



Office of the Minister of Finance
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

December 27, 2024

Honourable Jeremy Harper
Speaker
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Box 2703
Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2C6

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Re: 2025/26 Mains Estimates and Legislated Process for Mains Estimates Presentation to the Legislative Assembly – Votes 01, 23, 24, and 26

Thank you for your letter of December 19, 2024.

I respect the difficult position you find yourself in, as the neutral, non-voting Chair of Members' Services Board. The nature of the decisions made at Members' Services Board are done so by majority vote and are not necessarily unanimous. The composition of Members' Services Board provides the Official Opposition and the Third Party with a majority vote for the purposes of making decisions.

I disagree with your assertion that Members' Services Board has the final say in respect of amounts to be included in the estimates in respect of the Legislative Assembly, Ombudsman's Office, Elections Yukon, and The Child and Youth Advocate's Office.

As you know, every appropriation of any part of the public revenue must be recommended to the Legislative Assembly by message of the Commissioner, in the session in which the vote, resolution, address or bill is proposed.

By the operation of s. 4(2) of the *Financial Administration Act*, an act of the Yukon Legislature that has been made a paramount Act, it is Management Board that has been authorized to direct the form of the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the government for each financial year.

While the various Acts that you mention authorize the Members' Services Board to consider the budgetary requests of various bodies, and they authorize a process for reviewing and eventually submitting those requests to my attention as Minister of Finance, they do not ultimately effect the authority of Management Board to determine the amounts that the Government of Yukon will ultimately place before the Legislature as its estimates.

The above is a brief summary of a legal opinion originally provided to the Yukon Legislative Assembly in 2008 when the Yukon Party was in government.

The recent freeze in Caucus spending for this fiscal year, implemented by the Yukon Legislative Assembly office, is the result of overspending decisions made by Members' Services Board. Supplementary Budget increases have been requested for the current year, meaning that offices are projecting spending beyond the approved authorities granted in the Yukon Legislature.

This is cause for concern as we look to Budget 2025/26 and review the requests that have been made. As noted below, the requested increases are significant and include funding for an additional 5.4 new employees. Yukoners expect the Government of Yukon to prepare budgets that reflect their needs and as elected officials, we are all accountable for spending. It is my job, as the Minister of Finance to oversee the territory's spending in a fiscally responsible way on behalf of all Yukoners.

	2024-25 Main Estimates (000s)	2025-26 Request (000s)	Requested Increase (\$)	Requested Increase (%)
Yukon Legislative Assembly	8,559	9,725	1,166	13.6
Elections Yukon	1,184	2,590	1,406	118.8
Office of the Ombudsman	1,798	2,091	293	16.3
Child and Youth Advocate	1,104	1,410	306	27.7
Total	12,645	15,816	3,171	25.1

It is particularly interesting for the Member for Lake Laberge to raise this issue given the past conflict with the independent offices in the provision of requested budgets during the Yukon Party's time in office, ultimately requiring the Yukon Legislative Assembly to seek out the 2008 legal opinion. I note that the Yukon Party held the balance of power on Members' Services Board during that time. As result, they were able to present budgets to the Minister of Finance that were reflective of their wishes.

Our budget focus is on providing health care that meets the needs of Yukoners, protecting our environment and ensuring we are able to respond to wildfires and floods. I will continue the important work to finalize a fiscally responsible budget that delivers programs and services to support Yukoners. I look forward to tabling the 2025/26 Budget Bill in the Yukon Legislative Assembly during the 2025 Spring Sitting.

Sincerely,



Sandy Silver
Minister of Finance