMP funding

Ms. Van Bibber: Earlier this Sitting, I raised the issue of property and drug crime that has been affecting Whitehorse over the past several months. Last week, we learned that, due to the lack of support from the Liberal government, the RCMP is struggling to keep up with the increased activity that we have experienced.

The chief superintendent of the RCMP described the crime reduction unit as being ad hoc and cobbled together by taking members off the front line or from other positions.

Does the minister believe that the RCMP's current structure for the crime reduction unit is sustainable, and will the minister provide additional resources to strengthen the crime reduction unit?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: There is funding in the 2022-23 budget to strengthen the crime reduction unit. Let's be clear that the RCMP are in charge of their operations. We work very closely with them to determine the kind of funding they need to do the work that they are required to do to keep our Yukoners safe and to keep the community safe. The funding of \$420,000 is a permanent increase to fund members who are working with the historic case unit and the crime reduction unit in the

2022-23 budget, which I sincerely hope the members of the opposition support, absolutely.

We have allocated an additional \$1.1 million to offset increasing operation and maintenance costs for RCMP M Division. Further, our government continues to strengthen relationships with First Nations and First Nation governments through the continuation and expansion of the First Nation and Inuit policing program.

I look forward to providing more information to Yukoners about this important issue.

Ms. Van Bibber: It's clear from the comments by the RCMP that, due to the lack of support from the Liberal government, they are struggling to keep up with drug trafficking in the Yukon. The chief superintendent indicated that the Yukon could use a dedicated drug enforcement unit to help address this.

Will the Yukon government work with the RCMP to fund the creation of a dedicated drug enforcement unit?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that it's incredibly important. It is an excellent question, but it's incredibly important to remind Yukoners that the members of the Yukon Party opposition voted against the changes to SCAN, which was an expansion of scope for the safer communities and neighbourhoods unit, which works as part of the Department of Justice and works to keep on a complaint-driven process to keep Yukoners safe. Individuals can call the safer communities and neighbourhoods unit for the purpose of providing information about situations in their community that make them and their neighbourhood feel unsafe.

The SCAN unit has been extremely successful in making sure that changes can be made to Yukon communities. The Yukon Party opposition did not think, apparently, that this was an important part of crime reduction and the ability to do that. Absolutely, it is.

The conversation that I had the other morning with the chief superintendent, and several notes back and forth since then, have committed us to working together going forward as we always have. Some individuals may not know this, but the chief superintendent and I came to these jobs that we currently have at the same time and we have worked closely since that time.

Ms. Van Bibber: According to the RCMP, there are now as many as five organized crime groups operating in Yukon. These organized crime operations are contributing to the surge in drug trafficking as well as spinoffs such as property crime. While Yukoners are certainly well aware of the huge spike in property crime over the last few years, many were shocked to hear the level of organized crime. Many more were surprised to hear that, in the face of this rise in crime, the Liberals have been underfunding the RCMP.

Does the minister really believe that the RCMP has adequate resources to combat the rise of organized crime in Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As part of the 2022-23 budget, the Department of Justice has proposed a number of items to support policing and to improve community safety and well-being. This year, for the first time, the wages of the RCMP's

regular members are being adjusted so that recruitment and issues with opportunities here in the north should be strong. I can indicate that, since 2016, we have increased the policing budget by a total of \$463,000 in 2017-18, over \$1 million — almost \$1.1 million — in 2018-19, by \$251,000 in 2019-20, and by \$93,000 in 2020-21. We are working together to determine additional resources that could be available to the RCMP. There are a number of items that they have requested and that we have discussed with them and that are in the 2022-23 budget. I look forward to the passing of that budget so those funds can flow to the RCMP and they can have the adequate funds to do their jobs.

We are working closely with them on additional fund requests as we go forward because we do — we meet with them every quarter — and we are always discussing the resources that they need and providing them as best this government can.

Question re: Managed alcohol program

Ms. Tredger: It has been months since this government announced the substance use emergency, but for people on the ground, not much has changed. Last week, we talked about how safe supply is virtually non-existent in the territory. This government may think that their lip service is better than the Yukon Party's outright dismissal of harm reduction, but at the end of the day, it is the same outcome. People on the ground are going unsupported, and the issue is not just opioids. There is a serious crisis of alcohol abuse in the territory. One program that could make a big difference in many people's lives is a managed alcohol program. So far, the government has outright refused to open a managed alcohol program.

Now that the government recognizes that we are in an emergency, will the minister reconsider her position and say yes to a managed alcohol program?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The substance use health emergency has been indicated here in the territory since January 2022. Of course, we know that the substance use health emergency has been occurring long before then and that every community in the Yukon is affected.

Of course, I don't need the member opposite to tell us about alcohol as an issue here in the territory. We specifically chose the title of "substance use health emergency" to include the abuse and use of alcohol and of all kinds of drugs. We specifically chose the title to indicate that this is a health emergency — a health issue — and we have ultimately expanded a number of harm reduction programs in order to address the substance use health emergency.

It is also an ongoing issue. The declaration of a substance use health emergency was a call to action to all Yukoners — to governments to commit their resources and their energy to addressing this issue, to making Yukoners safe, and to providing the services that Yukoners need to deal with addictions. The opportunity for us to do that together is what is critical.

Ms. Tredger: It took hundreds of Yukoners across the territory taking to the streets for this government to even declare a substance use emergency. What is it going to take for them to actually act on it? While the minister is busy having

endless conversations, other people are taking action. The Kwanlin Dün First Nation, for example, is planning to open the territory's first managed alcohol program, but the Kwanlin Dün First Nation can't care for everyone in the Yukon.

Why won't this minister open a managed alcohol program?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The substance use health emergency here in the territory is a health problem. We absolutely need to work together. I am pleased that the member opposite mentioned the response by Kwanlin Dün First Nation because that is their leadership and that is their contribution to addressing the substance use health emergency, as are a number of other contributions made by First Nation governments across this territory. We need to take action. We need to take it together. Far too many Yukoners are dying from overdoses and toxic drugs that have been deliberately poisoned. We need to face the challenge with resolve and with compassion, ending the stigma of substance use so that people get the support that they need.

Addressing this crisis requires leadership and coordination across levels of government, communities, and health care professionals. As we work together, we will make a difference to address substance use and to make our communities healthier and safer, which is the goal. Declaring a substance use health emergency is a commitment by our government and a call to action to all — a call to action to all Yukoners to do whatever small piece they can to help someone to change their communities, to support the work that is being done across government, not only by government but by communities.

Ms. Tredger: The minister says that alcohol abuse is a health issue, and we couldn't agree more, but instead of offering supports for people who are in crisis because of their addictions, this government is choosing to criminalize them. In the last two years alone, there have been close to 2,000 overnight stays at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre for intoxication. This equals almost three people a night, every night, for two years. Instead of expanding treatment options, this government is allowing people to be taken to jail to sober up. That doesn't help anybody.

So, when will the minister stop criminalizing intoxicated people and implement real solutions that actually help, like a managed alcohol program?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: A managed alcohol program is certainly one of the potential responses to the substance use health emergency. As we've seen, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation has decided that this is an issue for them to address and they are doing so. I thank them for that. I know that their community is better and thanks them for that.

We have been working with respect to all communities on a number of topics with respect to responding to the substance use health emergency. Our budget here — of 2022-23 before the House — has additional funds to respond to the substance use health emergency.

Over \$5.5 million is in this year's budget that will support the government's immediate response to the substance use health emergency and includes over \$1.1 million to enhance the supervised consumption site here in the territory and to expand

into rural communities and increase the availability of the safer supply program.

It won't be that long ago that we recall that the Third Party was indicating that perhaps we should be delivering alcohol as part of a response to COVID, including restaurant food deliveries. That's not where we are proceeding. There are many, many responses. The communities are working together, and the substance use health emergency declaration —

Question re: International mining company regulatory oversight

Ms. Tredger: In a few short months, the Coffee Gold project is going to be underway in the Yukon. The project is being led by Newmont Goldcorp, one of the largest mining companies in the world. Although their employees at the Coffee Gold project are building positive relationships on the ground, those at the top are another matter entirely.

Allegations of human rights abuses have followed this corporation wherever they go. When indigenous communities in Peru opposed Newmont Goldcorp's mine site in their country, they received death threats. When one farmer refused to sell her land near the mine site, she was shot outside her home.

Can the minister tell us why he's turning a blind eye to these horrific human rights violations while opening the door for this corporation to operate in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Each and every time that I have met with Newmont and the folks from the Coffee Gold project and we have sat down and talked about the project, my first question has always been about how their work with the communities is going. I think that this is how we should judge the work of this project. I know that they worked hard to get an agreement in place with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. While the project was being considered by YESAB, they also got an agreement with the White River First Nation.

I think it is very important that we make sure that our mining projects work to support our communities, the environment, and social and governance models. It's all very important.

What I can say, from my experience with the company here in the Yukon, is that they have an excellent relationship with the communities.

I am concerned if the member opposite feels that they do not, but I look forward to hearing those concerns and I'm happy to answer further questions.

Ms. Tredger: Well, it sounds like the minister is saying that we should ignore their human rights abuse records and wipe the slate clean. There is a mountain of evidence on Newmont Goldcorp's abuses. In fact, their own internal report proved that these abuses happened under their watch near their mine sites internationally.

So, while the local mining industry keeps pushing for ethical, sustainable practices, this government continues to allow multi-billion-dollar parent companies that commit human rights abuses outside of Canada to do business in the territory. The minister can hold these corporations accountable,

or he can risk tarnishing the entire industry's future in the territory.

Does the minister agree that international human rights abuses and environmental harms should be taken into consideration when the government makes a decision about an application?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess what we are hearing from the members opposite in the NDP is that they are not supportive of this project, and I will let the member opposite rise to confirm yes or no on that. We are looking locally here on how First Nations and mining companies work together.

When it comes to this particular project, we are thrilled to see the level of engagement that has happened, not only with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and other First Nations in the area, but also with White River First Nation. We believe that the relationship that has been fostered by this company in Canada and in the Yukon absolutely is one worth supporting.

The member opposite talks about international concerns about this company, and I think that this is what we are hearing from the NDP — that is what they are going to determine as to whether or not mining should be happening in Yukon. I respectfully would say that, in my perspective, we are going to take a look at the socio-economic status and the regulatory process. We are going to look at the First Nation relationships. We are going to make sure that any company that works in Yukon works hand in glove with the First Nations whose traditional territories are affected, but also works through the regulatory process in the context of Yukon.

Ms. Tredger: Actually, I am glad that the Premier mentioned regulatory processes because right now there is no process to protect the Yukon from predatory mining companies. Under the current act, YESAB can't consider anything that happens outside of our border, so when corporations commit human rights violations abroad, they don't fall within the scope of what YESAB can assess. Even when the allegations are as serious as murder, systemic rape, and genocide, corporations get a free pass in the Yukon. YESAB's hands are tied. Any abuses by corporations abroad simply vanish when they come into the Yukon, which is why we were so glad to hear from the Premier that he was working with Yukon First Nations and the federal government to amend YESAA. Will these amendments include human rights violations under the scope of what YESAB can consider?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, first of all, with respect to YESAB, we are working with First Nations and with the federal government to look at improvements to YESAA. That work is ongoing. Second of all, we have successor legislation underway, so when it comes to the regulatory side — our side of that — it will be through new mining legislation. We are working on that front. With Newmont, as a company, I know that they are in other projects across Canada, including in British Columbia, which has an NDP government. I just note that for the member opposite.

I think what we are talking about here is something slightly different. I can talk with my federal counterparts. I will be having meetings with folks from Ottawa soon. I can ask them what is typically done when a company is coming into Canada

and how we ensure that they have a strong international record. That isn't something that we work on. We have focused on making sure that the companies that come here and work in the Yukon are doing so, working well and supportively with and for First Nations, with and for communities, with and for the environment, and we will continue to do that.

Question re: Conflict of interest re Old Crow wellness centre

Mr. Dixon: Section 10(4) of the conflict of interest act reads as follows: "A former Minister shall not make representations to the Government of the Yukon in relation to a transaction or negotiation to which the Government is a party and in which he or she was previously involved as a Minister if the representations could result in the conferring of a benefit not of general application."

Can the Minister of Highways and Public Works tell us if the former Minister of Health and Social Services has ever contacted the Government of Yukon in relation to the Old Crow health and wellness centre?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, as you know, conflicts of interest are handled by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. As part of our government's commitment to openness and transparency, the Yukon government passed the *Lobbyists Registration Act* that sets out clear rules for how these activities are governed. It is the responsibility of lobbyists to register under the act, to understand the rules, and to act in accordance with the law.

To the member opposite's question, my ministerial colleagues and I did not meet with the designer/builder nor the former minister and instead directed them to work with the Department of Highways and Public Works.

Our understanding is that the former minister is now working with the designer/builder in the role of the director of strategic operations on the Old Crow projects. The designer/builder was directed to the operational level. It is my understanding that the former minister, along with the design/build team, met with the Highways and Public Works staff on a number of occasions. These types of meetings are part of routine project administration.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the former minister has indeed contacted the Government of Yukon regarding this contract that she was responsible for as Minister of Health and Social Services. Has the Government of Yukon sought legal advice about whether the former minister is in contravention of the conflict of interest act in this respect?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: The designer/builder wrote a letter to a select number of Cabinet ministers in which the former minister was copied, asking for a meeting on this project. My minister and colleagues did not meet with the designer/builder or the former minister and instead directed them to work with the Department of Highways and Public Works.

Once again, my understanding is that the former minister is now working with the designer/builder in the role of director of strategic operations. The designer/builder was a director at the operational level and it is my understanding that the former minister, along with the design/build team, met with Highways

and Public Works staff on a number of occasions. Once again, these types of meetings are a part of routine project administration.

As the member opposite will know, conflicts of interest are handled by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and as part of our government's commitment to openness and transparency, the Yukon government passed the *Lobbyists Registration Act* that sets out clear rules for how these activities are governed. It is the responsibility of lobbyists or potential lobbyists to register under the act, to understand the rules, and to act in accordance with the law.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the minister has confirmed that the former minister did reach out to the Liberal Cabinet and did make contact with the Government of Yukon with respect to this project.

Will the minister release all correspondence and representations between the former Minister of Health and Social Services and the Government of Yukon with respect to the Old Crow health and wellness centre, a project that the former minister was previously involved with as a minister?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I suppose I will repeat myself. The designer/builder wrote a letter to a select number of Cabinet ministers, of which the former was copied, asking for a meeting on this project. My ministerial colleagues and I did not meet with the designer/builder or the former minister and instead directed them to work with the Department of Highways and Public Works.

My understanding is that the former minister is now working with the designer/builder in the role of the director of strategic operations. The designer/builder was a director at the operational level, and it is my understanding that the former minister, along with the design/build team, met with Highways and Public Works staff on a number of occasions.

These types of meetings are part of routine project administration. I would also say in the general sense that the work on the 10-unit mixed-use housing project, the health and wellness centre, and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation elders complex are all proceeding after some early challenges with respect to the winter road. So, this is fantastic infrastructure for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger): Order, please.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 204: *First Appropriation Act 2022-23* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Request for Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole

Deputy Chair: At this time, I will ask if any private member wishes to volunteer to be Acting Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Member for Porter Creek Centre rises

Department of Community Services — continued

Acting Chair (Ms. Clarke): Is there any further general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services?

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the minister for bringing this department back for debate and, of course, I thank the officials for joining us again today.

I would first like to ask the minister if he has been able to pull together the breakdown of the \$52 million in the ICIP — Investing in Canada infrastructure plan — funds.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I do have a list in front of me and I'm going to table it with the Clerk's office tomorrow.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that. I look forward to seeing that.

I just want to go back to a couple of things that we briefly touched on. One is the pool in Ross River. Can the minister tell us what work has been done to date in the remediation of that pool?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Department of Community Services works to update facilities to meet current safety requirements — to modern safety standards — and has undertaken assessment or repairs over the past two seasons in Ross River, Beaver Creek, and Carcross. I am happy to report that the pool in Ross River is ready to open. It's fully capable of handling visitors this summer; we just need to recruit a staff member to run the facility. Provided that happens, we will open in Ross River.

Ms. McLeod: I can appreciate the broad statement. Having done some work there, of course, we knew that. I was looking for a list of what work had been done. I understand that

the pool had been at some stage of readiness when Environmental Health stepped in, so I am looking to find out what work was done. If the minister wishes to return that information by way of a legislative return, I would be happy to accept that.

Does the minister have an estimated opening date?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, we have been — I don't want to say that we did structural repairs to the pool; we fixed a number of structural repairs to the building itself. We did system upgrades to meet the Environmental Health upgrades that were necessary to make the pool acceptable in a modern era. The drinking-water fountain had to be fixed as well, so we did that work. Now we're in the current process of hiring operators for all of our pools in one fell swoop — provided that's successful — and the pool is a seasonal building, of course. Provided that it's warm enough to run this season, we will have that structure open this summer. That's our intention. So, we're looking to hire those staff down to Ross River and get the facility open this summer for the season.

Ms. McLeod: I want to have a little bit more of a discussion on EMS. The last time we spoke, the minister said that, due to vaccination status, some of the EMS personnel would not be able to return to their full scope of duties. Obviously, that would leave some communities short of EMS personnel. Can the minister give us an update of what the EMS and fire personnel numbers are for the communities of Ross River, Teslin, Faro, and Mayo?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have eight volunteers in Faro. We have eight volunteers in Mayo. We have four volunteers in Pelly Crossing. We have four volunteers in Teslin. So, that's Faro, Mayo, Ross River, and Teslin. I think that answers the question.

Ms. McLeod: Let me just run through the numbers. There are eight volunteers in Faro; there are eight volunteers in Mayo — or the minister could correct that; and there are four in Teslin. I did not get a number for Ross River.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe the member opposite was looking for the number of volunteers in Ross River. That was EMS, and there are two. We do not have any active volunteers in the fire department in Ross River. The other communities are all run by municipalities. I don't have the numbers of the municipal fire departments, but all the numbers that I have given are for EMS, and there are two in Ross River. We do not have any active fire volunteers in Ross River at the moment.

Ms. McLeod: With two EMS members in Ross River, are those two members able to fully take up their duties?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The information that I have at the moment is that they are fully active members — those two volunteers in Ross River — and so they are fully capable of undertaking their duties. That is the latest information that I have.

Ms. McLeod: It would seem to me that having two personnel in EMS is probably not providing the coverage, I guess, that a community like Ross River might desire. So, can the minister just tell us a little bit about that? Does the minister think that having two EMS personnel for a community of that size is sufficient?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will preface my remarks this afternoon by saying that we could always use more volunteers in every community. Volunteerism is the heart of our communities. So, do I think that two are enough? I think that two are great. I would always like to see more.

That's one of the reasons why we have the clinical educators who have been hired. We had this discussion earlier in the month. We have clinical educators hired to go out and recruit and train more volunteers throughout the territory. It's an important part of the budget, and it's an important part of the modifications that we have made to the way we do work, both in Watson Lake and throughout the territory.

We always are looking for more volunteers in the community. We are trying to recruit and drum up more through the clinical educator program that we have just put in the budget this year and worked on. That's, I think, the best answer that I can give today.

We have two active volunteers in Ross River. I think that's tremendous. Can we use more? Absolutely, and I hope we can find some more through the clinical educator program.

Ms. McLeod: The minister mentioned that there were eight volunteers in Mayo and Faro. Is that a combined total of EMS and fire, or is it one or the other?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That's all EMS. The fire departments are run by the municipalities. I don't have those numbers; that's run by the municipalities of Mayo and Faro.

Ms. McLeod: We've had a discussion before about the recruitment officer, which is a new position. I'm wondering about the effectiveness of that position to date. How has recruitment been handled for Yukon communities? What has the result been?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can say that training and education are essential in supporting the delivery of emergency medical services throughout the territory. So, we're using a variety of training measures to deliver programs for the recruitment and retention of community responders and to support these folks throughout the territory. We have a training centre, a mobile training unit, high-fidelity training mannequins, online learning platforms, local training nights, certificate courses, two dedicated clinical educators that I have spoken about this afternoon, in addition to peer support groups and mental wellness supports with a focus on the psychological health and safety of our first responders.

We are also providing accredited COR training and certification for EMS community responders through the Emergency Care and Safety Institute's emergency medical responder program. All of this is to say we have increased monetary compensation as well to four hours of non-operational pay per month to encourage community responder attendance and to support biweekly training nights. We're providing equipment. We're funding the volunteer ambulance society and we're working with community ambulance stations to maintain an ongoing biweekly trade training night. So, we're doing an awful lot around training of our emergency medical responders throughout the territory. It's good work. I'm hearing good things about the program, but as of now, we're waiting to see what the results are. This is a work in progress. I think we're

doing as much as we can to try to pull more volunteers into the service to make them feel comfortable to go to work on behalf of Yukon citizens on a volunteer basis.

Ms. McLeod: I appreciate the work that's being done on the training front, especially on the mobile training unit that is able to provide training in the volunteer home communities. Of course, that's an issue that has been raised many, many times.

But I am curious still to know whether or not the recruitment position has netted any results for rural Yukon to date. I will leave my questioning there and turn it over to my colleague.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What we have been talking about, though, is a clinical educator who is focused on increasing volunteer participation in the community, making it easier for these people who want to take up the mantle of emergency medical responders to feel comfortable doing that, so that is really what their goal is. They are clinical educators and they are focused on increasing the volunteerism. I, like the member opposite, would love immediate results on this thing, but at this point, we are still working through these programs. We are in the process of recruiting people across the territory, and I am certain that I will hear more questions this fall about how successful our efforts have been since January right through to now.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for the opportunity to ask a few follow-up questions on the Department of Community Services. I would like to begin with psychology. I know that the minister did answer a few questions a few weeks ago when we were in Committee, but I did want to check in for an update because I understand that there have been a few developments between the association and the government.

I wonder if the minister could start by giving us an updated timeline for the process of regulated psychologists in the territory.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I guess, first of all, let me say that I really do appreciate the member opposite's optimism in us handling this file in three weeks. We are working very hard on this file, of course, and I'm sure that progress is being made by the good folks in Community Services as they work through this problem, trying to reconcile the needs of the territory and the needs of the territory's psychologists with the legislative regime that we have inherited and are working to fix.

I can say to the member opposite that, since we last talked a couple of weeks ago, between September 21 and March 22, the department has worked with the Yukon Medical Council and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association and two contract registry experts to assess the Yukon's current system for regulating health professionals and begin to build viable options for improvement.

One of the contractors is Harry Clayton, an internationally recognized expert on professional regulation whose recent work for the British Columbia government served as a basis for their ongoing regulatory reforms. We have also met with Dr. Richard Spelliscy, registrar and chief executive officer — and apologies to that fellow if I have mispronounced his last name — of the College of Alberta Psychologists to learn more about the support they provide to the governments of Nunavut

and the Northwest Territories in regulating psychologists. We have also met — as have I — with Dr. Reagan Gale, the vice-president of the Psychological Society of Yukon, to share information regarding the Yukon government's commitments in this area and to hear her perspective on the need for regulation of psychologists.

I can say that she gave me a very compelling argument for the need for getting some control and some regulation around psychologists in the territory. It is an important file. It's one that I have directed the department to work on. They are doing that, and I hope to have more to say to the members opposite in the fall.

Mr. Dixon: The minister made a few interesting comments at the outset there. He indicated that there is a broader review of the overall regulatory framework for health professions. Can the minister provide us a bit more information about what is being considered with the review of how the Yukon regulates health professionals going forward?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It's in my mandate letter to look at this. We have just taken action with the optometry at the hospital. We are currently working on a number of different files because we realize how important regulating health professions is in the territory. As I said, it's in my mandate letter, and we are working very, very hard on this file to find a way forward where we can actually regulate health professions in a way that opens up the fields to start providing the care that is delivered in other jurisdictions. That is part of the benefits that I hope to see through this work that we are doing right now. I am sure I will have more to say to the member opposite in the fall after we have had a summer of working through this file.

Mr. Dixon: The minister mentioned the name of an individual. The name escaped me, but that's not important.

The point was that it sounded like they have contracted an individual to do this work. Can the minister give us an overview of what that contract looks like, what the terms of reference are, and what the timelines are for the review?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my earlier remarks — and I will get the names to the member opposite, certainly through Hansard, which will be asking for the spelling of these individuals' names, I have no doubt.

We have contracted this specialist to work with our policy folks. We have a dedicated policy resource to work through some of this work. They are working with us to help us navigate the really specialized fields that we are trying to regulate, so that is really what the contract is for and I will work with my department to provide whatever information to the member opposite that we can under the rules surrounding provision of information by the Government of Yukon. I have no problem doing that. I don't have those contracts with me right now. I guess what is happening is that work is happening. We have specialists hired to help us with the policy work and help to navigate this very, very complicated field to make sure that we get the best regulations in place for our health professions in the territory as quickly as possible.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's comments and commitment to get us further information. One of the questions that I asked was the timeline for when that review will be

conducted and when it will be completed, but I appreciate that he has indicated that he doesn't have the contracts here and he will look into that and get back to us. I will move on from that now, but I will note that I would appreciate it if the minister could get back to us with a response.

Earlier, he also made a reference to optometrists. I am wondering if he can explain his comment in the current context. Are you looking at the regulation of optometrists as well?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, optometry is one of the health professions in the territory and I have been in touch with the optometrists over the last five years several times. I have learned some of the issues and some of the services that they would like to provide in the territory. We are working with as many health professions as we can; optometry is one of them.

Mr. Dixon: So, to return to the original question about psychology then, is a decision about the model and the path forward for psychology going to be made after this review is conducted by the individual who is conducting the review of the health profession's regulations?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think the member opposite is getting ahead of the train perhaps a little bit. We are doing the due diligence and the work that we need to do to make decision on health professions as soon as possible. I know that psychologists have been working very closely with the Department of Community Services. I know that they have been in touch, certainly, with me and with some opposition members as well.

We know how important this file is. We're working very closely to resolve it as quickly as possible in the framework of better regulating the health professions in the territory.

Mr. Dixon: I will move on. I'll move on to flooding, if I can.

I have seen some public discourse on flooding and flood response from the Government of Yukon. I was under the impression that the Department of Community Services was conducting an after-action report for the 2021 Southern Lakes flood response to look at lessons learned.

Can the minister confirm that? Can he explain what the nature of that review is? When will it be completed? Will it be made public?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: In early 2022, we hired a contractor to work — to do interviews with responsible agencies, including those from other jurisdictions and our own stakeholder staff who were responding to the crisis, the flood last year. That contractor is currently in the process of working — finalizing the interviews that she had been doing. She will then write a report for the Department of Community Services that will include recommendations and findings. We'll use that information and the information that we've already uncovered through some of this process to improve our community response going forward.

Mr. Dixon: When is that report anticipated to be done? Will it be made public?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am hoping to see the report in the next month or two. We will have a look at it, and then, as I've done throughout my term in government, any information that I can make public, I will make public.

Mr. Dixon: The reason I ask about the timing is that I tuned into Whitehorse City Council a few weeks ago and the EMO director — the name escapes me, but Trudeau is the last name — was giving a presentation. They had indicated that the report would be done by the end of April, so I was just curious if there has been a delay or if the minister is a little bit off in terms of his anticipated time of receiving that report.

I would like to ask a little bit about some of the government's early response. I know that even though they haven't received those recommendations yet, I have taken note of a few tenders that have popped up on the Bids and Tenders site. One is for the supply and delivery of two sandbag-filling stations to Yukon government. I am wondering if the minister can explain what the plan is for those. Would those be owned by the Yukon government, or would they be given to a municipality or other groups to allow for use? Once they own them, will they rent them out, give them out, or loan them out to community organizations, or will it be operated by Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, we are in the process of procuring a couple of sandbagging machines. They will be owned by the Government of Yukon. As is common practice in the territory — certainly in last year's flood and I'm sure in 2007 — we will deploy the resources that we have at our disposal to affected communities as needed.

Mr. Dixon: The other contract that caught my eye is the standing offer agreement for the supply of sandbags. Among other things, there are the large super bags. There are the smaller sandbags, which are what we would traditionally think of as normal-sized sandbags. Then there are the larger Tiger Dams.

According to the SOA document that is on Bids and Tenders, the government is seeking 300,000 tie-string polypropylene sandbags. One of the issues that we heard about last year when we were — all of us — out volunteering to do sandbags was the use of the polypropylene sandbags and their relative environmental impact compared to the canvas ones that disintegrate after use.

Can the minister explain why the decision was made to source polypropylene sandbags as opposed to canvas sandbags?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, indeed, we have a standing offer agreement on the Bids and Tenders system. I directed the department, early last week, that we are going to give a preference to burlap bags. We have 300,000 burlap bags currently in storage in our facilities, here in our warehouse. The reason being — this government has been committed, and I know that my colleague, the former Minister of Community Services, has also — we spoke, as well, last week — neither one of us wants to see more plastic bags in the environment. That is certainly a direction that the territory is going to go in, so we are moving to limit the amount of plastic in the environment through many government programs, including this one. We are going to source burlap, and I have asked the department to take another look at the standing offer agreement because, like the member opposite, we don't want plastic in the environment.

However, the caveat to this is this. The standing offer agreement allowing us to buy sandbags — let's say there was massive flooding some place in North America and we were unable to get burlap bags for some reason. What do we do in that case? So, we have the provision to be able to get sandbags of any type if we needed them.

The preference, of course, is going to be for burlap and to have environmentally sensitive sandbags, but I am cognizant of the need that if, for some reason, we used all 300,000 burlap bags, 600,000 burlap bags, and totally ran out of bags here and had to get more and there were no burlap bags to be had, we would have to use some other material.

I am cognizant of that issue, but the Department of Community Services is going to make its priority to buy, deliver, and deploy burlap and environmentally sensitive products in the Yukon.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's words, but I would remind him of how the SOA process works. There is a document on the website that calls specifically for polypropylene sandbags, so that's what the government is seeking to purchase when they include that directly in their specifications of their contract. I can appreciate that the minister wants to buy burlap or wants to buy some other product, but unless they issue an amendment to the tender document, which they may be doing — it sounds like perhaps it is something that we can expect to see — what they're going to get is polypropylene sandbags.

Can the minister explain that a little bit further? Is there going to be an amendment issued for the document that's on Bids and Tenders right now?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: To be absolutely crystal clear like the great waters of the Yukon River, yes, that's exactly what's happening as of last week when this came to my attention from my colleague, the Minister of Community Services. I issued a directive to the Department of Community Services to amend the contract so that we obtain environmentally sensitive sandbags for the territory.

Mr. Dixon: Thank you to the minister for that explanation. That is clear. I look forward to seeing that amendment come forward.

The next question that I have is about the Tiger Dams. The document calls for the purchase of one hundred 50-foot-by-24-inch Tiger Dams. I was just curious about the choice of wording here again. "Tiger Dam" is a specific trademarked type of dam, as opposed to a more general inflatable dam that could be used of a variety of trademarks or types.

I'm wondering why the name brand Tiger Dam was chosen as opposed to any other type of inflatable dam.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question.

I'm informed that the department is using the term "Tiger Dam" as an example because these are well-known. You are right; it is a trademark name. But, as the member opposite knows through procurement, if contractors have any questions or concerns, they can certainly approach the department procurement officials. If there is an issue with that, they have other examples. We'll certainly consider those examples, and

if we have to, we'll amend the contract to reflect what local contractors can get in the territory. This is pretty standard operating procedure in the procurement when we're doing these things. We will take a look at that if those concerns are brought to our attention through the procurement folks.

Mr. Dixon: Unfortunately, the minister is correct; it is standard operating procedure for some of these contract specifications to be unclear, and that's why I asked.

So, I would like to move on from that aspect of flooding to the cleanup that is anticipated for this spring. I know that there were a number of bags that were left in place — a number of structures, bags, and other things that were left in place — at the end of the year and that many Yukoners, either on their own property or directly adjacent to their properties, will be cleaning up sandbags, zip ties, poly sheets, et cetera, that are all in place along waterways, either on the rivers or lakes of the Southern Lakes. I just wanted to know if Community Services has any plans for cleanup in place for cleaning up, like I said, zip ties, sandbags, poly sandbags, or poly sheets that have been left in place along the waterways.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Infrastructure Development branch has commissioned Stantec to support the identification of long-term mitigation solutions for communities, starting with Army Beach and M'Clintock. Data collection occurred in the fall of 2021 and is being analyzed. Options for the Marsh Lake area are expected to be available for revision by the spring of 2022 and additional communities will follow as required.

We are actually continuing to take a look at the flood outlook for the territory, especially in the Southern Lakes — well, throughout the territory. Once we are certain that the flood mitigation berms in place today are no longer necessary, Community Services will work with residents in those communities to remove those structures so that it is restored to its pre-flood condition. We would at least remove the measures that we took to protect those homes and communities. Once we know more about this year's flood season, we will be in a better position to take action to remove the flood mitigation efforts that we have, and then we will work with those communities and residents to restore their properties in the face of the new reality of the territory.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that answer. So, it sounds like the plan is for the government to leave in place things that were put out last year to see if they are needed again this year. I think that is a fairly reasonable response.

I did want to ask, though, about one of the tools that the government deployed, which was concrete Lock-Blocks. Those were deployed in a number of different areas around the Southern Lakes in 2007. A number of homeowners and property owners in the area who had those installed on their properties that were owned by government were given the opportunity to buy the Lock-Blocks from the government rather than have them removed afterwards. Will that be offered again this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: At the moment, we are working with Yukon Housing Corporation on the recovery and what the future looks like in flood-ravaged areas of the territory. We are still working and waiting on the reports that are being compiled

by Yukon Housing Corporation, which is responsible for that aspect of the flood recovery. Once we have that information from Yukon Housing Corporation on their approach going forward — how they can purchase and go forward — then we will discuss that with residents. We expect that work to be done in the coming — I'm thinking in the next six weeks or so. We will see.

Mr. Dixon: So, the concrete Lock-Blocks that were installed by the government on various properties and along roadways and properties in the Southern Lakes are owned by Yukon Housing Corporation; do I have that correct?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: No. They were deployed by the Yukon government, but it is Yukon Housing Corporation that is actually spearheading the response to the flood in terms of the long-term mitigations for residents in the Southern Lakes area. It is the agency that we have commissioned to actually do the work with homeowners going forward. That's the agency — not Community Services.

Mr. Dixon: If someone has concrete Lock-Blocks or Jersey barriers that were installed by the government on or near their property, who should they reach out to in order to inquire about the possibility of purchasing them?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: At the moment, we have a flooding response line that members of the public can go to — online or a phone call. I know that my colleague, the former Minister of Community Services, has referred many people to the flooding site on yukon.ca and the information line. They can make their requests for things like concrete blocks into that line and the officials will then coordinate the response. The information that I have just been given is that flooding@yukon.ca is the e-mail and 867-332-7084 is the number that residents can call if they would like to ask questions about things like concrete blocks. Then we will coordinate the response to the proper authority to determine who it is, because if it is on someone's property, we will have to determine which agency is actually doing the determination of whether things like concrete blocks stay there. If it is offside a property line, it may be Community Services and we will have to figure that out, but if they phone this line — 332-7084 — we will get it to the proper authorities to answer those questions.

Mr. Dixon: I had thought that the minister might be providing the cellphone number for the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, but that sounds like a good choice of information to provide. I have had a number of people reach out to me from the Southern Lakes about that and so I will pass that information along.

I would like to move on then to infrastructure funding. Back in the old days of 2014, the provincial-territorial infrastructure component fund, or PTIC fund, was one of the primary sources of infrastructure funding for the territory, and indeed, the fund underneath it was the small communities fund, which I know funded a lot of projects from 2014 until now.

Can the minister tell us what the current status is of the small communities fund? The way the program worked before was that Canada entered into the funding agreement with the territory and then the implementation was led by the territory — in this case, the Department of Community Services. So, can

the minister just bring me up to speed as to the status of the small communities fund? How much has been spent and how much is left in that fund?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The small communities fund was signed in 2015 and is generally allocated to highways, bridges, and community infrastructure, such as water, waste water, roads, and cultural recreation projects. In total, \$254 million was allocated to this fund back in 2015. They have all been assessed and applied for, so the entire fund has been allocated to projects throughout the territory. As I said, the total is \$254,000,202. The deadline for claiming that money is December 31, 2026.

As of now, the fund has sunset, so it is now past its best-before date. We are just waiting for all the money to be spent. It is expected that all the projects will be finished by December 31, 2026.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that. I previously understood that the funding application deadline was set for March 2024, which, of course, was 10 years after the fund was first created. Obviously, the Yukon signed it in 2015. Do I understand it correctly that any project that has been funded under this has to be fully submitted for funding to the federal government by December 31, 2026 — is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is absolutely correct. The deadline for claims is December 31, 2026. The Government of Yukon asked for — and obtained — an extension to that date, so December 31, 2026 is now the deadline for claims under the small communities fund.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that information from the minister. I think the extension was from March 2024 to what the minister has said here, December 2026, which makes sense.

I will move on. Whistle Bend phase 7 — the tender was released last year and then cancelled. It has since been put out again this year. Can the minister tell us why the first one was cancelled last year? What has changed between last year and this year in terms of the scope, and what is the current status?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The phase 7 redesign work considered a number of different factors that we sought to improve for the tender going forward.

There is stormwater-main ditching required for phase 6 drainage that was not completed in 2021. The inclusion of the clearing of roads in phases 8, 9, and 10 was required in winter of 2021-22 to allow for phases 8 and 9 construction in 2022.

Scheduling of phases and site management delays to phase 6 completion — which was originally scheduled for 2021, but now has been pushed to 2022 — triggered access issues to other phases. Phases 7 and 8 were re-jigged to enable a staged method for delivery of work to avoid access issues through an existing construction site and to better coordinate all the phase work. Two subphases of phase 7 were built into the tender to allow lot completions in 2022 and the summer of 2023. That phase 7 work has been tendered and awarded.

Mr. Dixon: The minister just indicated that it has been awarded. Can the minister tell us what the value of that was?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We will get that information for the member opposite.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's willingness to get back to us with that.

Just before I move on, I just wanted to follow up on the last questions I had asked about the small communities fund. The decision to push the date back from 2024 to 2026 — was that a decision made by Canada or Yukon, and when was that decision made to push the date back?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As far as the decision, or Ottawa's decision, to extend the small communities fund deadline, that was done through the integrated bilateral agreement, which is how we go about identifying and asking for changes to the Government of Canada's management and deadlines of our infrastructure funding programs. We identified a need to extend the small communities fund out, and Ottawa agreed to that extension through that process.

As for the Whistle Bend phase 7 contract, it was awarded for \$13.7 million.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that. When will phase 7 lots be released, and how many will be released?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Phase 7 will include two phases — 7A includes 87 lots: 44 single-family lots, 41 townhouse lots, and two multi-family lots; and 7B includes 46 single-family lots. So, that is what phase 7's two phases encompass, and construction will begin this summer.

Mr. Dixon: So, when will those lots be released? When will they go out for lottery?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, in this year, we have Whistle Bend phase 6B: 101 lots are expected to be finished this calendar year. Whistle Bend phase 7A, there are 87 lots, and Whistle Bend phase 8, there are 16 lots. The total lots released in this fiscal year 2022-23 is 204 lots.

Mr. Dixon: So, I don't think I was clear about that. When will the 87 lots for 7A be released?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The plan is to have the building lots for Whistle Bend phase 7A this summer to be completed this calendar year and then to be released this fiscal year, so by March 2023.

Mr. Dixon: Then for 7B as well — is that the same?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: 7B would be for the coming summer, so that would be the next season. Right now, as I said, for this calendar year, we have 204 lots scheduled for completion this summer and for release to the building season of 2023. So, that's really what we're looking for.

Then, in Whistle Bend 7B, there are 46 single-family lots, and they are scheduled for completion next summer. So, that's when we're looking to get those done.

Mr. Dixon: I thank the minister for that. I'll move on.

I had some questions about Whitehorse City Hall. Obviously, there is — it's headline news over the last couple weeks that this project was cancelled by the City of Whitehorse.

That project did include funding from the territorial government. It is my understanding that \$15.7 million of that was to come from the small communities fund, which we spoke about earlier. I am wondering what happens to that \$15.7 million now that the project has been cancelled.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have said on the floor of this House many, many times that municipalities are governments in their

own right. They have the right to make their decisions. The City of Whitehorse has decided not to proceed with the City Hall reconstruction, which included washroom facilities, a transit hub, and all sorts of different things — improvements to the building's heating and cooling systems — so the City of Whitehorse City Council decided to not proceed with this building. We learned about this last week. We are now assessing what happens to the funds for that project, going forward. That is something we are looking at, too.

Mr. Dixon: Would that money be available for other City of Whitehorse projects, or does it go back into the general pool of infrastructure money that is available to the Yukon? In other words, can it be used in projects outside of Whitehorse or for other communities, or is it earmarked specifically for Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my previous answer, this is a live file. We are working on this right now to understand what the City of Whitehorse's plans are. They are a responsible government, and we are talking with them about what their thoughts are going forward.

I can say that the small communities fund, of course, is an infrastructure fund that is no longer live; it has expired. The extension was granted to 2026 — December 31, as I said in my previous answer. As of January 1, 2027, any unspent funds will be diverted into the Canada community-building fund, formerly the gas tax fund, for distribution under the agreed-upon sharing formula. So, that is what happens then to the funds that have been allocated to the City of Whitehorse project through the small communities fund.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's comments about the City of Whitehorse, but the \$15.7 million that would have come from the small communities fund presumably would have required a Management Board submission from the Yukon government. So, it is the Yukon government's decision about whether or not they will allow that funding to flow to another project or to this project. We know that this project is no longer a project — it has been cancelled.

So, will the government entertain other applications from other communities for the \$15.7 million, or is it earmarked specifically for the City of Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would just like to beg to correct the member opposite. Because the small communities fund has now expired, we do not have the capability to allocate this funding under small communities to other projects in the territory.

So, the funding was allocated and agreed to. This roughly \$16 million was allocated to the two projects at the City of Whitehorse. That's what Ottawa agreed to spend that money on. Those projects are now in flux. I cannot take that money now and allocate it to another project because the small communities fund no longer exists.

Management Board did meet. We did approve the funding for the City of Whitehorse for these two projects. Ottawa agreed to give us some money for those two projects. Now that the small communities fund is a closed door, we cannot go back into the small communities fund and say, "Hey, but there are these other projects we can now allocate it to." That ship has

sailed. This money is dedicated to those two projects until 2027. As soon as January 1, 2027 comes, if they haven't spent it on those projects they have identified, then that money will flow to the gas tax fund or the former gas tax fund. It is now, as I said, called the "Canada community-building fund", and that is where that money will flow in 2027, if it isn't spent on the two projects that were identified by the City of Whitehorse several years ago.

Mr. Dixon: I thank the minister for that. I appreciate the explanation. I don't fully understand, if there was an extension of the small communities fund until 2026, why can there be no further amendments or changes to this. If that is the case, that means that this money will not necessarily be spent, because this project was cancelled. My question then is this: Does the City of Whitehorse have the ability to re-profile their project and then allow this money to flow to a different re-profiled project of some sort of similar nature? If so, what are the parameters on the city to do that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As the member opposite may or may not know, the small communities fund launched in 2015. Under that program, as with most federal infrastructure programs — are by application. We take projects from across the territory, refine them with the municipalities and our community leaders. Once we get the program to a certain stage, we send it to Ottawa for approval. All of the small communities fund — the amount I cited earlier, some \$250 million, I believe it was. I don't have it at my fingertips right now, but I can get it.

Anyway, the small communities fund dollars were all allocated fully. All money was spent, all projects submitted. Some of the projects had not yet gone to tender. We asked for the tender. Ottawa agreed to the extension to December 31, 2026 for those projects. That fund is now closed; it's done. There are no more applications going through. That whole thing has been dismantled. We cannot get applications for the money allocated to the territory through the small communities fund; it is done.

So, now the City of Whitehorse has cancelled this project. We are currently looking to see what the City of Whitehorse does going forward. It's site-specific, so whether or not they come up with some sort of — if they retender the project or something — perhaps that money can be spent on the project at that point. We're looking into that from this point of view. It's sort of a grey zone. We expected the project to go ahead; it didn't.

So, now we're in a process where we have all these funds allocated to specific projects around the building and around the transit hub — high-efficiency buildings, a transit hub to help with civic transit. All of those things are part of the project. That's what was approved. It's a fairly specific ask. It was approved by Ottawa. We're working with the City of Whitehorse to see what it's going to do next.

The City of Whitehorse, going into this cancellation, knew that if they didn't go ahead with this project, that money was gone — more than likely gone. They made the decision with that full knowledge, as far as I'm aware. I have had conversations with the city administration about this, as have my officials. The City of Whitehorse knew that this money was

at risk if they didn't proceed with the project. They still made the decision. So, as a responsible government, I respect the decisions that they made on behalf of the citizens of Whitehorse.

Mr. Dixon: Thank you to the minister for that answer. So, in the event that nothing happens between now and December 2026 and this money rolls into what was formerly known as the gas tax fund, will it be allocated to the City of Whitehorse in their allocation of gas tax funding, or will it be just into the general pot of gas tax?

I apologize for the name of the fund. I realize it's not the gas tax fund anymore. I can't recall the name of it.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: "Gas tax" was so easy to remember. Now we have this — what is it? It's the Canada community-building fund; that doesn't roll off the tongue as easily as "gas tax", so I totally sympathize with the member opposite. It is a difficult fund to remember.

Anyway, the bottom line is that this is where the money will go. The City of Whitehorse will get a portion of the money but not the full amount in any way, shape, or form. There is an agreed-upon sharing formula for the gas tax. That is what will be followed if this money flows into that fund. It will be pennies on the dollar for the City of Whitehorse if that happens in 2027.

Mr. Dixon: Thank you to the minister for that. That is very clear. That \$15.7 million, if nothing happens between now and January 1, 2027, will go into the fund and will be distributed on the allocation formula that the fund has — understood.

I will move on. Whitehorse has indicated as well in their capital budget earlier this year that they are planning on building a new fire hall in the north end of Whitehorse. Will the Government of Yukon be supporting this project financially, and has there been a request from the City of Whitehorse to fund that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The City of Whitehorse fire hall, as I understand it, is now the new focus of the member opposite's questions. I can tell the member opposite that I have not received any correspondence or any questions in my dealings with city council.

On the fire hall, this is something that hasn't come to my table nor to my officials' table at the moment.

Mr. Dixon: Just to be clear then, that project — the fire hall at the north end of Whitehorse — won't receive any federal or territorial infrastructure funding?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: My officials and I are checking the current infrastructure funding under the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. We do not see any application from the City of Whitehorse for the fire hall at the north end, and none of us can recall any ask for funds for that project at this time.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that. I noted that, in the city's budget, they have also identified upgrades to the underground infrastructure in Hillcrest, which was valued at around \$13.5 million. I was wondering if the government was supporting this project or contributing financially to that project.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: For the underground infrastructure in Hillcrest, yes, the governments of Yukon and Canada are supporting that project.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that. Is the minister able to tell us how much the Government of Yukon is contributing to that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Under the Investing in Canada infrastructure fund, we have indicated our support for Whitehorse on this project through that infrastructure fund. It is 75-cent dollars from Ottawa. We have not yet received a formal request from the City of Whitehorse to tell us how much they are looking at for that project through ICIP.

Mr. Dixon: So, if the total value of the project is \$13.5 million and 75 percent of that comes through the federal government through the fund that the minister referenced, what would the breakdown be for the final 25 percent? How much would Yukon government contribute and how much would the City of Whitehorse be expected to contribute?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have received this request as a priority of the City of Whitehorse. The initial estimate is \$13.5 million, but the project still needs to be scoped and properly defined for the federal government. Once we get that scoping work done and all the detailed work has been done, we will make an application to the federal government on behalf of the City of Whitehorse for approval. We will then find out how much of the project the federal government is willing to fund. Once we have that information, we will then know how much is applicable for 75-cent dollars. Generally, once we know that, as the territorial government, we support 25 percent of the eligible costs for the remainder of the project.

That's really how it goes. Right now, we have notification from the City of Whitehorse that the Hillcrest underground infrastructure is a priority for the City of Whitehorse. We are now awaiting them because they are leading the charge on this project. We will find out the detailed work from the City of Whitehorse and then make that application to Ottawa. We will then get information back from Ottawa saying how much of that project is eligible for the Investing in Canada infrastructure fund support and then make further discussions with the City of Whitehorse as to how much we will contribute to the project.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that answer.

The government has funded a few pieces of infrastructure on the other side of the bridge, in Riverdale. The F.H. Collins track and the skateboard park are both very popular as well. However, in that area, I think a number of user groups have noted that there are no washroom facilities in that area. User groups are required to pay out of pocket for the renting of porta-potties. We've heard from a few who were interested in the possibility of the construction of outdoor bathroom facilities that would service both the skate park and the track and field there.

Have there been any discussions with the Yukon government about this? Is the government aware of any proposals to construct washroom facilities in that area?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, both these projects were funded by Community Services and then transferred to the City of Whitehorse in the case of the skateboard park and Education in

the case of the track and field facilities at the education complex in Riverdale.

I appreciate the information being brought forward by the member opposite. I have not had any requests myself for bathroom facilities. I think it's always great to have public bathrooms available to people. It's a critical piece of infrastructure, but I haven't had those requests yet, and we have no plans or funding requests into Ottawa to provide such facilities at this time.

Mr. Dixon: I would like to ask one more question on a constituency front. It's an issue that I wrote to the minister about, but I would like to ask on the floor today.

The City of Whitehorse has indicated that they will be launching a planning exercise for lots 519 and 520, which are known to folks in the Copper Ridge area as the "greenbelt behind Copper Ridge Place". It is actually two lots. One is owned by the City of Whitehorse and one is owned by the Yukon government. In their budget, the City of Whitehorse has allocated planning dollars to do planning for their lot, and there is some question about whether or not the lot that is owned by the Yukon government will be included in that planning exercise. I was hoping that the minister could explain whether that lot will be included in that planning exercise, what the government's plans are for that lot, and what sort of input the Yukon government will have, if it is asked what it wants to do with the lot that is owned by them in that area.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: My information from the Department of Community Services is that it will be included in the city planning exercise.

Acting Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Acting Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that. I will move to a few community infrastructure projects. I would like to start with the Dawson recreation centre. Obviously, this is something we discussed in Question Period earlier this Sitting, but I wanted to follow up on it. The community has arrived at a design for their new rec centre. The cost is around \$40 million to \$45 million.

I am wondering what level of support the Yukon government is budgeting for that project.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question this afternoon. Before I carry on, I just again want to give thanks to my two colleagues to my left here, Phil MacDonald and Matt King, the deputy minister, for their support of me this afternoon. We got into it so fast that I didn't do the proper

introduction. I just want to say that they and the good folks at Community Services who are in the background listening to this discussion this afternoon are doing exemplary work. I want to thank them for their support.

So, we have the Dawson City recreation centre, which, as the member opposite and I know, goes back a very long time now — decades. The option selected by the City of Dawson is the 6,346-square-metre facility. As we have discussed earlier, that's what we are working on.

The five-year capital plan has identified up to — and confirmed — a commitment of \$25 million for the project, including roughly \$20 million from the Investing in Canada infrastructure program and \$5 million from the Yukon government. We have done that in writing.

We now know that the project is probably going to be more than that. We have committed to the City of Dawson that we will work with them to cover the remaining costs. I know that the City of Dawson is looking for money, and we have committed to funding the project on behalf of that community and we will do so.

Mr. Dixon: So, \$25 million has been allocated so far — or identified, at least. Where will the balance come from? Will it come from another federal funding pot or will it come from Yukon government? Is there an expectation for the City of Dawson to contribute to the project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have had preliminary talks with the City of Dawson. I think that the City of Dawson has had conversations as well with other community stakeholders — the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and others.

At this point, it is very difficult to stack infrastructure funds, as the member opposite will know. We were talking about submissions to Community Services from municipalities — on Hillcrest. The same applies to the Dawson City recreation centre. We will have a look at what they have when we actually have a proper submission before us. We will look to find out where we can get funding for the project. It may come from some of the gas tax money that the City of Dawson has. It may come largely from the Yukon government's funds. We may be able to find other stakeholders — perhaps the First Nation community. We're just not sure, but we are looking for those funds at the moment.

As I said, the commitment from the Yukon government is to fund the project, so we will get the Dawson City recreation centre built.

Mr. Dixon: The minister said that they would assess this once they receive a proper submission from Dawson. Is that what we are waiting for? Are we waiting for a submission from the City of Dawson to request funding?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There has not been an application yet to the federal government on this project. The City of Dawson will determine the timeline for the project, but we have to do a conceptual design. Then there will be a final public consultation, and the City of Dawson will decide if that is necessary or not. Then we will go to the federal and Yukon governments for final funding approvals once we have the conceptual design and final consultations through the books.

From there, it will go through the environmental screening, YESAB, detailed design work, contracting, and issuing and awarding the construction tender, but at the moment, we are working with the City of Dawson on conceptual design. This is all hoping for and working toward a completion date of 2026. I believe that is the date we're looking for, so we're working back from that timeline.

Mr. Dixon: So, if there hasn't been an application sent in yet, how was the government able to determine the \$25 million that was identified for this project? Meaning the \$20 million from Canada and the \$5 million from YG — how was that determined if there hasn't been an application yet?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What happens with the Investing in Canada infrastructure program — we submitted a list of priority projects identified by municipalities across the territory. The Dawson City recreation centre was one of the priority projects from the City of Dawson. The identified budget was based on other similar projects across other Yukon communities. We've now worked with the community over the past few years. We have a better idea now of what the City of Dawson is looking for in terms of its recreation facilities. So, we are now working on that new scope, which is a project of a 6,346-square-metre facility in the town of Dawson. That is the project that they have come up with, and we're working with them to find funding for that project. Once the more complete design is ready for a detailed submission to Ottawa, we'll make that submission to Ottawa.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister. I will move on.

The minister was copied on a letter from the Village of Carmacks to the Minister of Highways and Public Works with regard to the grader station in the community. Obviously, getting that old grader station out of the way is a priority for the community and unfortunately the Minister of Highways and Public Works' response to the Village of Carmacks was fairly disheartening for the community, noting that there are no plans to move that grader station until 2025. I am wondering if the Minister of Community Services can offer some comments on the plan to remove the grader station in the community of Carmacks and if he understands the importance of this to the community.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the member opposite's interest in this project — this land development project in the centre of town. I was in Carmacks recently — time sort of flows together, but in the last several months, before this Sitting began — and I have been in regular communication with the Mayor of Carmacks. I actually was toured around the town. He showed me several places of interest within the Village of Carmacks. The old grader station is certainly one of them.

They have grand plans for that site, and I certainly understand the importance of that site to the Town of Carmacks. It is centrally located. I think they have some really interesting ideas for a mix of commercial and residential development in that area, so I do understand the importance of that site to the community of Carmacks.

I also know that it was a former grader station, so there will have to be some remediation work on that. That's not something that is going to be quick or easy to deal with.

So, yes, to the member opposite's question, I am certainly happy to work with the community of Carmacks in realizing their dream for development of their town. Like many communities in the territory, with the unprecedented growth we're seeing in the territory right now, development issues — land development, residential development, and commercial — is certainly of prime importance to many communities across the territory, including Carmacks. I am tasked with helping them realize their goals on that front and I will certainly do that.

Mr. Dixon: Will the Minister of Community Services agree to urge his colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, to accelerate the demolition of the grader station in Carmacks?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The current Minister of Highways and Public Works is — as a matter of fact, every one of my colleagues on this bench work very closely with one another on a regular basis. I have been in touch with my colleague about the importance of this project to the citizens of Carmacks. It is one of many, many projects that this government is undertaking to improve the lives of Yukoners. We will prioritize and get to them as quickly as possible, triaging and putting precedence on the most pressing needs in the territory, as we have done for the last five years. We will continue to work very closely and happily together on these files.

Mr. Dixon: I'll leave it there. I do have some more questions, but I know that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King is interested in asking questions as well, so I will cede the floor to her at this time.

Ms. White: My first question for the minister has to do, actually, around rural ambulance services. What is the stipend that folks get when they're on call now?

Deputy Chair: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, could you repeat your question? It was difficult to understand.

Ms. White: My first question is: What is the amount that volunteer EMS workers are paid? What stipend do they get per hour?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Third Party. It's not an easy answer for the Leader of the Third Party on the amounts. It depends on training; it depends on their certification levels; so there are various criteria that actually go into the amount we pay emergency medical services responders.

I can tell the member opposite that \$1.3 million has been budgeted for honoraria payments to volunteer Emergency Medical Services responders this year. I have a list of rates of pay here that I can give the member opposite. Standby pay is \$3.71 per hour; call-out for a level 1 responder is \$21.20 per hour; call-out for a level 2 responder rises to \$25.44 per hour; call-out for a level 3 responder is \$28.62 per hour; call-out for a level 4 responder is \$30.74 per hour; and non-operational meeting or training is \$19.00 per hour.

We have supervisors who are paid \$636 a month. Approved training for supervisors, or recertification, is paid at \$19.08 per hour. I hope that helps answer the member opposite's question. It is a fairly long list.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer.

What I was looking for was the hourly rate when a person was on call. When was the last time that number was reviewed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am told that the rates were reviewed in 2018. We increased them since the last election, so the rates we are charging now are the new rates. Part of my mandate letter was to increase the honoraria paid to emergency medical responders, so we have actually increased the rates recently.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer.

Can the minister explain to me the current status of the Haines Junction EMS crew? Is it a combination of volunteers and paid positions — by that, I mean government-paid positions — or is it solely volunteers?

Deputy Chair: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, could you repeat the last part of your question?

Ms. White: Sorry, Deputy Chair. I wanted to know if the rural EMS, or the EMS in Haines Junction, was solely a volunteer station or if there were paid Yukon government folks in that EMS station.

Deputy Chair: You speak quite slowly to help with our sound system. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Haines Junction Emergency Medical Services staff are volunteer in Haines Junction. We have three communities that are a blend of volunteer and paid: That would be Whitehorse, Dawson, and Watson Lake — are the only three that are the blended; the rest are volunteer services.

Ms. White: I will try to adapt, as required.

How many volunteers are currently in the Haines Junction station?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Nine.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. A number of years ago, there was a real struggle in the Haines Junction EMS station. Have those issues been resolved?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have been in the role for a year now and I am aware of no strife or problems within the Haines Junction Emergency Medical Services outfit.

Ms. White: I appreciate the minister's answer, but it's that one-government approach. One of the challenges that the Haines Junction station was having was volunteer burnout. As you can imagine, they have a lot of calls in the summertime and their area is quite large. I just wanted to know if the nine folks who are volunteering for their community there have all the support that they need from Yukon government.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: If anybody on the Haines Junction crew has concerns or issues, I would encourage them to bring it up with their supervisor and make it known. Of course, I am looking at the Haines Junction call volume and the number of active volunteers that they had in 2021. As of January 28, 2022, as I have said, they have nine volunteers. That is certainly in line with the call volume in other jurisdictions, other communities in the territory.

We certainly offer all of our employees with Emergency Medical Services the same supports — that includes peer support and counselling, if necessary. I read off a list of some of the supports that we offer to our volunteers and to our EMS

crews in an answer to the Member for Watson Lake earlier this afternoon.

As I said, no concerns have been brought to my attention or to the attention of the officials with me this afternoon. That's all I can say about that this afternoon.

Ms. White: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Can he tell us how many calls the Haines Junction station received in 2021?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: In 2021, the Haines Junction crew responded to 112 calls.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I'm sure that the minister remembers a series of — or, I would hope — most of the editorials he wrote when he was the editor of the *Yukon News*, but he had a particularly interesting one that talked about bolstering support for rural ambulance workers.

Before I continue, is he familiar with that editorial?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm afraid the member opposite has been delving into my writings a lot more than I have of late. I think I wrote — my estimate was more than two million words in my career at the *Yukon News*. So, she has me at a disadvantage. I'm not familiar with that particular editorial that I wrote years ago.

Ms. White: I'll remind the minister.

So, we were talking about the number of volunteers. For example, there are two currently in Ross River, four in Teslin, eight in Faro, eight in Mayo, and nine in Haines Junction. One of the things that he wrote was that: "Ambulance service in rural Yukon is currently based on volunteerism, like coaching sports.

"Alright, not exactly like coaching..."

"But calls to the community this week suggest the service is once again in crisis."

The member goes on to describe that we base the health and safety of rural Yukon on volunteers — and you do a comparison with how it's similar to other volunteer positions, but it's not.

I know we've talked about the training that has been changed, and it has gone from having no on-call amount of money to — now it's \$3.71. But what kind of check-ins does the department do with communities to make sure that they are adequately supported when it comes to volunteer EMS?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I really do appreciate the trip down memory lane that the Leader of the Third Party is taking me on. I see that she is reading an awful lot of my material, and I hope that she takes the time to provide some of it to me so I can actually go back and have a look at what I wrote more than a decade ago in my career as a journalist. I appreciated the comments that she read into the record this afternoon — my impressions as a far younger man, published here in the territory. That's tremendous. I really appreciate the time that she is putting into reading all those great stories from the *Yukon News*. Maybe she can go to *The Globe and Mail* and *Up Here* magazine and others that I wrote for over my tenure as a writer.

Thank you for that. I will say that the territory has moved on since, obviously, I was writing, but we still do rely on volunteers. Volunteerism in the territory, as I said in an earlier answer, is very, very important to the Yukon. It certainly keeps

the community spirit that we see across the territory — keeps our communities running and safe. I really do extend warm thanks to all those who step forward to help their neighbours, friends, and loved ones in the territory.

Today, we have — the world has changed, as I said. We have cellphones; we have modern communications — the communications infrastructure throughout the territory is way, way more robust than it was when I began writing for the *Yukon News* back in 1989. We received papers from Vancouver the day after they were published and had to check; they were out of date the moment they hit the stands if they were coming from out of town.

Things have changed in the territory since then. We have managers assigned and dedicated to our volunteer Emergency Medical Services staff. We provide training; we provide equipment and online and in-person training as well to all of our EMS staff throughout 15 communities.

The other thing that has changed in the territory — and for the better — and it's reflected in the new nation-leading Yukon workers' compensation health and safety legislation that we recently passed in the House — is mental wellness and making sure that our folks are well looked after from a mental wellness point of view. We have mental wellness supports available for all of our EMS staff regardless of whether they are paid or volunteer staff. They are all paid, I suppose, whether they are full-time or volunteer staff. We offer those services — all the services — to the entire cadre of the Emergency Medical Services staff across the territory. So, that's important as well.

I'm sure that there's always more that we can do and we are certainly looking at ways to improve the services we provide to those selfless and dedicated people who step forward to help their community on a regular basis.

Ms. White: To the minister, I actually am not interested in the articles that you wrote, but I am interested in the criticism that you launched at government in your time as editor. How many ambulance calls did Watson Lake get last year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The remarks of the Leader of the Third Party cut so deep. She is not interested in what I wrote so many years ago. It somewhat pains me.

In Watson Lake, there were 353 calls in 2021.

Ms. White: Can the minister remind me how many volunteers are in Watson Lake and how many paid staff are in Watson Lake for EMS?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Currently, in Watson Lake, we have eight paid staff and we have two volunteers supporting those eight paid staff. Those are the numbers I have here before me.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. For anyone who is interested, it is worthwhile to read this editorial where the current minister criticizes the government of the day for the handling of EMS services knowing that, at the time of the writing of this article that year, there were 400 call-outs with eight volunteers. Now we have 350 call-outs with eight staff and two volunteers. The question he asked was if it was sustainable. I guess the question I ask is: Is it sustainable the way EMS is being done now?

Again, the minister made the comparison that volunteering was like coaching but not quite like coaching. So, the question

that I will leave hanging, I guess — and the minister can choose to respond or not — is whether or not it is sustainable. With that, understanding the complications of doing this remotely, I will cede the floor.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite, I suppose, for that. I am not sure, again — it wasn't mentioned when my editorial was written — how many years ago. It had to be at least 11 years and perhaps more than that. The territory is a vastly different place than it was 11 years ago. As a matter of fact, EMS in Watson Lake is vastly different from what it was 11 years ago, because we now have eight paid staff people and two volunteers. That is a vastly different thing, and we have also changed the entire model for paying for and delivering emergency medical services care in Watson Lake.

We have recently — as a matter of fact, it was just in the last — just this year that we have actually gotten that through Management Board and have started these changes that we have going here. I am very happy to have brought that new model to Watson Lake, and we are going to see how it works and see if we can't continue to improve emergency medical services in the territory and all sorts of other services in the territory that citizens rely on, going forward.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line debate.

Mr. Dixon: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Copperbelt North has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$107,023,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$116,715,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$223,738,000 agreed to

Department of Community Services agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 12, Department of Finance, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 12, Department of Finance, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any general debate?

Department of Finance

Hon. Mr. Silver: I won't spend a lot of time in any preamble today, other than to welcome Scott Thompson, my Deputy Minister of Finance, who is here to help support me this afternoon, and also, just a note about the dynamic team that we have in Finance. Putting together an annual budget represents a herculean task, that is for sure — each and every year, even the supplementaries as well, and the department does this with a relatively small team.

Over the years, I have been very fortunate to attend multiple in-person and virtual all-staff meetings, pancake breakfasts, and events with the department. Each time, I am welcomed with open arms, and each time I get a glimpse into what makes the Department of Finance so special, and it is the people. Not only does the department continue to hire the best at what they do, but it is also clear that they love doing it — so much so that, back in January, I helped present a departmental lifetime achievement award for an individual who has been with the department for 40 years. I don't often name public servants in the Legislature, but I think it's worth acknowledging Betty-Anne Stubbins and her contribution to public service over the last four decades. I had the pleasure of hearing a bit about Betty-Anne's story over her career, and it's hard to imagine a time when smoking was still happening at people's desks and budgets were being put together without computers, but those were some of the stories we were hearing from Ms. Stubbins' experiences.

While an organization may only see a handful of individuals stay within one department for their whole career, I was also struck — and this is important to state on the record, too — by how many people in the department have been there for more than 10 years and 15 years as well. That is a credit to the department. It does work like a family, that's for sure. With this amount of experience and dedication, you can really see the expertise and institutional knowledge that is reflected in their work, based upon the dedication of these public servants.

The department continues to do the background work to make sure that money gets where it needs to go to support Yukoners through COVID, for example, and through other issues as well. The department tracks the latest federal, provincial, and international trends to ensure that our tax rates are consistent and appropriate for our current environment. It also does a fantastic job to make sure that rural Yukoners have access to banking services so that they don't need to make the

long drive to Whitehorse — or Dawson City or Watson Lake, for that matter — for their financial needs.

I will end by just saying that the Department of Finance counts every receipt issued and every cheque, and they track all financial transactions that enable us to reconcile the entirety of the accounts for the Government of Yukon each and every year, and they do it with incredible precision with a roster of just 78 full-time equivalent positions. They do it with a responsible and sustainable budget, as well, of \$11.8 million in this year — which is nearly identical to last year's total as well.

With that, I will end my comments to begin with and open the floor up to the opposition for some questions.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the officials from Finance for their work on the budget for their department and otherwise.

At this point in the Sitting, as members know, we are reaching the tail-end and need to prioritize which questions we're asking for which departments. I will be — the questions that we would have otherwise, time permitting, have asked during debate on Finance, we'll be addressing through written questions or letters.

With that, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3 — pardon me, Deputy Chair. I am ahead of myself here.

At this point, I'll be saving those questions for written questions in a letter and moving that we wrap up debate in the interest of moving on to other departments.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 12, Department of Finance, in Bill No. 204?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line debate.

Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 12, Department of Finance, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 12, Department of Finance, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Lake Laberge has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 12, Department of Finance, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$11,764,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$32,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$11,796,000 agreed to

Department of Finance agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*. Is there any further general debate?

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for five minutes.

Recess

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*. Is there any further general debate?

Department of Health and Social Services — *continued*

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I just wanted to put on the record a couple of statistics with respect to the Health and Social Services budget, and then I am happy to continue to entertain questions for the few minutes that we have in today's schedule.

The estimated budget for the Health and Social Services department of Yukon government for the 2022-23 fiscal year is \$510,285,000. This represents a 4.09-percent increase from last year. The 2022-23 main estimates also include an increase of 63.5 FTEs over the 2021-22 main estimates. The FTE count for 2022-23 will total 1,590 FTEs. There are 103.4 temporary FTEs, 82.8 temporary FTEs for the COVID response, which are being actively utilized across the department, as well as 20.6 temporary FTEs for the substance use health emergency.

There are more than \$11,600,000 in this year's budget dedicated to the health and social resources necessary to manage the ongoing risk of COVID-19 in our territory. As I have said earlier, it includes 82.8 temporary FTEs.

I will certainly have more statistics to provide on line items in the budget, but I am happy to entertain questions, should there be any. If I don't have time to answer them, I will be happy to take them under advisement and provide further information.

Mr. Cathers: In resuming debate here today, I would like to ask a question of the minister just prompted by the issue that I raised earlier today about Opportunities Yukon. We understand that they are still waiting for a contribution agreement for the current fiscal year, as well as the new housing project that the minister gave a statement on in Question Period. There is, as the minister knows, a long list of NGOs funded by the Department of Health and Social Services. Those NGOs typically receive funding through a contribution agreement that begins on April 1.

My question is: How many of the NGOs funded by Health and Social Services have received a funding agreement for the current fiscal year, and how many are still waiting for a funding agreement for the current fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I can see if I have the actual number. I can certainly indicate that all of the NGOs that are supported by the Department of Health and Social Services have received at least a cost-of-living increase for 2022-23. I am just trying to see if I have the actual figure for how many of the transfer

payment agreements or MOUs are already signed for this particular year.

As the member opposite knows, it is not unusual — particularly in the cases when we are negotiating for new programming or new situations or changes in the programming — for there to be a period of time after April 1 but where the negotiations continue and ultimately the transfer payment agreements or the MOUs are finalized — a short period of time after that — then, ultimately, they are signed and the individual organizations proceed, as they had in the past, with new funding agreements. In particular, with respect to Opportunities Yukon, we are working on finalizing the changes to their work and how we will manage to support them in that way.

Seeing the time, Deputy Chair, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 25, 2022:

35-1-42

Environment Act — Performance Audit — 2015-2018 — Yukon Executive Council Office Government Internal Audit Services (January 2022) (Clarke, N.)

35-1-43

Review of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act Interim Progress Report (March 2022) (Streicker)

35-1-44

Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees (April 25, 2022) (Clarke, N.)