



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 199

1st Session

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HANSARD

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable David Laxton

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. David Laxton, MLA, Porter Creek Centre

DEPUTY SPEAKER — Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME CONSTITUENCY PORTFOLIO

Hon. Darrell Pasloski	Mountainview	Premier Minister responsible for Finance; Executive Council Office
Hon. Elaine Taylor	Whitehorse West	Deputy Premier Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture; Women's Directorate; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister responsible for Justice; Yukon Development Corporation/ Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Doug Graham	Porter Creek North	Minister responsible for Education
Hon. Scott Kent	Riverdale North	Minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources; Highways and Public Works
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Minister responsible for Community Services; Public Service Commission
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister responsible for Environment
Hon. Mike Nixon	Porter Creek South	Minister responsible for Health and Social Services; Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin	Minister responsible for Economic Development; Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Darius Elias	Government House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin
Hon. David Laxton	Porter Creek Centre
Patti McLeod	Watson Lake

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

New Democratic Party

Elizabeth Hanson	Leader of the Official Opposition Whitehorse Centre
Jan Stick	Official Opposition House Leader Riverdale South
Kevin Barr	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes
Lois Moorcroft	Copperbelt South
Jim Tredger	Mayo-Tatchun
Kate White	Takhini-Kopper King

Liberal Party

Sandy Silver	Leader of the Third Party Klondike
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 21, 2015 — 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 proceed with the Order Paper. Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the MacBride Museum Society to create an exhibit of Yukon's telecommunication innovators in the old telegraph office.

Mr. Elias: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use the community development fund to support the Friends of Mount Sima Society to construct a beginner and intermediate double-track downhill mountain bike trail and single-track trail for four-season use.

Mr. Silver: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take responsibility for the 22-percent cost overrun on the new LNG facility being built in Whitehorse.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) take responsibility for breaking a platform commitment that Yukon develop a goal of zero waste, with a target of 50 percent waste diversion by 2015;

(2) explain to Yukoners why it failed to keep this commitment; and

(3) explain to Yukoners whether or not this commitment has now been abandoned completely.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister? This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Oil and gas development in Kaska traditional territory

Ms. Hanson: The Kaska has long held a unique place within what is now known as the Yukon. However, in recent years, it appears that this government has purposely gone out of its way to antagonize the Kaska. One of the Premier's first actions was to unilaterally remove section 13 of the Yukon *Oil and Gas Act*, which required Yukon First Nations' consent to develop oil and gas. The move seemed to lack any purpose; apart from provoking the Kaska, who said the move — and I quote: "...destroyed any doubts which may exist regarding your government's profound lack of respect for recognized title and rights."

Despite this, the government now says it can solve everything by negotiating a reconciliation agreement with the Kaska. So can the Premier explain the purpose of the reconciliation agreement, the scope of the reconciliation agreement, and how, and by whom, it will be implemented?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: As we have said in this House before, our most preferred path is a self-government agreement, as has been the case for 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations.

We realize at this time, however, that there is no mandate from the federal government toward a self-government agreement nor is there any will by the Kaska or the White River First Nations to go down that path. Having said that, we are committed to a new approach through reconciliation and we're doing that both with the Kaska, with the Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation and White River First Nation as well. This is a path that will be unique to each First Nation as we move forward and determine what the priorities are and we go forward from there.

Ms. Hanson: He didn't answer the question, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly surprising to see this government adopt the language of reconciliation when it comes to its dealings with the Kaska. Given their track record, their preferred outreach with Yukon First Nations is in the courts.

Justice Murray Sinclair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said — and I quote: "Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts." Forging and maintaining respectful relationships has not been this government's forte. In fact they often appear to be actively resisting relationship building.

Can the Premier explain exactly how this proposed reconciliation agreement will contribute to repairing the existing relationship with the Kaska people and, most importantly, who among the Kaska will have a say in approving or rejecting the proposed reconciliation agreement?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Of course the opposition is always looking for those occurrences where governments don't agree, and certainly that will occur in the past and will occur I'm sure in the future as well.

What we do know is that there are many, many instances on a day-to-day basis where this government works with First

Nations to achieve goals that are to the benefit of all Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: What the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made clear is that reconciliation is not about simple transactions. To date, the government's statements on their proposed reconciliation agreements are like most of their proposals — long on words but short on substance. The timing of this proposed reconciliation agreement is also interesting, coming as it does with the Yukon Party government's declared intention to open southeast Yukon to fracking. Yukoners have a legitimate right to know what is on the table.

Is this government trying to negotiate a resource access agreement under the auspices of a reconciliation agreement?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I know it pains the opposition to hear when this government continues to work with First Nations every day. We will continue to do so, and we will continue to work with representatives of the Kaska and White River First Nations to move toward a reconciliation agreement — a reconciliation agreement that will fit the concerns of each of those individual First Nations and focus on the priorities that we agree upon. That will be the path going forward. We want to ensure, as I have said in this House many times, that those First Nations can benefit from economic development within their First Nation. That is a priority for the First Nation and that is a priority for this government.

Question re: Continuing care facilities

Ms. Stick: The Yukon government's proposed \$300-million, 300-bed continuing care institution will be the largest and most expensive capital works project in Yukon history. Last week the minister responsible took great pains to trot out the two needs assessments and one business case that were written about the 300-bed model, and only the 300-bed model.

This bigger-is-better approach to health care was selected in the absence of public consultation, without analyzing seniors' health needs across the continuum of care, and without costing out other care options to support the health and well-being of our aging population.

Mr. Speaker, on what concrete evidence did this government base its selection of 300 beds before the two needs assessments and business case were commissioned?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: In the area of the business cases and the needs assessments — especially the needs assessments — those will give us good information, good data and statistical information on how we need to move forward with numbers of seniors who will be requiring this high level of care in the coming years.

What we see before us in this budget is an extension of that, with a 150-bed facility in the Whistle Bend area. This government believes in planning for the future and planning for possibilities, so what we've done is — we're looking at a model that is expandable, both with the facility and the amount of land that we've acquired, if, in eight, 10, 20 years down the road, those services are needed.

We see a fast demand — a high demand — for services in the next coming years, and we expect that the 150 beds in that new care facility will be used very quickly.

Ms. Stick: The government's own March 11 press release identifies a 300-bed facility.

This government has not worked with Yukon citizens or medical professionals to find the most effective and affordable means to meet the needs of our seniors and elders; instead, they chose a 300-bed model that will proportionately be more expensive to operate. The estimated O&M costs will rob the continuing care budget of its ability to focus on home care and other supports that help Yukoners age in place. This is not responsible planning.

This Yukon Party approach has already wasted millions of our health care dollars. What other options were considered in addition to or besides a \$300-million megaplex that is shown to be the most expensive?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of the services that we continue to offer to seniors across the territory in all communities — in fact many of those services that the members opposite continue to vote against. This government will stand behind those seniors; this government will stand behind providing the services and the level of care that those seniors require. The members opposite continue to vote against that.

This government has a solid track record when it comes to looking into the future and looking at future demands on our health care system, especially with respect to services to seniors. We know that the number of seniors who will require a high level of care — not care that can be provided in a community, not care that can be provided with home care, but care that requires medical staff and doctors in close proximity to hospitals that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I know the Leader of the Official Opposition would like to speak but she'll just have to wait her turn here.

But I'll go back on this government's track record to providing those services to seniors, people with disabilities or people with mental health issues. This government puts its money where its mouth is. The members opposite continue to vote against that.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, it's funny he should mention nurses and doctors because they have not consulted with them prior to coming out with this announcement.

Last week, the minister said he agrees with the NDP that keeping seniors in their homes as long as possible is the most viable option. Is he not aware that the number of Yukon seniors being assisted by home care services is lower today than it was four years ago? Those are the statistics from your own documents.

The Yukon NDP's vision is for aging in place, providing seniors and elders with the ability to choose from a range of options that are more affordable, more effective. The Yukon government has provided no such choice and it will cost all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister show Yukoners what other options, rather than the expensive 300-bed model, were on the table or admit he never considered anything else?

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It's difficult to know where to begin with this.

First off, the opposition continues to talk about a 300-bed facility. Of course we have said that we're building a 150-bed — but we have the vision to know that we're aging quickly and our population is increasing, so we will build a facility that has the ability to expand later if the need arises. That is called "vision" — something that the other two parties don't have because they describe this as a warehouse.

It's interesting how the NDP in Alberta, as part of their platform, is proposing 2,000 more long-term care beds. It's too bad they couldn't take a lesson from their partners in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we've increased health care spending by 350 percent. We've added more seniors residences and we are looking at options for assisted living. We continue to work to ensure that we provide the best level of care for all our citizens. Perhaps it's still early in the afternoon and the member opposite is still out to lunch.

Question re: Energy transmission line

Mr. Silver: I want to talk about this government's vision on energy. It has been well known that, for many years, the Yukon Party government spent its time and resources planning to sell our energy futures to a private company from Alberta. Many fruitless years and a resignation later, Yukon Party 2.0 has decided to take a closer-to-home look to energy solutions.

For example, last year, the government funded a study to look at the viability of an electrical interconnection between Yukon and southeast Alaska. It was called the West Creek project. Last fall, the minister said that the report would be ready in February of 2015. When will that \$250,000 report be released to the public?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Studying the transmission link and potential telecommunications link between the Yukon and Skagway was extremely important work. The final study is scheduled to be completed this month, April 2015 — that's my understanding from officials. There were two scenarios analyzed: developing the West Creek hydro project — which the member opposite referenced — near Skagway, and exporting power to Yukon during winter or Yukon transmitting power to Skagway for the cruise ship industry when we have additional capacity during the summer months.

Again, we also believe that an economic development corridor between Yukon and southeast Alaska has the potential to generate and provide affordable, reliable clean energy. It may also increase hydro supply — there are a number of potential projects located along that corridor, both in the Yukon, as well as British Columbia, then further into Alaska.

Again, as mentioned, my understanding from officials in Energy, Mines and Resources is that the final study is scheduled to be completed this month.

Mr. Silver: Our energy demands continue to grow and it's time to make a decision on new sources of power. This government is now left with only one choice — more reliance on fossil fuels — because of its lack of long-term planning. It kind of left us with no other options.

Better late than never, but the fact remains that expanded hydro capacity is years away from becoming a reality. The government has two separate energy planning projects going on with two different departments in charge and with two different timelines in play. Yukoners have been waiting for this government to get serious about expanding our hydro capacity for more than a decade, and it appears that we're going to have to continue to wait.

Realistically, how far away is the West Creek project in Skagway from actually happening?

Hon. Mr. Kent: The West Creek project, which would be the production project in Skagway, is something the Alaska Power & Telephone Company is proposing. It isn't something that is being proposed by this government. Again, we've looked at the transmission viability and, again, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to listen to the Member for Klondike when it comes to promoting the use of natural gas or, in this case now, he's not promoting the use of natural gas. We go back to 2011, December 14, I believe it was, and Hansard clearly shows that the Member for Klondike, at that time, was very supportive of using natural gas, not only to supplement the domestic power supply, but also supply some of the mines in the Yukon.

Again, we noticed the Member for Klondike flip-flopping on an issue. He just continues to — it is almost like watching Timbits hockey when it comes to the Liberals. There are a bunch of people just chasing the puck around rather than a solid strategy and vision, and that is what the Yukon Party has.

Mr. Silver: Talking about solid strategy and vision, this is the government that wanted to privatize our power and now we are actually being pigeonholed into one option and one option only because of this government's decisions. Yukoners can appreciate that proper planning takes a lot of time. We only have to look at \$6 million wasted on scrapping the design for F.H. Collins to see what happens when planning is not done properly.

Yukoners are not impressed with the fact that the Yukon Party government is only starting to address the issues of expanded hydro power after 12 years of being in office and, again, most of those years were spent by a former Energy, Mines and Resources minister leading the way toward privatization. Is this the leadership that the minister speaks about, Mr. Speaker?

Why did this government sit on its hands until an expansion of fossil fuel use in the form of a new LNG facility was its only option to meet the expanded demands for power?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In addition to the very revisionist history we are hearing from the Leader of the Liberal Party, I would point out and remind — I actually have to ask the member: Has he been under a rock for the last decade? Is the member not aware of the investment in Mayo B, of the

investment in the Aishihik third turbine, of the investment in the Carmacks-Stewart transmission line project? All of these are investments by this government in public hydro infrastructure assets. In fact, I would remind the member that, in this term, we have strengthened the oversight and governance of Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation and also made it very clear that all public hydro assets will continue to remain public hydro assets. We are investing over \$100 million in public hydro assets. The member is either blissfully unaware of this or choosing to reflect something different in this House.

Question re: School bus driver wages

Mr. Barr: School bus drivers in the Yukon joined a union over one year ago, and we hope they get a fair first contract with the employer soon. I would encourage the public to check the YouTube video on Yukon's school bus drivers. For too long these bus-driving jobs have been treated as short-term, second-class employment, but school bus drivers have a huge responsibility to safely transport our children, even in bad winter conditions. They have every right to seek improvements in their working conditions. Their wages and benefits should reflect the important work that they do.

Why has the Yukon government neglected to include school bus drivers in the fair wage schedule?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously, the Yukon government very much values the role that school bus drivers play, not only in our education system, but in our society. We, of course, continue to work with the provider of the service through their contract for school bus services in the territory. With regard to the matter the member is referring to, I will have to get back to him with regard to what was included in what schedule of which act and what was not. I will, of course, continue to work with the company providing the contract currently and providing the services to Yukoners.

Mr. Barr: The fair wage schedule sets the wage rates by category, class and job title to be paid to persons working on a contract for a public work of the Yukon. It is a policy tool that the government uses to ensure that contractors pay fair wages to their employees. The fair wage schedule includes electricians, pipefitters and many other occupations, including some driving jobs, but there is not fair wage set for school bus drivers. I raised this issue in December 2014 without getting anywhere with the minister.

Why does this Yukon government believe Yukon school bus drivers should be excluded from the fair wage schedule?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We have a contract with a private contractor to supply bus services to the Department of Education. The fair wage schedule, which is part of the *Employment Standards Act*, is not one of the laws that apply to our busing contract with Takhini Transport. What has happened in this situation is exactly the process that should be followed. If the employees feel that they require a union to represent them, then they should go through the process, which is exactly what's happening.

There is no requirement as far as I'm concerned to include these people in the fair wage schedule because this is a Yukon company employing Yukon employees.

Mr. Barr: The minister is not answering the question. School bus drivers do critical work and we trust them with the safety of our children. They deserve respect and they deserve to be covered by the fair wage schedule. I have a simple question for the minister and I am sure Yukoners would appreciate a straight answer: Why does the Yukon government believe Yukon school bus drivers should be excluded from the fair wage schedule?

Hon. Mr. Graham: It is almost like the members opposite feel that we should have a fair wage schedule for every single occupation in the territory. That is called a minimum wage. We have a number of —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Graham: The members opposite would have everybody equalized at the poverty line. I understand that, Mr. Speaker, because that is the socialist ideal.

We have a number of safeguards in place to ensure that our children are our number one priority. Those things are all included in the contract that we have with a private contractor. We are not going to get involved between every contractor in the territory or every employer in the territory and their employees. That is one of the things that is covered by union negotiations and that's why we believe that that is the system that should be followed.

Question re: Yukon species at risk

Ms. White: Since 2002, the Yukon Party government has had a long history of half-hearted attempts to proceed with Yukon species at risk legislation. However, in recent years, this most recent combination of the Yukon Party seems to have given up altogether.

In 1998, when national species at risk legislation was being developed, Yukon committed to implementing our own complementary species at risk legislation that would reflect the Yukon's unique interests. Yukon has many species at risk that are simply not being given adequate protection by federal legislation.

The Yukon Party likes to talk about their solid track record. So how is this for a track record? In 2003, 2005 and again in 2009, this government was brought species at risk legislation that they chose to ignore and not advance.

When will this government implement made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Canada wrote to the Yukon to indicate that a recent review by the federal government respecting the federal *Species at Risk Act* indicated that there may be some inconsistencies with the definition of "federal lands" that is in conflict with the devolution agreement.

We understand the federal government is considering some minor amendments to correct the inconsistencies identified with the definition of "federal lands". We work with our management board and our local First Nations resource managers within those First Nations to address species at risk.

Ms. White: The federal species at risk legislation that this government continues to rely on is inefficient at the best of times and completely inadequate at the worst of times. The federal government has given recommendations on what species to protect by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada but those recommendations are only as good as the members of the federal Cabinet who review them and, as of late, they have been putting politics ahead of species and habitat protections.

I think most Yukoners would agree that a federal government that has been ignoring and silencing scientists across the board will likely not make the right decision when it comes to Yukon species at risk.

Why is the Yukon Party continuing to rely on blatantly inadequate federal legislation to protect Yukon species at risk?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I beg to differ with the member opposite. We do a really good job dealing with species at risk. We just need to look at our bison population, one of the largest non-diseased herds. We managed that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Yes, exactly, federal species at risk. We managed that closely by monitoring populations. Our bison management team that we have — a partnership with the local First Nations and renewable resource councils of the local affected First Nations work together on this. We're doing a great job for species at risk. We're looking forward to doing more work in the future. Thank you.

Ms. White: Bison are a really visible population. We only need to look at Baikal sedge to see how badly they're really doing at species at risk. Made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation is essential to ensure the interests of Yukon are actually met. This government has a track record of inaction when it comes to protecting Yukon's wildlife. We only need to review their abysmal record when it comes to developing land use plans — those plans that would allow some protection of the habitat of endangered Yukon wildlife. One has to wonder why there is either an inability or unwillingness for this government to develop made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation.

Why is this government so resistant toward implementing made-in-Yukon species at risk legislation?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the member opposite for the question. What this government is committed to is working with the First Nations, working with the management board and the local renewable resource councils to develop management plans for species at risk and implement and work with them.

Question re: Inmate risk assessments

Ms. Moorcroft: When the Auditor General's report on the state of corrections in Yukon was released, it showed that all of this government's talk on community safety and protection of vulnerable individuals was just that — talk. The Auditor General found that this government was not effective in offering necessary programming that would reduce recidivism and keep our streets safe. Even more shocking was the fact that the majority of people convicted of sexual assault

or domestic violence were not receiving the additional required risk assessments. It wasn't a shock, however, that the minister dodged my question on the matter, so I'll ask it again.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister assure this House that all those convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence are now being given the necessary risk assessments?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: In fact, I answered the member's question. She just didn't like the answer.

As I indicated to the member, we recognized that during the period of time that the Auditor General conducted the review in 2012, there were issues with the programming not meeting the standard that the government and the Department of Justice had set out.

As I indicated to the member, some of these issues were already identified by staff through internal quality review processes prior to receiving the Auditor General's report. Those additional areas that were identified in the Auditor General's report were immediately made a priority.

As I have indicated to the member, we remain committed to improving the programming to meeting the standard that has been set out. I have confidence in the work that staff are doing. They will, of course, have my support and this government's support in doing that work.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, I will ask the minister to listen to the question that I am asking him. I'm asking him about conducting risk assessments on inmates who have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The risk assessments that are required for these individuals are there to ensure that vulnerable members of our community will not be victimized following the release of inmates.

It is essential that these assessments take place and the minister should quit dodging the question and hiding behind public servants.

Can the minister give Yukoners a guarantee that no more of the risk assessments designed to protect vulnerable individuals will be missed by the department?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I'm not sure if the member doesn't understand my answer or if she just doesn't like it, but I will again state, as I have before, that during the 2012 time period that was reviewed by the Auditor General, there were gaps in program delivery. Some of these were, in part, due to the challenge that staff were facing in transitioning into the new correctional facility. As I've mentioned to the member, some of these issues were already identified by staff through internal quality reviews and steps taken prior to receiving the Auditor General's report. Those areas where there are gaps or issues that were identified in the Auditor General's report that had not previously been identified are being focused on as priorities, and that includes preventing gaps from occurring in the future. As I indicated to the member previously, the department is focused on meeting the standard that was set out as a result of the work done in 2009 and since that time. I am committed to supporting them in that. That, of course, includes preventing gaps in program delivery.

I remind the member that this is a substantial increase in the standard we've set out and the types of programs that have

been set out since her time as Minister of Justice when it was certainly inadequate by today's standard.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, just because you're moving buildings doesn't give you a free pass on conducting risk assessments on inmates who have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The minister has said that his department is working to improve gaps in program delivery. I'm going to ask for the third time if the minister will address the question of doing risk assessments. Can the minister assure this House that all those who are convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence are now being given the necessary risk assessments? The Auditor General reported that they weren't being done. Can the minister now say that the risk assessments are being conducted on individuals who have been convicted of sexual assault and domestic violence?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I will again reiterate to the member that the issues that were identified in the Auditor General's report — some of these matters were identified prior to the receipt of that report through internal quality review measures.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member heckling again — which, I point out, her own staff member described yesterday as “lacking class” when members were heckling the Assembly.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I have held back for some of the comments today, but this one has crossed the line. We can go either abusive or insulting language — we can go that way, or we can go imputes false or unavowed motives to a member not inside this gallery.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: On the point of order, I'm not sure how the member thinks this falls under either one of them. I was quoting what an NDP staff member put out as public communication on Twitter yesterday, and remind them they're hypocrites by their own standard.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: You can't have a point of order on a point of order.

Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on the original point of order. Did you have —

Ms. White: On the last comment, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: No.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: The rhetoric in the House has been rising. We've had several situations in the past few days where I have directed and cautioned both sides of the House on the use of different words, and yet it continues.

As for the minister's comment, this House doesn't like to have comments made to or about people who are not able to come here and defend themselves. The fact that it was on

Twitter — I would ask the minister to refrain from saying who put it on Twitter and just comment on the Twitter statement, as it is.

The order and decorum in the House is set by the members. The Speaker's job is to maintain it, but it is the members who will set the level of the order and decorum here. If you want it at a high level or a low level, that's up to you. I'm only going to maintain it at what you feel is tolerable. If you take offence to something somebody has said, in some cases, maybe you should get a thicker skin, because I will not defend you when you turn around and do it again.

At this point in time, I'm not going to give a ruling. I've made my statement.

The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business

Mr. Elias: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of government private members to be called on Wednesday, April 22, 2015. They are Motion No. 926, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and Motion No. 942, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Elias: 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

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 18: *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — continued

Chair: The matter before Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*.

Department of Community Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to rise again to speak to the Department of Community Services main estimates for the 2015-16 budget year.

When we broke yesterday — when our proceedings concluded yesterday — we were discussing a number of issues related to solid-waste management and, in particular, recycling. I wanted to quickly take a moment to note one program that the Yukon government supports through the Department of Community Services, because I didn't have a chance to mention it yesterday. That is the Yukon recycling club. I had the chance to give some awards to some very deserving young students this year, earlier this month, and I wanted to highlight that work that's done to raise awareness of recycling in the schools by the Yukon recycling club.

The Yukon recycling club is a program for youth aged 4 to 16. Participants receive points along with the refunds for each beverage container they bring to local processors and community depots. These points are then redeemed for prizes contributed to the club by local businesses. The top point earners from each age category are entered into a grand prize draw at the end of each club year. This year's grand prize winners ranged in age from 9 to 16 and come from Whitehorse and Dawson City. The prizes included laptops, tablets, custom bikes and model rockets. This is the 20th year of operation for the Yukon recycling club and, each year, more than 1,000 youths participate. The club costs about \$100,000 annually to administer, with support coming from the recycling fund, which comes under the budget of the Department of Community Services.

In particular, I just wanted to note Arlene Carpina from the Christ the King Elementary School, who received an award and a prize this year, as well as Jan Mark Espinosa, also from that school. Jordan Lee La Vallee from Hidden Valley School received an award and of course Eva Von Flotow from Vanier also won her age category for the recycling club.

There was one other winner from Dawson City — whose name escapes me at the moment and I don't have it here, so I will have to return with that — but she won a bicycle that was awarded to her a few weeks ago as well.

I just wanted to make that note as I had forgotten to mention the recycling club in my previous comments — about some of the ways that we support recycling in the territory. I wanted to congratulate those winners of the recycling club awards and thank them for participating this year, and thank all of the students throughout the Yukon who participated in the recycling club. It is obviously a great program that the Yukon government values and it does a fantastic job in raising awareness and promoting recycling throughout the Yukon.

As a shameless plug, I would note that at this year's trade show — the Lions Club's trade show — that will occur I believe in May — the recycling club will have a booth. Yukon students are encouraged to visit the booth to sign up for this coming year's recycling club. If they do come and sign up at the trade show, they will be granted an additional 1,000 points to start off with. So it is a nice boost for any students who are

interested in participating in the recycling club to attend the trade show and sign up and get a nice head start with regard to those 1,000 points. That's what I wanted to add with regard to the recycling club.

Generally — and more related to where we ended yesterday's discussion — were the more specific issues related to solid-waste management in the territory. As I have noted, we continue to invest in our communities. We have made strides toward modernizing solid-waste management that will adapt to the changing needs of generations of Yukon communities.

Building on the success of the "Our Towns, Our Future" review, Yukon government partnered with the Association of Yukon Communities to form the Solid Waste Working Group, which produced a findings report in 2013.

Yukon government is now working with Association of Yukon Communities to renew the mandate of the working group, as we work together to modernize solid-waste systems in the territory. The group is now more action-oriented and plans to produce actionable items for implementation. The work of this group follows the 2009 *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, which outlined a vision for modern and efficient solid-waste systems in the territory. We are pleased to say that we have taken a number of steps to implement objectives of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, including the following: meeting our commitment to end the practice of open burning; transforming solid-waste facilities to run more modern systems; providing opportunities for diversion of various forms of waste, including recyclable materials; collecting hazardous and special-waste streams at a number of facilities; improving signage to facilitate higher levels of diversion; and providing opportunities to divert various waste streams, including tires, scrap metal and appliances, propane tanks, e-waste, hazardous materials, and common recyclables such as plastic, paper, cardboard and tin. This level of diversion leaves much smaller volumes of waste going into Yukon landfills and also decreases environmental risks by diverting more environmentally hazardous materials.

We will continue to implement the goals of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and use a model of continuous improvement as we upgrade infrastructure and systems related to solid waste. We are also committed to working with industry and other stakeholders to find long-term solutions to improving waste diversion and recycling. We are committed to fair and transparent procurement processes in establishing contracts for our operations. We will continue to increase our engagement with industry to raise awareness of operational work taking place in the communities and contracting opportunities that will be advertised throughout the year. There are some inherent cost challenges to responsible waste management in the north, but we are committed to responsible and efficient solutions.

Since ceasing burning of garbage at our solid-waste facilities, our operation and maintenance budget has doubled. These costs include affording environmental stewardship initiatives like groundwater monitoring at each and every one of our facilities. These costs are still cheaper in the long term

than opening and closing landfills. Affording these costs allows us to manage the risk of environmental contamination and a potential costly cleanup.

While our responsible management of solid waste evolves, Community Services is in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of our solid-waste facilities and waste management systems overall. We hope to present findings from this review with options to continue improvements in the 2016-17 fiscal year. We are committed to fostering a strong working relationship with municipalities and we communicate with them prior to any changes to solid-waste operations or regulatory standards.

With regard to recycling, in 2013 we partnered with the City of Whitehorse to establish greater short-term certainty for recycling processors. This included interim funding to support processors in a fair and equitable manner while commodity prices were very low. We are engaging in ongoing discussions with the City of Whitehorse to develop longer term, sustainable models for the processing of recyclable materials within the city and at the territorial level as well.

We are also working with the Department of Environment to move forward with proposing changes to the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation as I explained yesterday. Those changes to the BCR would expand the range of containers that are subject to deposit and would increase the amount of money available to support community depots and processors. These proposed changes were created with the goal of increasing the amount of material recycled in the territory.

Proposed changes to the designated material regulation would include more tires of different sizes that would be subject to an environmental fee. The changes also propose to administer fees for other products, including electrical items and electronics. These upfront fees would provide money to administer stewardship programs for the recycling or responsible disposal of these items. This is a significant step toward greater environmental stewardship through waste diversion.

Yukon government is also aware of the success associated with extended producer responsibility programs in southern jurisdictions, but we are also aware of the challenges that come with those systems, and so we will continue to explore those systems and determine whether or not they could be successful in the north. As I have indicated previously, in the coming years we intend to maintain our stewardship model.

Yukon government is also committed to renewing waste diversion credits to recycling processors. That was something that we had announced earlier this year. In 2014, Yukon government provided \$150-per-tonne diversion credit payments to the recycling processors for recyclables hauled from the communities and shared costs with the City of Whitehorse for volumes generated within the city. Within the city, the rate was \$75 for Yukon government and \$75 for the City of Whitehorse.

We announced earlier this year — March 31 — that we would be expanding the diversion credit program and

increasing it. The announcement we made on March 31 indicated that, as work continues to establish a more sustainable waste management system across the territory, Yukon government is committing \$573,000 for local recycling processors in this budget, based on the type and tonnage of recyclable materials they process in 2015-16. This is two and a half times more than what was provided last year and, on top of that, there was an additional \$68,000 given to the processors to ship 400 tonnes of stockpiled mixed plastics out of the territory for recycling.

I wanted to take a moment to commend the excellent work of the City of Whitehorse on this file. The two orders of government represented by Community Services and the city administration, as well as myself and the mayor, had a number of discussions about this particular announcement. I wanted to acknowledge the fact that the City of Whitehorse really dug deep and provided a significant amount of funding when it came to this announcement. The City of Whitehorse of course indicated they were lifting the \$150,000 funding cap for its 2015 diversion credit program, which will provide an additional \$57,300 in credits to recycling processors this year. The city will also advance the 2016 diversion credit funding, which is another \$150,000 for recycling this year. It has also offered to accept mixed paper, which has been stockpiled by recycling processors at its compost facility where it will be processed separately into lower grade compost.

Madam Chair, on this particular issue, obviously the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse work very closely. I would again reiterate my thanks and appreciation to the mayor and to the City of Whitehorse for coming up with this additional money and working together closely with us to address this need. Obviously I think it's fair to say that our enhanced support was a success, as we have seen now that Raven Recycling has indicated that they would be returning to their public drop-off program for non-refundable recyclables in the territory, which of course, yet again, increases the opportunity Yukoners have to recycle and to ensure that more waste is diverted from the waste stream and properly handled through recycling — again, an excellent example of a partnership with the City of Whitehorse to achieve a common goal.

We also have recently completed 10-year operating plans for solid-waste facilities in unincorporated communities to ensure efficient operations that are in compliance with regulatory and permit requirements. This project was completed in collaboration with municipalities outside of Whitehorse, which helps us all save money by jointly contracting the work. We continue to engage with the communities to acknowledge local perspectives in solid waste and to establish levels of service appropriate to each community.

An important highlight is the formal agreement about the solid-waste facility that was signed in the summer of 2014 with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow. In August 2014, the First Nation took over operation and maintenance of the facility. This provides a model for community involvement in solid-waste operations. We are excited about

this type of local involvement and continue to engage with other First Nations to introduce more local perspectives on solid-waste planning. As with all of our facilities, we'll continue to monitor and test groundwater in Old Crow to ensure the local watershed is not being negatively affected.

We'll also continue to work with regulators in Old Crow to ensure appropriate and efficient operation of the solid-waste gasification unit in accordance with permitting requirements. Yukon government officials have worked very closely with the supplier and engineers, and we're happy to see that fuel efficiency, emissions and cold-weather performance of the gasifier have all improved. We also collaborated with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to coordinate the removal of waste metal from Old Crow in early 2014 when the winter road was in place.

Recently, in the fall of 2014, site improvements were completed to our facilities in Destruction Bay, Deep Creek and Champagne. We've also committed \$333,000 to municipalities outside of Whitehorse to support the establishment of consistent groundwater monitoring programs at Yukon solid-waste facilities.

Across Yukon, we are seeing investment in improved management of solid waste by municipal governments, by First Nation governments and, of course, by Yukon government. I would be remiss, Madam Chair, if I didn't also note that private sector and many non-profit organizations also participated in those initiatives.

We believe in innovative approaches to managing solid waste in remote communities and that community partnerships are the cornerstone of success for our collective solid-waste management efforts. We also recognize that there are challenges and we will continue to work to address rising costs associated with the transformation of solid-waste management in Yukon.

Currently the community of Ross River has a landfill. We've initiated discussions with the Town of Faro to explore the possibility of a regional approach for managing waste from Faro and Ross River. By establishing community partnerships with municipal governments, we're working to establish regional circuits across Yukon that could include a circuit for the southeast, the Kluane Lake region, the Faro-Ross River region, and potentially one more circuit in central Yukon.

This was a primary goal of the *Solid Waste Action Plan*. Madam Chair, I'm pleased to report, as you're well aware, that last week I had the opportunity to sit down with the Mayor of Watson Lake and sign a new regional solid-waste management agreement for the southeast Yukon. We are well on our way to moving forward with this vision. I'm hopeful that we'll be able to continue discussions with the community of Faro, as I've indicated previously, and continue discussions with the community of Haines Junction for the western portion of the Alaska Highway region.

With respect to municipal landfills, our government is committed to working with the AYC, as well as municipal governments, to address long-standing concerns about landfill liability. We recognize the need to expand our efforts to

address solid-waste management with a pan-territorial approach. We see the need to broaden the scope and we'll continue to work with municipalities.

Under the *Public Health and Safety Act*, municipalities are required to operate solid-waste disposal facilities for their residents. Municipalities follow the same operating requirements for unincorporated sites, as established by the solid-waste management regulations adopted in January of 2000. Since 2011, \$7 million has been allocated toward solid-waste management capital projects under the Building Canada fund; \$2 million was identified for transfer stations and recycling depots. This investment enabled us to transform dump-and-burn facilities into transfer stations to meet our commitments under environmental regulations and permits. This funding has led to installation of infrastructure to significantly reduce the amount of waste that goes into Yukon landfills. To date, we have spent just over \$1 million on this initiative.

Discussions continue with municipal governments with respect to establishing regional agreements, and we are hopeful that this dialogue will continue. As I indicated, of course, Watson Lake has taken that step and we look forward to expanding that model to other areas.

We have our agreement in place in Dawson, and that has been formalized in a partnership to regionalize solid-waste services in the Dawson area. This agreement provides the City of Dawson with access to \$400,000 of Building Canada funds for capital upgrades to the Quigley solid-waste facility.

I do have more that I wanted to provide to members with regard to this issue and I would like to turn now to infrastructure, but I do recognize, as you are indicating to me, that my time has elapsed, so I will cede the floor and look forward to comments from members opposite and to continuing the discourse that we began yesterday with regard to this important issue.

Mr. Barr: First of all I would like to welcome back the officials and thank you for helping us walk through this section of our budget, Community Services, which is a very large portfolio. It is all-encompassing.

I thank the member for his comments. It actually refreshed some of my memory and it also added some questions as he was speaking that I hadn't actually thought of, but I was triggered to remember now to ask — with some of the information that he shared.

Where I left off yesterday — and the minister had spoken regarding — when I was speaking about some of our older landfills as they were — we had talked about burns and this study — but this specific one that I was aware of was Marsh Lake. That was the one. I do know that, as we have moved toward waste diversion, those are the hopes — that we will be diverting what will be remaining in the landfills and I know that that's part of a solution. However, he was asking for which one and so I recall specifically that one and there were concerns around the Carcross one at the time.

Having said that, I'll maybe ask a couple of questions within this at this moment when I speak, and if I'm not hearing them, I'll just redirect those questions, Madam Chair.

I know that a large part of the response there was to discuss the future of recycling in Yukon and, as the minister mentioned yesterday, he realizes there is a longer term vision in actually succeeding as to where we're going with recycling and waste diversion in the territory. One of the questions is: Is the government's intention to move forward with universal access to recycling services like what is available in other jurisdictions in Canada, or is the government moving toward a user-pay recycling regime that requires Yukoners to pay more to recycle?

I do know that — I'll throw this one in the question — waste metal is no longer accepted in some of the rural transfer stations. Could the minister tell me which communities are no longer receiving waste metal? I know Marsh Lake is one again and I know Mount Lorne is one, but I would like to know where else and I will just end with those questions for now.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I have just a few more comments that I want to make about infrastructure generally with solid waste and then I will turn specifically to the questions raised by the member.

With regard to infrastructure, Yukon seeks to maximize the benefits of federal infrastructure funding programs to improve community-based infrastructure and initiatives that will also contribute to a healthy environment. Gas tax funding is held in trust for all Yukon municipalities and First Nation governments. Each has a specific allocation of the overall fund. The gas tax fund has become a permanent source of revenue for Yukon communities. In July 2014, a new agreement was signed and will now provide an ongoing source of funding for local infrastructure projects, including drinking water and waste-water systems, solid-waste management and a number of other important infrastructure items.

Yukon's initial five-year share of the fund was \$37.5 million and, beyond 2010, amounted to \$15 million per year over and above existing infrastructure programs. The new gas tax fund agreement is set to run from 2014-15 to 2023-2024. Over the next five years, Yukon will receive \$78 million for infrastructure projects, including projects identified under new categories that include regional and local airports, broadband connectivity, brownfield redevelopment, sports infrastructure, recreational infrastructure, cultural infrastructure, tourism infrastructure and disaster mitigation.

Many municipality governments and First Nations have utilized portions of their gas tax allocation for solid-waste projects. For instance, in Whitehorse, \$2.8 million was approved for compost program improvements. This led to composting and garbage collection carts for curbside pickup and upgrades to the city's composting facilities, including organic approval status and trucks. \$60,000 was approved for a waste composition study in 2009 that helped the city analyze contents of the landfill to understand the nature of the composition and better manage the waste stream. This project came in underbudget and was completed for \$28,500. \$275,000 went toward upgrades at the Whitehorse landfill, including transfer stations that are now in place. The project was completed underbudget. In 2013-14, \$680,000 was

provided to support the Whitehorse compost facility infrastructure and \$630,000 was provided to support solid-waste action plan implementation.

For the Village of Teslin, \$16,000 was approved to complete installation of solar-powered electrical fencing and the building of a composting facility structure. The project was completed within budget. An additional \$162,000 was used by Teslin to purchase a compacting garbage truck to reduce haul loads.

There were a number of other investments throughout the Yukon — in Watson Lake and Dawson, Mayo, Carmacks, and with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and a number of other unincorporated Yukon sites.

I will turn back to the specific questions. I believe one of the questions was related to whether or not there was free access to recycling services in the territory. That is correct. Any person who wants to recycle can visit any of the processors to drop off their goods.

The BCR model is one that makes beverage containers a bit different, so there is a fee that one pays at the till for those products. Going through the process of the recycling fund, it is then returned at various amounts to the handlers and processors — as well as funding the recycling fund itself, which undertakes a number of activities throughout the Yukon. In a sense, there is a user-pay sense to that system, given that individuals pay at the till for a beer can or a pop can, or any other beverage container, as is common throughout Canada.

In regard to other products like the ones contemplated under the designated material regulation, again there would be an upfront fee associated with the disposal of the product at the time of purchase. That is the model we're going down right now. As I have indicated before, we intend to expand the number of products that will be included under that system, and we did a public consultation on that and heard a lot of good input from Yukoners about those proposed ideas. We started off with a modest list of products. Although it is modest in the sense that there are only electrical products and all sizes of tires, I think it is a big step forward and we will look at expanding that list of products in the future once we determine the relative success of the increase of the number of products.

For some products, there is a fee and that is the model we use. That is the way our system is set up. It's easy to look at other jurisdictions to see what they're doing, but that is the system that we have and we are committed to taking our system, growing it, improving it and making it work better for Yukon.

The next issue was about the specific concerns around Marsh Lake. My understanding is that there is a construction and demolition cell that does have some lifespan issues, but we are dealing with those. We are actively considering options presently to determine what the best course of action is for that particular site. I don't know if that includes raising the height of berms or not. That may be true. If the member — it is after all his riding — is aware that that is the case, I will

take him at his word there. I did want to note, though, that Marsh Lake does accept waste metal — the Marsh Lake transfer station. Of course it is a transfer station; it is not a landfill at Marsh Lake. I know, at one point in its history, it was, but it is now a transfer station and is intended to be that way for some time, so we don't anticipate that there will be larger issues with the lifespan of the Marsh Lake transfer station, given the fact that it is a transfer station.

There are a couple of small transfer stations throughout the territory that don't accept waste metal — Johnsons Crossing comes to mind — but typically we try to ensure that, regardless of where we are in the territory, there is reasonable access to solid-waste facilities that accept various materials. Obviously we try to rationalize that by looking at what services are provided in various parts of Yukon, and if there is somewhere that doesn't have the ability to accept certain materials, we try to ensure that it is communicated to the local populations where it is appropriate for them to go.

Recycling, Marsh Lake and the acceptance of waste metal, I think, were the three questions that I heard from the member opposite. If I have missed one, I apologize. I look forward to hearing it again.

Mr. Barr: Thank you to the minister for his response.

I was at the LAC just last week in Marsh Lake and the previous overseer of the transportation is now leaving — Walter — and there's a new person. But he was stating there — I'm sure I'm not incorrect — the result of waste metal in Marsh Lake and issues with it. It is no longer — and maybe it's just a recent thing that maybe officials and the minister aren't aware of but I notice in his response that they are still. I guess that's the contradicting information that I have from just last week and that's why I was asking.

I also received information just today about Mount Lorne around waste metal also — that they are no longer receiving any waste metals at that spot — and that just came up in a post today from Mike Bailey, actually, who has been quite instrumental in waste diversion in the territory. They continue to do a great job. I know that many folks in the territory are concerned with waste diversion and some of the information is that we have only have one planet. There are many very concerned folks who are dealing with waste diversion. I might add that Mount Lorne last year was already at 75:25 waste diversion, so they must be commended for what they're doing out there.

I would just like to state that I know that there were issues in Ross River with burning. In the minister's opening remarks here today, he was stating that we've moved away from that. I do know that has been an issue and continued to be an issue before we broke in Sitting. I am aware that there was a contract put in place so that there is some oversight at the Ross River landfill. I would like to get an update from the minister if he is aware of any recent burning. I'll just leave that at this point.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: First of all, I will just respond to some of the comments about the waste metal. The best information that we have here today suggests that — the policy is that both Marsh Lake transfer station and Mount

Lorne transfer station are to be accepting waste metal. Every year we issue a contract to go pick up that waste metal. If it's not being collected there, we'll have to follow up and determine why it's not because we're paying to go and collect it. We'll have to look into that if the communities have decided not to collect it for some reason or another. That's not consistent with the policy of the Yukon government so we'll have to look into that.

With regard to Ross River, there is a contract in place with some greater oversight, as the member noted, so there's more active management of that particular site being undertaken now by Community Services than there was previously with regard to burning. I haven't heard of any complaints about burning going on, but if somebody lights garbage at the dump and it is burning, it's something we want to hear about. Obviously it's not allowed and it's not consistent with our policy or our regulations.

It's a concern for us to hear if there is garbage being burned at any dump, including Ross River. I should note, though, that what the plan is with Ross River — and obviously we have the contract in place now. Ideally it would be nice if we could establish a regional landfill or a regional solid-waste agreement for that region. We're in discussions with the Town of Faro to that end. That is the approach we've taken in other regions. For instance, as I indicated in my opening remarks today, I had the opportunity to sign a new regional solid-waste agreement with Watson Lake last week. As a result of that, we'll be closing our Upper Liard facility and using the Town of Watson Lake's solid-waste facility as a regional site. That will work for the Town of Watson Lake for a number of reasons, but it will also work for Yukon government and the public, whether it be individuals or companies looking to dispose of waste in the southeast Yukon.

I think that's a model that can be successful in other regions like Faro and Ross River, and I'm hopeful that our discussions will be fruitful with the Town of Faro to achieve that. If we aren't able to do that, we'll continue to figure out a way to make the Ross River facility work. We'll continue to liaise with the community there and to ensure that we have the contracts in place and the management activity in place to ensure that the facility operates consistent with the regulatory requirements that are imposed upon us by their permits.

Like I said, we're hopeful that we can go down the regional solid-waste agreement route with that area but, if not, we'll have to find another way.

Mr. Barr: I'm happy to hear about the resolve in Watson Lake and Upper Liard. I know that was going to be a question of mine — to see where that is. It does bring to mind, when the minister was speaking about AYC and regional plans and speaking with municipal governments and the Yukon government around waste diversion, waste management, solid waste and so on and so forth — and I was reading in some material from a previous minister who was in this position — that there was a recommendation to also be including First Nation governments in these discussions.

I do know that I hadn't heard that in the response, and I'm wondering if there are ongoing talks, as it was a recommendation from a study done by previous ministers — I don't have the date on the tip of my tongue, but I can get that for him. I do recognize that Carcross-Tagish First Nation, for example, has taken it upon themselves to locate waste bins throughout the area, which is open to non-First Nations to put in — if they're seniors, not businesses, and say for in Tagish and in Natasheeni and Choutla subdivision, so on and so forth — because of bears and some seniors and a lot of people living in these rural communities having waste sitting around their houses. This is the reason for doing that — to cut down on that.

I guess it's just citing that there are some different approaches out there, but are there talks with First Nations included with the Association of Yukon Communities, with the YG?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The simple answer is yes, very much so. First Nations are involved in a number of ways with regard to solid-waste management in the territory.

I had noted a few examples — for instance, the innovative new approach we've taken in Old Crow with the Vuntut Gwitchin. There were discussions with the Liard First Nation since they have a curbside pickup system for their citizens in the Upper Liard area. That will ultimately end up at the Watson Lake facility as a result of our regional agreement there.

Likewise the member referenced the systems operated by the Carcross-Tagish. Obviously we commend them for doing those programs. Ultimately, whatever they collect ends up at our facilities as well. We're interested in what First Nations are doing and we're interested in what LACs and municipalities are doing because oftentimes it will end up in our system and we want to be able to understand where it came from and how it was collected.

We do work with First Nations throughout the territory in all regions of the territory to address these needs, and First Nations play an important role in providing some of those services so we'll continue to engage with them.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response and offering some clarification and all that. I appreciate that.

I would like to maybe move on at this point. I had, in my opening remarks, raised some questions and I will go back to them now because it was asked of the minister to maybe ask specific questions now.

One of the things I had asked or brought up during those remarks was about planning for ambulance services and fire trucks as we're amalgamating those in the communities such as Carcross right now. I know that when I had asked about Watson Lake and the bay being too short for the ambulance — for the stretcher and the cleaning especially being an issue when we're at minus 30 or minus-degree temperatures and for the upkeep of ambulances and just washing, for example. Has that been taken into consideration for the new building in Carcross?

I do know that there are new fire trucks and new ambulances that were purchased and we applaud the

government for doing this. We know this does help in moving things forward. But we also know that in the planning for the building in Carmacks, which isn't slated yet — we want to guarantee that we aren't having buildings built that don't really fit the whole need of the service. To confirm that for the upcoming one in Carcross — but has the issue been taken care of in Watson Lake, for example?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To start as a general comment, I would say the member is correct that our goal — as we move forward with integrating the various protective services in the territory, we do try to collocate these services. That was what happened in Beaver Creek; that's what is intended for Carcross. When we build these facilities, it is cost-effective from a construction point of view and an operation and maintenance point of view to have a single building that houses all of these services.

It is helpful also for the integration of those services that they be located together. I know that there are some in the various fields, whether it is the fire field or the EMS field, who like to have their own building and it acts in some communities as a bit of an area strictly for that one field. So we are trying on the one hand to address that, but also address the fact that it does make more sense for the public to invest in a single facility that houses all of these services rather than having three or four different buildings or three — or different offices that offer those services. So yes, we are moving to integrate those services as best we can where it is appropriate, and we think it will be appropriate in Carcross.

As well, we consult with the communities to try to provide other interests as well. For instance, in Carcross there will be the fitness room, which will be available to residents of Carcross or citizens of Carcross. That was something that came out of the discussions with the local area council. I believe the LAC's representative who we were dealing with had a background in fire — either was a deputy chief or a former chief of the fire hall in Carcross. Certainly, there were some very helpful comments and helpful input provided through that process.

With regard to Watson Lake — I had a chance to tour the EMS building when I was there a few weeks ago. The EMS folks didn't mention at that point that there was a problem with the size of the facility, but that doesn't mean that there isn't. If there is a problem, of course as we construct these new buildings, they are built to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Sorry, Madam Chair, I think the Leader of the Official Opposition is whispering. I can't quite hear — thank you, Madam Chair.

Obviously, when we construct these buildings we do build them to fit the equipment that they are required to hold. In the case of Watson Lake, I think it is a fairly old building, so perhaps the equipment has changed. I know that is the case with the EMS building down here by the hospital. The building that was built a number of years ago was suited to the older style ambulances, and it was indicated to me that the newer ambulances are larger and do not fit as well in the bays that were built for the previous models. That could be the case

in Watson Lake, but I don't know for sure. If there is a problem in Watson Lake, I am happy to work with EMS there to try to address it. But like I said, when I toured it a few weeks ago, the folks there didn't mention it as a concern. Perhaps it is. I had heard from the Hospital Corporation that there was a small concern about a bump leading into the approach of the new hospital that wasn't so bad for the EMS responders, but was a bit hard on some of the patients sometimes when they had that bump leading into the ambulance bay at the hospital. My understanding is that that has been or will be very soon addressed.

Yes, we do try to build these buildings to fit the purpose that they are intended for. I think that covers the question the member opposite asked.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I too toured that facility and that was the comment I received in Watson Lake. Actually, that building is newer. It is actually a retrofit from the old NAPA building that was built with the ambulances they still have in place. It was an oversight that maybe the minister would want to be proactive about. That is my information.

Moving on — I would like to at this time salute all the EMS workers and volunteers out there. I know that they do a great job in all of our communities and in Whitehorse. I just thank them for everything that they do and I was recalling in the budget briefing that, over the last few years, we on this side of the House have been advocating for even turnout equipment and I was assured that at this point — and the reason we were asking for that is that EMS workers were actually dipping into their barbeque funds to get some equipment. At this time and place, we are hearing that they have recently been purchased turnout gear and that is good news that this has happened at this point.

I have several questions here and I know that my colleague, the Leader of the Liberal Party, has several himself. I will just keep going at it and I know some of my colleagues here have some questions. So it is a large department.

One of the things I did bring up initially was also the civic addressing specifically in Marsh Lake, where I know that they themselves have been accessing funds for their signs for their civic addresses. I was speaking with the folks there today and have been in the past few weeks speaking about them going to community development funding to receive monies for their signs for people to put on their houses for their civic addressing, which we all know goes hand in hand with 911 — that these be available.

Given that Marsh Lake is one of the initial folks who have been working on this for several years, they have recently even received from people who have funded them in the past. They don't feel that their funds should go toward civic addressing signs — that it should be coming from Community Services — so I am raising this today. Is the minister prepared to work with Marsh Lake and offer the funding necessary for signs for civic addressing in that particular community that is ready, that has been working on it and that wants to move forward?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon government recognizes that street signs and house numbering are important to help

local fire departments, EMS services and RCMP respond to calls. Community Services is very pleased to be working with LACs, including Marsh Lake, who would like to improve street signage and house numbering in their area. Community Services is currently working with all five LACs on a civic addressing system, which is expected to be completed very soon. All five LACs have requested house numbers and street signs to assist for those local emergency services that I mentioned earlier.

In response to this request, CS has initiated and is working to complete a civic addressing project for the local advisory areas. We're working to ensure that all residents within a local advisory area have a house number and all roads have a street sign. This information is also being captured in maps so that it is available to emergency responders. This project is using a system that could be implemented for future territorial expansion of the initiative at a later date if necessary. So the short answer is that the Yukon government will of course provide the funding for street numbers and street signs and we're working with the LACs to implement that. I believe that there is a rotation at least. We're working with one LAC at a time. I don't know in what order they're being done, but when it comes time to do Marsh Lake, if it hasn't been done already, we'll provide the funding for street signs and house numbers.

Mr. Barr: If there is a rotation that's happening, would the minister provide this side of the House with who is next in line? Hopefully the minister will recognize that I do know, in working with the communities in my riding, that some have been working on it for several years and I know Marsh Lake is one. Others have come on just in the last year or two years and so on and so forth, but I do know Marsh Lake is one that hopefully would be next in line. I would ask if I could maybe get that information — if it's not here — at a later date.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that Marsh Lake is next or we're ready to go with Marsh Lake as soon as the LAC is ready. My understanding is we can provide funding for street signs and house numbers in the Marsh Lake advisory area as soon as we can. If the member is talking to LAC members, they can feel free to contact the department — or in particular contact their community advisor — and we look forward to implementing the new civic addressing in Marsh Lake. My understanding was that some LACs had indicated they weren't quite ready yet. My understanding though was Tagish was one of those — that other areas were going to go first. We'll get to the other LACs when everyone is ready and when they're ready to go. As I've indicated, there's funding available for street signs and house numbers and we look forward to implementing that.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I'll certainly pass that information on and I'm sure they'll be very happy to hear that it's happening and so will the first responders, because they have been part of the solution about time in getting to places that is going to eventually save lives ultimately. I thank the department for their efforts in this and the minister's comments.

I'm going to throw this out there because over the last few years in unincorporated communities, the *Dog Act* — the municipal act around dogs, animals and pets has come up I know in my riding. I know it comes up in others. Recently in Carcross at a community meeting, there were some elders in tears.

I know that it also has to do with street lights, especially in the wintertime, when there have been as many as close to half of them out in the Carcross community for example. Being that it's dark and we have dogs running around, is there an appetite to look at that act that reflects to pets running in the community? I know that it is kind of a free-for-all and the only response that RCMP can deal with is if there is a life in danger, really. Maybe that could be explored.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I should note that the animal protection program was something that was brought in a few years ago by the Yukon government. It saw a new animal protection officer come into the government and undertake a number of programs throughout the territory. Those are focused on — I know one program for instance is related to the spaying and neutering of animals throughout the territory. That program has been fairly successful from my understanding, but I should note that, as a part of the very recent change, that program has been transferred over to the Department of Environment, so some more detailed explanations of what is going on with that program would be better placed in Department of Environment debate.

I would note that part of the reasoning behind the transfer was the fact that the Department of Environment — and in particular the animal health unit — has some excellent resources and structure that we felt would be a better fit for the animal protection officer and, for instance, having the chief veterinary officer in the same office as the animal protection officer I think is a good thing. It provides that individual and that position with some support and structure around him or her — in this case it's a him — and I think it will be a good step forward for the protection of animal health in the territory. It will also give the program some additional ancillary supports from the animal health unit as Environment is a better fit for that particular program, which is ultimately why we transferred it to Environment. The animal protection officer program and the animal welfare program is something that we transferred to Environment and I encourage the member to bring it up with the Minister of Environment later on.

However, I should note that I don't believe at this point we're contemplating amendments to the *Dog Act* in this current term. That certainly doesn't imply that we couldn't do it in the future, but I think before we undertake legislative amendments, we would want to make sure that we were doing it for a good reason and a reason that made sense and we weren't just doing it for the sake of changing the act because we thought that would solve everything. I think what happens on the ground in terms of the program that is offered by Yukon government is important and if there are changes to the program that don't need to be made, I'm confident that within the new structure of the animal health unit, the Minister of

Environment and his department will be able to make those changes as necessary.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I'll update those who have been asking about that.

I would like to step back — I forgot to bring something up. In regard to the Haines Junction volunteer ambulance situation, which I brought up in my opening remarks — I believe there are actually even talks going on today to have some resolve with the situation that happens in Haines Junction in the summer months when there's a higher incidence of callouts that generally results in the volunteers being out on call for long periods of time, which, in turn, affects their ability to actually show up for work.

There were talks previously. I brought forward questions in the House last Sitting and was encouraged that the department was going to be coming to resolve before this summer. I know the minister likely wouldn't be able to comment, given that there is a meeting today, but there was a situation that did happen recently that I wanted to ask about, but if the minister does have information, please let me know. The meeting could have been completed by now.

Unbeknownst to the supervisor of EMS and the volunteers themselves, there had been a recruitment push by the department and they hadn't known about it, which seemed rather odd. Maybe the minister would like to comment on both the areas I've remarked on.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yukon government is responsible for providing equipment, infrastructure and training to support rural Yukon emergency medical response and relies on the community to provide the volunteers. This approach is consistent with all Yukon communities that are not serviced by a hospital or community health centre.

As the delivery of EMS in rural Yukon is largely dependent upon volunteers, their recruitment and retention is an ongoing process involving Yukon Emergency Medical Services in partnership with communities. While each community has its own dynamics, volunteer availability has been especially challenging in Haines Junction over the past several summers due to the seasonal employment of volunteers and vacation preferences.

At the suggestion of local volunteers in Haines Junction, a pilot project was put in place this past summer to reduce the number of uncovered shifts in the community. YEMS provided extra portable radio units to volunteers, and this helped alleviate the issue. YEMS continues to work with the community to look for long-term solutions and has partnered with other stakeholders to establish a working group that will provide recommendations on how to address service gaps in Haines Junction. The working group continues to meet and will report back to Yukon government in the near future.

Community volunteers continue to be supported through numerous initiatives, including maintaining the improved supply of uniforms, medical and safety equipment, fleet management and station maintenance, providing in-station training and implementing an on-line learning management system to allow community responders to develop and

maintain clinical competency without leaving their home communities. This system should be in place very soon.

The YEMS has been meeting with a community-based working group comprised of local first responders, municipal council members and CAFN representatives tasked with identifying options and potential solutions to address summer volunteer levels. Yukon EMS received the working group's summary of potential options a few weeks ago and is currently in the process of examining the report and its recommendations.

Yukon government continues to work in partnership with the community of Haines Junction, including the municipality and the local First Nation, to identify the appropriate next steps. We depend on our partnerships with Yukon communities to recruit and retain volunteers, and we will continue to assist to help secure adequate volunteer levels for the long term.

The working group that I referenced is providing recommendations to Yukon government that we will give consideration to, and we look forward to working with the community to address the unique needs of Haines Junction. Obviously, volunteer recruitment and retention is an issue throughout the territory and can sporadically come to be in a variety of communities, and that has been the case in Haines Junction in this case where Yukon EMS has been requested to meet with the working group. My understanding is that they met either late last week or early this week, so perhaps that is the meeting the member is talking about.

YEMS is committed to supporting the existing volunteer system within a pilot or mentorship program that will address the immediate summer coverage issues while building local capacity over the long term. Yukon EMS is actively working with other government partners to establish the framework to support this option and to recruit, train and deploy suitable community responders.

My understanding is that YEMS tries to engage with the community, especially the local volunteers, with regard to how they conduct their volunteer drives or their programs or communications to increase volunteerism and to attract new volunteers. If that didn't happen in the case of Haines Junction, I am surprised to hear it. Usually our EMS folks in the department are pretty good at engaging with our volunteers to do that, but I would be happy to follow up and determine if that is the case and, if so, what happened. As I said, my understanding is that we do try to work with the communities as best we can to raise awareness of opportunities to volunteer in YEMS. Like I said, if that didn't happen in Haines Junction in the case of the most recent initiative, I will have to look into that. I don't know why that would be the case.

I did want to note that — I think it is the working group that included the Village of Haines Junction, YEMS, Community Nursing — they all did some excellent work with regard to coming up with some recommendations. I think what they all noted was that there is the understanding that further development and systemic evaluation of the options will be required prior to consideration for implementation. We

are going to have to take a look at the recommendations that have been provided to us and give some consideration to them to determine what best to do with regard to the next steps.

I think that covered the question in general, but if I have missed something, I look forward to hearing more.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I will look forward to hearing the results of this latest meeting. I know summer is coming and I did find it odd that Yukon EMS hadn't worked with the supervisor and the local EMS workers to be part of their recruitment drive. That is why I brought that up. I know that there are other communities that certainly could benefit from a recruitment drive and I would encourage the minister to do a volunteer recruitment drive throughout the territory. Given that Haines Junction — it isn't really the issue of a lack of volunteers; there are a large number in Haines Junction — so it was the previous reasons for the difficulties in the summer months that I had expressed. It just seemed — yes, well, I will look forward to hearing back from the minister on why that may have occurred and would encourage it to happen in others too.

When I speak of volunteers in general, I know that a lot of the LACs are coming up for elections this fall and — whether it is a volunteer fire department or local advisory council — these people are often of the same pool within the communities that do volunteer. There has been some expression from when I have been attending meetings that there is a joint effort from YG just in all around general recruitment of new faces and to look at solutions as we go forward. I know myself as a volunteer and many people sit on many different boards in the communities and it is the same faces you will see at many of the meetings. I think that they need support in attracting new folks to step up to the plate, because volunteers do offer so much and it would be helpful to support them in the recruitment.

I'll move on to something I had brought up in the past. I know that specifically around emergency preparedness and whether or not this minister had an appetite to help communities that have — there are some communities, for example, like Marsh Lake, where if there is a huge emergency, people know to gather at Marsh Lake Community Centre. Families — people go there and there are going to be supports. There is a generator; there is a food — and so on and so forth — plan in place. Something happens, you know where to go — Mount Lorne doesn't have that plan set up — so that local people throughout the Yukon in their communities, given some catastrophe, have a specific plan in place — so where to go, generators in all these areas and so on and so forth. Would this minister look at being proactive in seeing where plans are in place and then assisting and helping to orchestrate an emergency plan for those that don't?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The short answer is yes, absolutely. The EMO does do much of this work already. The EMO supports seven volunteer ground search and rescue teams across Yukon, collectively made up of over 100 individuals. They supported the merging of the administrative portion of the SAR teams into one society, while maintaining response capabilities and assets in the communities.

We support ongoing efforts of the Yukon Amateur Radio Association to maintain the Yukon marine distress system and the amateur radio network. We've distributed roughly 12,000 72-hour emergency preparedness brochures to Yukon households. We've delivered incident command system training to over 250 Yukon government and community personnel, including the ICS 402 course, to 22 Yukon government senior managers. We organized the first annual Yukon-wide earthquake preparedness exercise, called Yukon ShakeOut, with over 6,000 participants in the first year. We established temporary enclosed storage shelters for SAR in Faro, Dawson and Whitehorse, using federal search and rescue new initiative fund dollars. We coordinated the collection of digital elevation data as part of the Yukon flood risk mapping. Surveys of 13 Yukon flood-prone community areas were conducted last fall, in aid of providing enhanced digital elevation data to improve flood-plain mapping.

We also piloted the disaster resilience planning program with the Village of Carmacks and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to refine the program for use in all communities. This program will assess the community's disaster resilience in aid of strengthening its emergency preparedness capacity. That model is one we could use in other places as well. I know the EMO works directly with other levels of government, including First Nations, to develop disaster management plans to ensure that there's an understanding among governments of who is doing what in the case of an emergency, and to ensure that necessary services are available to community members in the event of an unfortunate incident like a disaster.

We do that bilaterally with First Nations; we do that with municipalities; we do that with LACs and any other group that is willing to work with us. So if there is a group — for instance, Mount Lorne is the one referenced by the member opposite — I would encourage them to contact the EMO to determine how best to integrate their needs for programming or for services or for plans with what's being done already.

Our focus in EMO does tend to be on the four pillars we have identified: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. We assure that the Yukon government emergency coordination plan is up to date and we try to provide a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government's areas of responsibility.

Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations have completed their own emergency plans, inclusive of business continuity, and progress is being made on the rest. EMO is currently leading the modernization updating of the territorial emergency coordination plan. The Yukon government emergency coordination group is assisting in the rewrite. It's anticipated the new plan will be ready for approval in mid-2016.

EMO has been engaged in a multi-year initiative through the Aboriginal Relations — Executive Council Office — branch implementation fund to strengthen emergency preparedness by planning alongside with First Nation governments and communities. EMO is working with all Yukon self-governing First Nations to provide this advice and support. So, Mr. Speaker, again, we work with communities,

First Nations and other levels of government to try to ensure we have a coordinated response to any type of disaster. In the specific case of the group that the member opposite discussed, I would encourage him to contact EMO to discuss their concerns and provide the support that they are looking for.

Mr. Barr: That's encouraging. I will pass that information on. I thank the minister for his response.

Over the past year, organizations as varied as the Association of Yukon Communities, the City of Whitehorse and a number of local area councils have expressed severe concerns about collaborating with the Department of Community Services on a number of issues, including consultation. Since the new Community Services minister has taken charge, has his department announced any initiative to improve the government's strained relationships with Yukon's other governments?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I'm not sure exactly which groups he's referring to. Could he give me an example of which order of government he's talking about? Is he talking about LACs or municipalities? I'm not clear.

Mr. Barr: Actually several, including the municipal government of Whitehorse, Association of Yukon Communities, the City of Whitehorse — I'll use those.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I happen to disagree. I happen to think that the relationship between the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse is very strong. I would encourage members to ask the mayor for his opinion of the relationship. I think that we have a very strong relationship. We work together, at the political level between the mayor and myself as minister. As well, our department works very closely with the city administration. We provide, obviously, significant funding to the City of Whitehorse and work together in a number of ways. I would point to the example I cited earlier of the enhanced diversion credits as an excellent example of us working together to address a common interest. I think the communication has been open. Working relationships are strong and we'll continue to work on a government-to-government basis with the City of Whitehorse. I disagree with the overview provided by the member opposite. I think that our relationship is very strong with the City of Whitehorse.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. Thanks to my colleagues for being up here with me.

Another situation I brought up previously was that Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay citizens have been asking for an RCMP detachment for years.

Last month this shortcoming was made clear by the 90-minute response time that happened from the closest detachment in Haines Junction. Is the government going to listen to the communities and their leadership, both the municipal and the First Nations, and create a permanent RCMP posting in Burwash Landing?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I would remind members that the issue at hand is the Community Services budget for 2015-16. The issue of RCMP detachments is dealt with in a different budget, the Department of Justice, and I

would encourage members to focus their questions on the topic at hand.

Mr. Barr: I respect the minister's comments and would encourage him to work with his colleagues to help finding resolve. I know that we don't always operate in silos here. If the minister could do so, that would be great.

One of the things I have also brought up in the past was — and it's great that the government has announced new investments for volunteer ambulance uniforms. It is to ensure that they are visible and effective in their duties. There are other volunteers out there with their turnout gear. I am familiar with specifically one — it is the search and rescue volunteers, and it costs each one of them in the neighbourhood of \$1,000 for their gear to turn out and go out on call. That's something that they come up with out of their own pocket. Is the minister looking at subsidizing those volunteers? They volunteer, for example. They go out and do that. The support isn't there to get them boots required or rain gear, and so on and so forth. They come up with that amount of money on top of saying, "I'm ready to go out at any time when I'm called through the night and day", whether or not it is their kid's birthday. I just feel that supporting them with uniforms would be a good thing.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Yukon government does support search and rescue individuals or volunteers throughout the territory in a number of ways. I'm not aware that we are contemplating subsidizing the purchase of rain gear at this time, but that is something I would be happy to look into going forward.

Mr. Barr: That's great. I'm sure they'll be happy that you're willing to look into that. I hadn't heard that from previous ministers.

I have a few more questions and I know that I am going to turn it over shortly. I'll just ask a few more and allow my colleagues to ask some questions.

I have heard in the House that there are plans to reopen the Ross River School. Can the minister comment on that and give us some timelines?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Department of Community Services 2015-16 budget does not include any appropriation for the Ross River School.

Mr. Barr: I think at this point that will conclude my questions.

I have one other one. In the budget regarding the Dawson City water treatment facility, is there money allocated? I know that, for the facility itself, it still hasn't been handed over to the city. There have been ongoing issues, and I know it has been worked on and it is still being worked on, and that in the agreement, until the city feels comfortable with the Yukon government, it won't happen. There had been debate as to whether or not money would be available for infrastructure that — not the new infrastructure, but one of the flooding situations where it connects to the old. Is there going to be money put forward in that part of the water treatment facility that needs replacing for the system to work?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I may have to review the Blues to get the full breadth of that sentence, but I believe he is asking

about the force main in Dawson. If that is the case, we have been working with the City of Dawson to address that need and will be providing funds this year to deal with the force main in Dawson.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the department officials for their work here today and yesterday. Your time is very valuable and it is much appreciated in this Chamber.

Seeing as we just had a question on the Dawson wastewater treatment facility, I might as well start there. Yes, I do believe my colleague was talking about the force main. Interestingly enough to note, when the blueprint was being looked at for this waste-water treatment facility, it was noted at that time by officials from the City of Dawson that these mains — they had had an interesting history. They weren't the right fit to begin with. There were changes to the design and it was an ongoing issue. It was brought up at that time that it should be looked at. It was even indicated by the officials from the City of Dawson that this will be an issue — that if not dealt with right now, this will be an issue. As we noticed, it did become an issue. This is probably not necessarily the department to be talking about most of this type of infrastructure work, but I will bring it up during Community Services. I will also bring it up with the Minister of Highways and Public Works as well at that time and maybe we will get an answer from someone.

On that, the facility has finally passed three months' compliance from Corix. It should be noted at this time that bleeders are coming off. We do not send as much pure, fresh water through the system at this time, which was having an effect on the tests. It is probably the lowest flow for the whole year as well.

I could see why the mayor and council could have a little caution as far as this, but again, as far as the compliance necessary for Corix to be able to sign off with YTG, we have seen that it has finally passed three months' compliance. There are still going to be major issues on functionality, especially during the summer months when we have a lot more flow through that system.

There are O&M costs that are at issue as well, and sustainability issues as far as downloading the cost of this facility to the City of Dawson.

I guess the question at this point right now is: How far ahead is the government in dealing at this point with getting a commitment or something signed with the City of Dawson as far as warranties — as far as at least a five-year warranty? I know that there are issues about air handling and there are issues about the liner on the clarifying tank, so if the minister can explain how the negotiations are going with the city and how much closer they are at signing, at bare minimum, a five-year warranty for the turnover of this facility to the City of Dawson?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yukon government remains committed to ensuring that the operation and maintenance costs of the water-water treatment plant are sustainable for the City of Dawson. We are working with the City of Dawson together to ensure the waste-water treatment plant consistently meets the contractual terms and conditions. The member

referenced some warranty issues. There were some warranty issues with Corix, the contractor, and we are addressing those.

The negotiations and discussions are ongoing with the City of Dawson to reach an agreement for how to move forward. As those discussions and negotiations are ongoing, I am not going to say too much about them, but I will say that they are going well and I look forward to working with the community of Dawson to see waste-water services provided in an efficient and reasonable way in the community. Obviously I think there is more work to be done and more discussions to be had, but I am optimistic about how things are going. I have spoken to the mayor about this a few times, but the primary discussions are going on at the officials' level between the administration of the City of Dawson and the Department of Community Services with some interaction, of course, with the Department of Highways and Public Works as well. I am optimistic we'll find a path forward that will meet the needs of the community of Dawson as well as the Yukon government.

Mr. Silver: I do appreciate that conversations are being had and things are moving forward. We are not putting all the onus here on just the Yukon Party or just the YTG. We know that the City of Dawson — the CAO has left, moved on to Elliott Lake, so I could imagine, as you are building up negotiations and talking about this issue and then you have a change in personnel at such a high level — that would definitely throw a wrench into things, for sure.

Could the minister expand a little bit more upon capacity to take this over? I know that one of the issues is to get city employees to be certified to the right levels of certification. Maybe the minister can give us an update on how that's going.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I guess if I was to expand a little bit more — I don't intend to be coy — these are ongoing discussions and I don't want to say something that is incorrect.

It is a dynamic situation, because discussions are ongoing. We are seeking a multi-year agreement. The agreement would include ensuring that the community of Dawson has the capacity to operate the facility at the time upon which they would potentially take over the facility. We want to make sure that officials from the community of Dawson have access to the facility throughout the coming years, to ensure that they can get an adequate amount of training and experience with the facility.

Obviously we want to ensure that everybody is comfortable going forward and that the proper accreditation or proper training is provided to those who will be operating this facility. The exact figures around training times, operation and maintenance costs and the amounts that will be paid by the various orders of government over the coming years are things that are still to be determined and we're in discussions currently with the town to determine what those are going to look like.

Mr. Silver: Thanks to the minister. I do appreciate that you want to get things right, especially if we're bringing them up for Hansard. I know that, after my conversations with mayor and council — lots of good faith conversations — we had the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works

stand up in this Chamber and say that YTG wouldn't ever download something that couldn't be handled by the municipality. Of course I'm paraphrasing right now, but we have faith that this government will stick to that and a solution would be had in the hopefully very near future.

Might as well get back to the original segue, which was with the water force mains — and just a little bit more background: when the facility was built, it was simply connected to an old discharge pipe — the force main. In December, that connection between the plant and the old infrastructure broke — if we can get an update on whether the department has plans to upgrade this infrastructure; timelines; price — that's everything, Madam Chair.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Within 24 hours of me becoming the Community Services minister, I had a chance to meet with the mayor of Dawson in his capacity as president of AYC. The meeting was prearranged for a different reason but, given my new responsibility, I had a chance to meet with the mayor very shortly after it was announced I would be the Community Services minister.

At that time, he impressed upon me the great importance that this particular piece of infrastructure had and why it was a key piece of municipal infrastructure or a key piece of infrastructure for the community. He was seeking support to help improve that or address that issue. Over the following weeks and months, we had gone back and forth a few different times in discussions — both at the political and official level — and we were able to find a way to support the City of Dawson in addressing this issue.

I stand to be corrected on the actual final amount, but it's in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 million that will be provided to address this piece of infrastructure in the coming season.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you to the minister.

When the waste-water treatment facility in Dawson was planned, a district heating project was layered on that. Part of this was a boiler that was going to run on biomass, on wood chips for, like I say, a district heating project.

Can the minister give us an update or let us know about this plan? Is this still in the plan? What buildings are we talking about? Is this extending to the museum? Is it extending to the waste-water treatment facility? Where are the plans right now for the boiler system that is to be fed by biomass?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the biomass facility is functioning and provides heat to the facility. However, as the member noted, it was contemplated that it could perhaps provide additional energy to other facilities. My understanding is that it has been raised that we could do an additional phase and possibly a third phase in the coming years. We're looking at including the potential for that in upcoming infrastructure plans as we move forward to implement the new Building Canada fund.

Mr. Silver: Sorry, just for clarification's sake — there's no line item per se in these mains for this item?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, I don't believe so — not for expanding the system to other buildings, although as I've indicated, if we were to conduct a second phase or a third

phase of that, it would come in future years, perhaps through the new Building Canada fund.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the minister for the clarification.

Sticking to the heart of the Yukon, the Klondike, I would like to ask a question about the —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Silver: Did I hear some opposition over there? I would like to stick with the heart of the Yukon, the Klondike — I have to reiterate my statement — the Dawson City rec centre. The City of Dawson has recently indicated that it wants to proceed with fixing the current rec centre as an option. There's a debate about this tonight; there are more conversations being had locally right now. The government has a report that provided a permanent fix for the current recreation facility and that report is almost a year old. The report is recommending the demolition of the curling rink and replacing it on the other side — turning that into more of a parking lot on the south side. It also recommends a new ice plant and several renovations to the ice rink and it pegs the cost at around \$12.5 million.

We are hearing too that the recreation facility planning report 2015-16, which was done by the working group, has been drafted and is ready as a draft — or ready at least in theory and supposedly is on a desk somewhere at YTG. Of course the planning committee is made up of Dawson City community members and also made up of members of YTG, so we are wondering when the minister can make this available and if he could maybe make some comments on it here in the Legislature.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member opposite is correct that the funding that has previously been made available to Dawson is still there for the most part. I believe it was approximately \$4 million that was allocated previously for this project. The working groups comprised of — and again I stand to be corrected, but my understanding is that there are two officials from the Yukon government and two from the City of Dawson who approved the workplan for the coming year to spend that money on the facility. My understanding is that the City of Dawson passed a resolution that reads as follows: "Whereas long-term planning for the eventual replacement of recreation facilities is an important municipal function, but should not come at the cost of dealing with today's issues; whereas there is money that may be used towards the refurbishment of the current Rec. Centre that will enhance that facility's function; be it resolved that Council endorse focussing efforts and resources on the current Rec. Centre for the foreseeable future; be it further resolved that administration investigate costs associated with renovating the second floor and installing an ice mat system in 2015."

So, pursuant to that resolution, I understand that the plans for this year are to do just that — to renovate the second floor and install an ice mat system. I believe that the workplan has to be approved by both governments and it is somewhere in the approval process as we speak. I don't know exactly where, but my understanding is that it is anticipated that that would be approved relatively quickly and that work can begin this

year to spend some of that \$4 million that has been allocated for the work to be done on the Dawson recreation centre.

I think I've answer the member's question with regard to where it is. It is with both governments right now in the approval stage and, once it's approved, work can begin — the work that is contemplated in the resolution passed by the Dawson City council.

Mr. Silver: Thank you to the minister for the update. Yes, the sooner the better — reports, plans. It would be nice to start going forward on some type of upgrades at least to the current facility. The whole plan of these mats is a great idea. We have some of the best hockey players in the Yukon currently and we have a limited — an extremely limited — season. I was told anecdotally the other day that our team girls hockey players are some of the best absolutely in Yukon and the boys in Dawson are actually afraid to play against them. So imagine the talent level if we could start hockey at the same time of year as the rest of the other communities — imagine.

I'm going to move on to — actually, it is probably a good time to talk about the Carmacks arena and I do believe it was brought up here as well. I think this issue was partially discussed but it was more on a larger question about sports and recreation commitments in the Yukon in general.

In December, an inspection on the Carmacks rink by its insurance company revealed that the supports holding the roof above the outdoor rink were unsustainable. As a result the arena has been closed all winter. Where are we as far as the department's commitment to ensuring that Carmacks has an arena next year?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am sure it will come as no surprise — my disagreement that Dawson has the best hockey players. From what I can tell, the best hockey players, of course, are in the capital City of Whitehorse, although I should note that a number of excellent hockey players have come out of a number of communities. Haines Junction, I think, has produced some excellent hockey players as well. I should note that the community of Old Crow has put forward some good athletes, including a few in the Oldtimers, which I think includes the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. Of course, the transition to Oldtimers is never easy for an individual, and I hope we all support the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin as he makes this difficult transition in his life. Moving from recreational level to the Oldtimers league is never easy, and I know that the emotional toll it has taken on the member has been difficult — to say nothing about the physical toll. Going up against people like the Minister of Education, of course, doesn't help, as he is known for — the term we use on the rink is "laying the lumber". He is a bit nasty sometimes, but I don't want to go too far; otherwise I may be called on a point of order.

With regard to the Village of Carmacks recreation complex and hockey arena, the member is correct. In December 2014, just a few months ago, the Village of Carmacks received word from their insurance provider that they would have to shut down their hockey arena, citing structural safety concerns. Soon after, Community Services

representatives met with the CAO there. It was decided that an assessment by a structural engineer would be done to determine options for fixing the arena in order to open it for this winter season. The report came back from the structural engineer with the advice that the village could indeed fix the arena. However, the Village of Carmacks council has decided to look at longer term options as opposed to financing short-term solutions. Community Services is committed to working with the Village of Carmacks and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to come to a resolution for the ice rink. We are currently collecting information on structures and funding options in order to provide meaningful recreation opportunities for the Village of Carmacks residents. We have provided this information to Carmacks, or will be shortly, and we are assisting them in continuing to build a healthy, safe community with a fully functioning hockey arena and recreation complex.

We are working closely with the community there to determine what the needs are and how to move forward. At this point, we have engaged to the degree that has been requested of us by the community and will continue to do so as we consider options alongside the village to determine what the needs will be and how best to address them.

Mr. Silver: I am going to move on to another question here on search and rescue. I have a couple of questions on search and rescue and then I will give the floor up to my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun.

In November of 2013, a report entitled *Yukon Search and Rescue Capability-Based Risk Assessment* was prepared by the Yukon government Emergency Measures Organization. The report concluded by making recommendations based upon 14 areas. I asked a question during Question Period, May 14, 2014, for an update on these recommendations, and the minister of the time said that he would not — and I quote: “...speak to specific actions here today in the House.” He went on to say — and I quote: “I can assure the member that government will be taking action, based on the good advice and solid input we’ve heard from our volunteers.”

Madam Chair, he did not say whether or not the recommendations of the report were actually going to be implemented, so I guess I’ll start there. Is the government still looking at this report?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Could the member suggest which recommendations exactly he’s referring to?

Mr. Silver: Again, we asked the question: Are you moving forward with this? So there were recommendations based on all 14 areas. I would leave it to the minister to tell us which ones they are working on.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I take that to mean the member doesn’t have the report handy or have it at hand. Yes, my response at this point would be that I’m sure we’ve taken the report recommendations seriously and we’re considering how to respond.

Mr. Silver: All right; fine. The first recommendation of the report, recommended from EMO, is that EMO work with its partners to increase the safety through public prevention, taking steps to educate the public, in order to reduce

hardships, injury and loss. Has this happened? If so, what has been done to promote public prevention?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, we are acting on that recommendation, along with our partners in disaster prevention and emergency response. That work is being conducted by the Emergency Measures Organization in a number of ways, and I’m happy to discuss some of the EMO’s work on that front.

In an emergency event, Yukon’s Emergency Measures Organization is responsible for drawing together the resources and expertise required to support the response in a timely and effective manner, whether from a local source, across Canada or across North America.

EMO leads all emergency preparedness planning for the Yukon government. It focuses on the four pillars of emergency management: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. EMO is responsible for ensuring that the Yukon government emergency coordination plan is up to date and for providing a coordinated approach to emergency response within the government’s areas of responsibility.

Today, most Yukon government departments and corporations have completed their own emergency plans, inclusive of business continuity, and progress is being made on the rest. EMO is currently leading the modernization and updating of the territorial emergency coordination plan. The Yukon government emergency coordination group is assisting in the rewrite. It is anticipated that the new plan will be ready for approval in mid-2016.

EMO has been engaged in a multi-year initiative through the Aboriginal Relations, Executive Council Office, implementation fund to strengthen emergency preparedness planning by First Nation governments and communities. EMO is working with all Yukon self-governing First Nations to provide advice and mentoring in the development of preparedness plans and local capacity. In Yukon, the RCMP have the responsibility for all missing persons, inclusive of all ground and inland water search and rescue operations. EMO supports this by helping to provide training and equipment to search and rescue teams so that they can respond to a search mission when requested by the RCMP. As part of the government’s all-hazards approach to emergency management, EMO works with Wildland Fire Management, the Fire Marshal’s Office, Emergency Medical Services, Health and Social Services, Highways and Public Works, and other government and non-government partners to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

Periodically, flooding can pose a risk to some communities. To help residents prepare for this, EMO and the Department of Environment publish weekly seasonal flood risk reports. These are distributed to the media, stakeholders and the public. EMO recently completed work on a project it initiated to survey community flood risk using light-detection and ranging-survey technology launched in 2012 in conjunction with the Yukon government’s Climate Change Secretariat. The project was funded through the federal government’s climate change adaptation program.

LiDAR-based surveys of 13 Yukon flood-prone community areas were conducted in 2014 in aid of providing enhanced digital-elevation data to improve flood-plain mapping. To improve detailed mapping of flood-prone areas in and near Yukon communities, planners, land developers and emergency managers are better able to plan, build and prepare for current and future climate-change-driven flood risk.

In partnership with federal, provincial and territorial partners, EMO delivers its 72-hour emergency preparedness public education campaign every May. In short, Yukoners are encouraged to learn about the risks they face, prepare an emergency plan and have an emergency kit capable of supporting themselves and their families for a minimum of three days. As part of its preparedness program, EMO led the successful Great Yukon ShakeOut exercise. On October 16, 2014, Yukon participants joined millions in North America and around the world to practise the “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” earthquake preparedness drill during the world’s largest annual earthquake exercise.

EMO continues to work collaboratively with the Yukon Amateur Radio Association to ensure there is a redundant radio communication system in place in case of a telecommunications emergency in the territory. In addition, Yukon Amateur Radio Association, along with support from EMO and the Canadian Coast Guard, maintains the marine radio system in the Southern Lakes region. EMO also participates in regional, national and international partnerships to share information and best practices related to emergency management, develop national emergency management strategies as well as guidelines and standards and coordinate their implementation. To that end, EMO is active in the National Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management forum, composed of federal, provincial and territorial emergency management agencies; the provincially and territorially focused Canadian Council of Emergency Measures Organizations; the Western Regional Emergency Management Advisory Council, where it works with B.C., Oregon, Idaho, Washington state and Alaska under the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management arrangements in making preparations to assist each other during catastrophic events; the national Ground and Inland Water Search and Rescue Council, composed of provincial, territorial, GSAR — so ground search and rescue representation from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat — Parks Canada, and the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada; the Northern Search and Rescue Roundtable, where federal, territorial and regional — including Nunavik — local and national volunteer SAR agencies meet to discuss search and rescue issues and concerns across the north from three search and rescue disciplines: air, marine and ground; and the Pelmorex Public Alerting Governance Council, which is composed of representatives from the FPT governments as well as public/private broadcasters and cable, satellite distributors that collectively provide direction and advice to Pelmorex on matters relating to their role as the distributor of national emergency public alert messages.

Madam Chair, through these measures and many others, the Yukon government is working to implement the recommendations as suggested by the member opposite.

Mr. Silver: With all due respect to the minister, the 72-hour prep, the earthquake response, the regional partnerships, the national councils — all of these items go well beyond a 2013 report. These are items that have been historically what the government does.

Specifically to this report, there were some specific recommendations in 14 different categories. Now I’m not going to list them all here. We’re not going to go through it here, but I will ask a couple more specifically — but if the minister could possibly get back to us when he has actual recommendations or responses to the actual recommendations — specific recommendations and specific responses — that would be very helpful.

Again, a couple of them — EMO forming training working groups — if so, based upon a recommendation from this particular report, who is included in this working group? That would maybe be a question I could ask the minister today. Or has EMO provided any funding or anything in terms of curriculum development as well, which is another one of the specific recommendations from this *Yukon Search and Rescue Capability-Based Risk Assessment*? I’ll leave it at that — if the minister can maybe respond to those two and I will give the floor to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I’m not sure if we have responses to those recommendations formally or not. If we have, I’ll provide that information where appropriate. But I don’t have the specifics on the curriculum development today.

Chair: Prior to moving forward with another speaker, would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

We are continuing general debate in Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

Ms. White: So just before we start, I promised the minister I would start off with a compliment — so I sent an e-mail to him on February 5 of this year. I’m going to get more into the e-mail, but I pointed out that there were two links on the Community Services website, both for an emergency preparedness guide for people with disabilities and then an emergency preparedness guide for people with children. Both of those links actually went to the French part of the federal website. I pointed that out to him and I have just checked and they now go the English website, so that’s fantastic. Congratulations and thank you for making the change on that because it probably could have easily got lost in that.

The reason I’m referencing this is that, on February 5, I sent an e-mail and I was having a conversation with an elderly

constituent and she asked if the emergency measures plan for Whitehorse has a plan for seniors or wheelchair citizens or people with disabilities. In my e-mail to him, I said I didn't have the answer, so I looked on-line. You know, on the Community Services website it takes you to these two federal websites with handy suggestions, but not really with any answers.

So I'm just coming back to this — and I'll just paraphrase the last paragraph, which is that he was quite certain that whatever plans we have in place would contemplate dealing with folks who have limited mobility, but that he would be happy to confirm it and didn't know that we have a single all-encompassing plan that we could share with my constituent, but he would see what he could find out. I think the e-mail conversation stopped there.

So my question is: What is the department's plan on dealing with people, both in the City of Whitehorse and outside the City of Whitehorse, who have limited mobility issues — people with disabilities, wheelchairs and seniors? In the event of a disaster, what is the department's plan for helping those people?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In the case of the City of Whitehorse, they have a municipal plan in place that we work with them on. My understanding is that it does address issues related to mobility or people who are challenged with mobility. I don't have the specific data with regard to what specifically happens or what actions specifically go into place, but I know there is a plan in place and it does address those concerns.

Ms. White: The City of Whitehorse website actually links directly to the Emergency Measures website of the Department of Community Services. I am just flagging this as an issue. We all have seniors in our ridings and I am sure we all have people with disabilities in our ridings and we might get asked the question. I am just going to put that out there — that right now it goes in a circle. The City of Whitehorse says to check Community Services; Community Services says to check federal government and I still don't know what to tell the seniors. I will just put that down for right now, but I do thank the minister for changing the website so at least now it goes to the English page.

I sent a letter on March 17 with questions about rural well enhancement and the program. My question — well there are a lot of different questions, I'm sure — but when we go into the program description, it seems to be that there is some leeway in the program. My question is that if someone had both a domestic and commercial property — and we are not talking about a large commercial property, we are talking about a small café with two flushing toilets, and they need to make changes to their water system to be able to access their business licence. Does the rural well enhancement program possibly be something they could look under?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The answer is no, it would not. The rural well program is specifically for domestic users. Commercial is a very different use and a very different application. The domestic rural well program is not intended for commercial operators or commercial wells. There are a lot of reasons for that. It relates to the different types of liability

that are associated with commercial operations, the different valuations in terms of the asset that you are borrowing against. In some cases, that is not possible with a commercial operation in the same way that it is with a domestic. The simple answer is no. The rural well program is not intended at all for commercial operators.

Ms. White: Just reading the definitions and stuff, I understand the minister's answer there.

Is there a program that will help rural Yukoners who live in these kinds of homestead-like situations and are trying also to work and live on their property to make changes to their water systems?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, when we made the changes to the rural well program last fall — and we have begun to enact them now through regulations and agreements with municipalities — I had asked departments to look at that possibility. So the answer is, no, we don't have anything in place, although we were contemplating whether or not that would be possible in the future.

The early indications I've received are that it doesn't look good. There's a significant degree of uncertainty and risk associated with commercial properties that isn't there for domestic, so if we wanted to get into commercial lending for the purposes of wells that would be used to provide commercial operators with services for their businesses, that's a very different application than the domestic application. While we did give that some consideration and we don't have anything in place today, it doesn't look like we would be able to do anything beyond the domestic program for commercial operators because of a number of reasons. But the liability and risk were at the top of the list for those reasons.

Ms. White: If the same well serviced both the small business that is run seasonally and the home that is lived in full-time — would that change the situation at all?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't want to get into specifics about a specific case, but the intent for the domestic well program is for domestic wells. They aren't intended to be used for commercial applications. If a well was being used for a commercial purpose, I don't believe it would be eligible for the domestic well program.

Ms. White: But if it was the same well — so it was used for the domestic purpose — so let's say then we don't talk about the commercial aspect and we stop the pipe from running to that side, would the program possibly be able to be accessed for that purpose?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't believe the Yukon government could simply ignore the fact that the well was going to be used for commercial purposes afterwards. If the well is intended to be a domestic well, it would be eligible for the program, assuming it meets all the parameters of the program. If it's intended for commercial use at any time during the year, then it's not eligible.

Ms. White: Last fall, I tabled a petition highlighting some of the unique challenges of mobile home owners. It's super interesting, because the new minister represents a mobile home park and the minister for the Porter Creek South riding also has two mobile home parks within his riding. What

has come to light — kind of in the last number of years, especially since we passed the legislation in 2012 — is that mobile home owners face unique challenges and, under the act, those challenges seem to be exacerbated in some cases. Under the new act, when it gets enacted — which I have a question about as well — mobile home owners are viewed solely as renters, but we know that when you own the asset on the piece of property, there is concern about kind of planning long-term futures.

I guess my question here is: Has government looked at engaging mobile home owners to discuss the unique challenges that they face with the current *Landlord and Tenant Act* or the one we passed in 2012 that will hopefully be enacted soon?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I can confirm that the regulations are being developed currently to bring the RLTA into force. The new RLTA will govern tenancy agreements between mobile home owners and mobile home parks. It will provide additional protection and certainty for mobile home owners, and it will also provide new tools and options for mobile home owners to avail themselves of in the event they need help or advice or have a dispute with their park owner.

In terms of protection and certainty, it will limit pad rent increases to no more than once per year. It will require mobile home park owners to provide at least three months' notice of an increase in pad rent, and it will prohibit pad rent increases in the first year of tenancy. Furthermore, if a tenancy is to be terminated, the RLTA provides expanded time of notice for mobile home owners than other types of tenants and prohibits a park owner from requiring a tenant to move a mobile home during the coldest months of the year.

Additionally, mobile home owners will have access to the Residential Tenancies Office, which will be prepared to offer advice and assistance for mobile home owners on matters related to their tenancy, including tenancy agreements. As well, the RTO offers a new avenue for dispute resolution beyond what is currently available.

While there are new protections, new tools and new options for mobile home owners built into the RLTA, the act does not provide for the type of rent control that I know members sought previously in discussions. I would note, though, that, as we move forward with the implementation of the act — if it becomes apparent, as we move forward both with the act and the regulations, that there's a need for some additional measures relating to mobile homes, then I can commit to revisiting tenancy laws between mobile home owners and park owners at a future date and, yes, that would include discussions with the mobile home owners.

Ms. White: So the points that the minister just highlighted — except for not being made to move your mobile home during the winter months — are essentially the same protections that have been given to renters, whether it's a duplex or a basement suite or a bachelor apartment. The security he has just highlighted is for all renters.

So if I was renting an apartment, and I was told in three months' time that my rent was going to go up substantially — let's say by 50 percent — I could start looking for a new place

to live. If I was a mobile home owner and I lived in a mobile home park and I was told in three months' my rent was going to go up by 50 percent, I have an asset that has to be moved. It has been highlighted by the previous minister that, if I moved my mobile home within the City of Whitehorse, it would no longer meet building codes. So then I couldn't even move it to a lot within the City of Whitehorse.

It was suggested that, as a mobile home owner, I could move it out of town. We know that isn't so easy either. So my question is: Does the minister recognize that there is a difference between being able to move the contents within a place with three months' notice, as opposed to moving an entire place — like the home itself?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that response. So recognizing that difference, is there not a value in having a conversation now with mobile home owners? We have six within the City of Whitehorse; I would guess there are more than 900 homes. They have different management; they have different expectations. One park, if you pay within the first three business days of the month, it's \$400; if you pay after the first three days, it's \$480. We have seen substantial increases in those park fees.

We have seen those increases tied to promises of increasing services, but we have not seen that. So would the minister consider having that conversation sooner rather than later?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Obviously we just passed this bill relatively recently, so not we're keen to make amendments at this time. But, as I indicated, if it becomes apparent as we move forward with the implementation of the new regulations and legislation that there is need for some additional measures relating to mobile homes, then I can commit to revisiting tenancy laws between mobile home owners and park owners at a future date. I won't commit to any specific measure at this time, but I can indicate that, yes, we will take the matter under consideration and consider the member's comments as we move forward.

Ms. White: Just to remind everyone, we passed the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* on December 12, 2013, which was a fair number of years ago. As we have continued to wait patiently for those regulations to come in place for that act to be enacted so it's actually in place, is there any room within the development of the regulations, prior to them being implemented, that we could look at some protection for mobile home owners?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, which was passed in the fall of 2012, sets out the rights and responsibility of landlords and tenants when they enter into a residential tenancy agreement in Yukon and sets up a new dispute resolution process outside of the courts to ensure compliance and encourage a healthy private rental market in Yukon. This act will come into force when the regulations, including minimum rental standards, are in place. As I have indicated, we're hoping to have those in place later this year.

The *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* — until the new legislation comes into effect — and the *Employment*

Agencies Act, which regulates employment agencies in Yukon — all fall under the Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies branch of the department. The regulations that will come into effect later this year, as I indicated, will bring into force the act and those new tools and new opportunities that are available to tenants — including mobile home owners — will be available then. As I've indicated, if it becomes apparent through the implementation of this legislation and regulations that there is a need for some additional measures relating to mobile homes, then I can commit to revisiting tenancy laws between mobile home owners and park owners at a future date.

Ms. White: What sort of problems or what kind of threshold are we talking about for that being revisited? We have seen quite a few examples in the recent past about the challenges of being a mobile home owner within a park, so what's the threshold that the minister would require in order to be able to open up that conversation?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't know if "threshold" is the right term for it, but I've indicated that, if in the implementation of the new legislation and the regulations, it becomes apparent to us that there is some change needed or some revision necessary, we would entertain revisiting the laws between mobile home owners and mobile home parks.

That is something we will have to determine as we move forward, but, as I have indicated, there are new tools and new options that are available to mobile home owners as a result of the new act and I hope that mobile home owners are able to avail themselves of these new resources to try to resolve any potential disputes that they might have with park owners. If it is determined in the course of the implementation that it is not sufficient, then we would consider revisiting those rules.

Ms. White: Will there be a process at the Residential Tenancies Office if a mobile home owner comes in with a complaint or a concern, that it will be documented so that those can be stored and when we reach whatever critical mass, the issue can be revisited? Will there be a way to keep those separate and tracked?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the RTO will track its calls and incoming issues and that information, we hope, will be available.

Ms. White: Just based on these unique circumstances and the challenges of mobile home owners, will the office be given the direction to keep a separate file so that those are easy to track, easy to find and easy to understand?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't know exactly how the RTO will operate its filing system, but we can look into that and determine whether or not a different file folder can be used, perhaps, for those types of issues.

Ms. White: I will take that file folder as a win.

Yesterday the minister said that the residential landlord and tenant regulations would be completed later this year. We have heard that in 2013 and again in 2014. I was wondering if I could have a more precise timeline as to when we can expect this act to be enacted and the regulations to be in place.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The process for bringing regulations into force is a complex one and involves a number of agencies

and government, including Cabinet, to approve, so I am unable to provide a precise date at this time, but I think — as I have indicated — they will be available later this year.

Ms. White: Since we passed this in December 2013 — sorry, 2012 — there have been times when we have sent people to the Residential Tenancies Office to look for help and they are handed a pamphlet of paper, including tenant rights, landlord responsibilities, how to access the Law Line if you need to go forward with the small claims process — so until the law is enacted and the regulations are in place, is this the service that we can still expect from the Residential Tenancies Office?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, I believe that is correct.

Mr. Tredger: I welcome officials and thank them for their time and their attention to this budget and I thank the minister for his answers so far.

I would like to talk a little bit about Keno City. As everyone knows, Keno City is a very small community north of Mayo. They have been undergoing a bit of a renaissance.

Mike Mancini still has the Keno City Snack Bar, but also there is a hotel that has just opened. The Keno City Sourdough Bar has opened. It is a thriving community — Silver Moon Bunkhouse has opened.

In 2012, Dr. Hanley did a health impact assessment. I know since then that Community Services has worked with the residents of Keno on a number of issues and I want to thank them for the time that they have spent there.

Dr. Hanley noted that although a number of stressors can be mitigated or minimized through collaboration, the lack of a governance structure or organized representation within the community poses significant challenges in terms of developing a strategy that responds to a unified community vision.

I have talked a number of times about what mechanism Community Services would pursue or work on with the residents of Keno City so that they will have opportunities for organized representation. Last summer, during one of the submissions to YESAB, one of the residents wrote the following: There has been no formal process for residents and landowners to voice their concerns — more importantly, a mechanism in place that ensures that people can formally express their concerns and have them responded to accordingly, and that there is a record of this and that this record is referred to in any subsequent applications. Our understanding was that this formal process was to be put in place. Who ensures that this is adhered to and complied with? We believe that the process can only be effective if a third, impartial body ensures that it is done in a measurable way. Whatever informal process that currently exists has been inconsistent, at best, and generally unsatisfactory in terms of coming up with mitigations and any follow-through on the art of the proposition.

The concern is that, as an unincorporated community, Keno has not had any means of representation. I am wondering whether Community Services has followed up on Dr. Hanley's recommendation. What type of formal process is in place? I know that in talking to various officials there is a

certain amount of frustration in who represents Keno. Is it the community club? Is it individuals within Keno? Having a formal structure would go a long way to helping not only industry, but various levels of government interact with the residents of Keno. The residents of Keno could then gain some assurances that they are represented at a municipal and a community level.

I am wondering whether the minister is aware of this or whether he would undertake it as a priority, certainly for the citizens of Keno.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that Keno is too small to incorporate as a municipality and also doesn't have the numbers to justify a local advisory council. We have assigned a community advisor from the department to Keno. Our community advisor visits Keno and hears Keno's concerns in much the same way that we do for other municipalities or communities, but because there is no municipality or municipal government there, the community advisor typically engages with citizens directly.

I believe there are few enough citizens that she's able to do that. We have dealt with the community club previously. That's one way for us to engage with the community, but the very small size of Keno means that it's simply too small to justify a local advisory council. If they want to pursue specific issues, like recreation, they can form a recreational authority, and that's how we'll continue to engage with the community of Keno.

As well, I should note that, in the budget this year for sports and recreation, we're providing close to \$18,000 for the community, which is up considerably from past years, as a result of the significant increase we've made to the community recreation assistance grant, the CRAG funding.

Keno is certainly getting a significant boost when it comes to recreational investment in this budget, and we'll continue to work with the community to try to address their needs as best we can.

Mr. Tredger: I understand the importance of recreation and we'll talk about that in my next series of questions. Keno needs some sort of representation. The community advisor — there are citizens who live in Keno as well as many property owners who don't. Has the position of the community advisor been advertised or made known to the people of Keno? Does that advisor visit on a regular basis? How would citizens of Keno find that out and know when she's coming?

Again, we run into this: Is there a means to communicate? Does Community Services have a means to communicate with the majority of residents of Keno so that, should the community advisor be planning a trip there, there's some way of advising everyone in the community, short of sitting down with a phone and phoning all the land owners and all the residents? It's an awkward situation and, as I say, it was noted by Dr. Hanley and it has been noted many times since. This is a critical part of it.

I don't expect the name of the community advisor on the floor, but if the minister would advise me who it is, so I can let the residents know who it is and who they have — someone they can contact — but, more importantly, how do

citizens know when the advisor is coming? How do they know what the process is for involving her or that person in their concerns?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the community advisor has visited Keno a number of times since we assigned her with the responsibility for being the community advisor for Keno. I don't think there's a problem for me to say — it's Kirsti Muller, so citizens are welcome to follow up with Kirsti to address those issues. When she comes to town, she lets as many people know that she's coming to town as she can. I think she's able to deal with them on an almost individual basis, given the very small size of Keno. I don't think there's a necessity for a municipal or LAC structure in Keno, given the small size, but we will continue to provide the considerable services that we do in Keno.

Those include a range of municipal-like services, including drinking water and waste water and all of the solid-waste services that the Department of Community Services provides.

Mr. Tredger: Does the community advisor have a regular schedule? Is there any way of alerting not only the current residents of Keno, but the landowners who live there and may be there for periods of time over the year? There's a significant number who reside in Keno part-time and enjoy that. Again, we have that problem: How does the community advisor contact all of the residents? Are her visits on a regular basis or are they sometimes?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I think the answer is somewhere in-between regular schedule visits and sometimes. I would say she visits the community on a semi-regular basis.

Mr. Tredger: When she visits the community, is a report given back to the community?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Not a written report that I'm aware of, Madam Chair — if folks want to know what she heard, they can just ask her.

Mr. Tredger: I think that sort of explains the crux of the matter. When somebody comes by on occasion and visits with individuals within the community and then goes back, there's a sense of frustration. I understand some of the problems — the size of the community — but it is in a community where there's a lot happening. I would ask the minister to look into that and see if the visits can be arranged ahead of time and that some kind of reporting — what I heard, what I took forward from them — would be arranged.

When we discussed this with the previous minister and some of the other ministers, they mentioned that, in response to Dr. Hanley's report, an interdepartmental committee had been formed to look at addressing some of the issues that Dr. Hanley raised. At the time, I wasn't able to ascertain which department was taking the lead. I would assume that the community advisor would make reports to that committee. If those reports are being made to the committee, could those reports be made public or does that community advisor sit on the interdepartmental committee? How does Community Services relate to that? I'm trying to find out again: How often does the interdepartmental committee meet? Are the minutes or the discussions in that — even the topics — made available

to citizens of Keno or to the public? Which department is taking the lead on that? Is there an individual there whom residents of Keno could contact if they feel their concerns aren't being addressed?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the intergovernmental committee is being led by Health and Social Services so I would direct the questions about its function to the minister in the debate on the Health and Social Services budget. But my understanding, again, is that the community advisor visits the community on a semi-regular basis, every three or four months. I understand that she has a fairly extensive e-mail list of community members. If someone is being missed, I'm sure that, in his capacity as MLA for the area, the member could provide the community advisor's name or information to her to add to that list. If any of the community members have concerns with the services being provided by Community Services, then they are welcome to raise them with the community advisor. Likewise, if there are other concerns with other departments, I'm sure she's willing to act as a conduit from the community members to the various departments as issues arise.

Mr. Tredger: I would be very happy to take the minister up on his offer there, and before the community advisor's visits to Mayo, if she would alert me as to when they happen, I would be more than happy to contact various residents who I know may be interested in meeting with her or taking part in any public meetings that occur in Keno. I will help to advertise it, as I stated.

Does the community advisor sit in on the interdepartmental meetings? Does she relay the information that she has gathered from the community members to the interdepartmental meeting that is, as I understand, hosted by Health and Social Services?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that the community advisor attends some of the meetings of the interdepartmental working group, but I don't know the frequency with which that group meets, as it's something led by the Department Health and Social Services.

Mr. Tredger: Is the minister privy to reports that the community advisor gives to the interdepartmental meetings? If those reports are available, I would ask that the minister table them or, at the minimum, share them with the opposition parties.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I will have to take that under advisement. I don't receive the reports so I can't commit to tabling them.

Mr. Tredger: We were talking a little bit about recreational facilities and recreational facilities in various communities in the Yukon. There have been a number of indicators that our facilities are beginning to age and that there needs to be some long-term strategic planning.

My experience with the Auditor General's report is primarily in education, but I know they have had a number of reports to various departments over the years. He talks about strategic planning as a management tool that helps to set priorities and goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. It also helps to assess how resources are to be allocated and

gives it the scope to adjust its direction in response to a changing environment.

We heard earlier how important recreational facilities are to the Yukon and the quality of hockey players being trained and growing up in our various communities. I would like to put in a little pitch for Carmacks hockey players, not necessarily as the best — although they are darn good — but persistent. This winter, the Carmacks players would drive to Pelly after school to practise. The recreational team would drive to Pelly to practise. Others joined teams in Whitehorse and drove to practise. What was missing is that it wasn't happening in their community.

I know that our structures need maintenance. We know that we should have a schedule for replacement. We should have a means where there is assessment of the facilities in each of our communities so that we are not surprised, whether it is the settling of a building in Dawson City, or permafrost malfunctions in Ross River, or structural problems in Carmacks, or a leaky roof as in in Pelly.

I am wondering if Community Services has a long-term strategic plan for capital replacement, for operation and maintenance of our recreational facilities and, if it does, what is the mechanism for addressing emerging concerns, for addressing future potential capital projects — and for ensuring that the operation and maintenance of the facilities are kept up-to-date.

I will just leave it at that and I have a few more follow-up questions.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When it comes to recreational infrastructure, we work with Yukon communities, Yukon recreation groups, sports groups and others to address the recreational infrastructure needs of Yukoners. When facilities are owned by municipalities, they tend to undertake the operation and maintenance; when they are owned by Yukon government, we do so. That is pretty consistent throughout the territory. When municipalities have recreational infrastructure needs, they communicate that to Yukon government and we will determine the degree to which we are able to support them or help them.

Obviously there's a component of federal funding available there as well, through Building Canada and other funding mechanisms from the federal government. We try to address the needs as they arise. We have a pretty good understanding of our own recreational infrastructure throughout the territory and work on an annual basis to ensure that the necessary upkeep is undertaken. When communities approach us with concerns about their recreational infrastructure, as has been the case in a number of communities, we work very closely with them.

I provided earlier today an explanation of what's going on in Carmacks — also what's going on in Dawson. If we want to get into specific facilities in specific communities, I'm happy to, but I think that's a general response to the very general question raised by the member opposite.

Mr. Tredger: I guess what I was hoping to hear is that there was an inventory of all of our facilities in the communities — recreational facilities — and an assessment of

where they are in terms of their life expectancy, what kind of repairs are needed, what it will take to maintain them.

I think it's important that such a strategic plan be developed and that it be open and transparent. My experience in talking to various municipalities and unincorporated municipalities, is that they weren't sure how the process was arrived at. That leaves us with a bit of a problem, because if there isn't a clear process there, then people may get the idea that these are political decisions rather than necessity decisions, and get into a situation where one community feels they are in competition with another community and that they don't have control of the process or input into the process.

I hearken back to the mid-1990s, when many of the school buildings in our communities — and indeed throughout the Yukon — were aging, and many of them were in need of replacement. Every community wanted theirs done now, and every school in Whitehorse wanted a new school now. What the government of the day did, under Piers McDonald, was assess all the structures and then sit down with all of the school councils afterward and say, "Look, we can't build 10 schools this year, but let's together sit down and decide what needs to be done first, what can we get away with in terms of maintenance, and where we can go in the future."

Subsequently, within a 10- to 12-year period, there were 10 schools built — schools in Mayo, Pelly, Carmacks, Haines Junction, Golden Horn, Hidden Valley, Holy Family. It's hard to believe that, in the 10 years since, we've built one school; in the 10 years previous, we built quite a few.

The reason I think we were able to do that is that we sat down with an open and transparent process. When I hear of communities like Carmacks going without a rink, it wasn't a surprise. Carmacks has been looking for a replacement for years. Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and the Village of Carmacks have all been saying, "We need to do something. Our facility is falling apart."

This year I heard from the citizens of Pelly Crossing. Their arena is having significant damage because the roof hasn't been replaced. What we need is a long-term strategic plan, not only for the maintenance and upkeep, but for potential replacement, and it has to be open and it has to be transparent so that the players — the community members closest to it — can have some input and look at realistic projections. I will just include in those facilities that we've been mentioning that many of our communities have swimming pools that are aging rapidly. Does our long-term plan call for the replacement of them on a regular basis or are we going to wait until they're unusable and scramble to come up with the funds to replace them, maybe leaving the kids and community members who use those pools in the summer out for a year or two, as has happened in Carmacks with their skating rink?

Does the Department of Community Services have a long-term strategic operation, maintenance and capital replacement plan? Is that available to our municipalities and to our community members — both incorporated and unincorporated — and if not, will the minister commit to getting such a plan in place?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm happy to take the member's comments under advisement and I will have to give them some consideration as we move forward.

Mr. Tredger: While he's taking those under advisement, I would ask that he also look at emergency services in our various communities and the housing of them. Again, what I hear from several communities is that when they get their new equipment — fire trucks or ambulances — the old buildings won't be large enough to hold them. What I hear is that there's a need for a building to house ambulances, fire and search and rescue equipment. In some communities, it's scattered throughout the community; there's no central place. But as we're going to a more modern place, having the search and rescue boat in somebody's backyard is not optimal.

So again, is there a long-term strategic plan to look at the needs in terms of emergency services to bring them under one roof where training can occur; where there is a central area where they can exchange ideas, and maybe share some of their services and training and some of the costs where the facility is upgraded? I know a number of the facilities in my area are in need of repair and in need of upgrading. I know there is an expectation that within a few years they will need a new ambulance station or a fire station and again, is there a long-term territory-wide plan that would allow for communities to input in an open and transparent matter so that they can plan? Okay, we have to wait because there is more of a need in community X and community Y might wait for five years or 10 years, but make do with what they have and know that in that length of time theirs will be looked after.

It's a matter of involving everybody and strategically planning so that we can address the needs before they happen, rather than after the fact.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, there is indeed a plan and I look forward to providing the member's comments to those who implement the plan so they can be made aware of the considerations brought forward by the member.

Mr. Tredger: One of the things that I noticed in travelling from community to community is that, in order to input the municipal councils that have more experience or that have been more stable or are able to provide better and more accurate input and know who to contact and who to work with — whereas in other municipal councils or unincorporated councils there may have been more turnover, more change and they haven't made those connections.

Now, given that this fall there are going to be municipal elections and Community Services may end up with a variety of new councillors and people new to positions, has the minister given any consideration to working with the councils in terms of training the new councils so that they know how they can access strategic planning, how they can have input, what their limitations are in terms of that, how they go about ensuring that their recreational facilities, their medical facilities and their town structures are being maintained — or if we're looking at replacement? So has the minister worked with the Association of Yukon Communities as well as with various municipalities in terms of how they're going to handle the changeover from the current municipal officers to the new

ones? In some cases that won't probably be as necessary because there may be some continuity; in others you may end up with a brand new council.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, of course, we offer these sorts of training and opportunities for new councillors to become familiar with their jobs and familiar with the services and programs provided by the department.

In November, following the elections, we provide an orientation for new councillors — we do that in partnership with AYC, I should note — and through that orientation we provide as much training as we are able to, to new councillors or new mayors, to provide them with an understanding of what their role is and what some of the general issues are in the territory with regard to relationships between the Yukon government and municipalities. I understand that the AYC also offers some services in that respect as well, and other more experienced, or seasoned, councillors are available from other municipalities to provide mentorship and guidance to other communities or councillors who are new.

I think it is an excellent example of the AYC facilitating training and opportunities for councillors to get the skills and information that they need to do their jobs. I think the Department of Community Services has come a long way over the years with regard to that interaction with municipalities. I know that it wasn't that long ago that community advisors were somewhat strangers in the municipalities, but now I think there isn't a municipal government or mayor or council or otherwise who doesn't know who their community advisor is and who doesn't have an ongoing relationship and discussion with them.

Not only that, Madam Chair, but at the more senior levels, of course — at the CAO level or the city manager level — those officials liaise directly with the department at the director or ADM level, and mayors and councillors at the political level engage with us ministers. We try to engage with them as often as is necessary.

I think we provide those services to the municipalities and the councillors through a number of means, but the partnership with AYC is one of those.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that, and it would be important to extend that to the unincorporated communities as well. Over the years, I have heard from a number of the communities a concern that YTG is becoming more and more centralized and more services — in order to access them — some people either have to go to Whitehorse or, in some cases, one or two satellite communities.

I am wondering if the minister has a breakdown — and I don't expect him to have this now, but it certainly would be worth looking at the number of services offered in each community over the last 10 years and whether that has been increasing or decreasing — the number of personnel. Again, I would stress the fact that public servants contribute much to our society, and when personnel are taken out of a community, it leaves a significant gap. These are the people who have kids in school, who do coaching, who are an integral part of the community.

I know the importance that our public servants pay in our communities. I'm wondering two things here: if the minister has, or whether Community Services has, done a time lapse of how that has been going? When I go to the communities, I hear that we lost this and we lost that, but I don't have anything concrete to say this is why or that's why. I think that would be important and it would be a transparent and open move.

The other concern I heard from a number of areas — and it relates to a couple of my earlier questions — housing of the various personnel, whether they be from Yukon Housing Corporation or whether they be our licensee agencies. By housing, I mean their office buildings, not their personal house — that's not your department — and whether the buildings in the communities — I know Mayo has a number of agencies in one building and that has worked very well. A number of other communities have asked me if there's any plan to have such a centralized building. It may be the same building that houses our emergency services or something. But again, is there a long-term plan to work with the municipalities to develop YTG buildings in the community that would house several services and be a real boon to the communities?

You know, to pick up your mail and go to Yukon Housing Corporation or to get your driver's licence, or those kinds of things, without having to drive to Whitehorse, and have it under one facility — I guess that's a long way of saying two things: one, do we have a breakdown of whether or not there are more Community Services and YTG personnel in the communities now than over the last 10 years; and, secondly, is there any thought to increasing the number of personnel in communities and trying to develop a YTG-type building that may be in combination with the municipality buildings?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: For the Department of Community Services, our personnel allotment by community has remained unchanged, but I can't speak for other departments. When it comes to the distribution of government employees throughout the communities, that's something you'll have to ask various departments about.

When it comes to government space — meaning the space that we use for offices or buildings, storage and otherwise — that is something that's done centrally by the Department of Highways and Public Works, which determines the space requirements for government offices throughout the Yukon government.

So to the extent that's possible, my understanding is that Highways and Public Works works with the communities to try to collocate services where possible, but that's something that's ongoing.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer, and I will ask Highways and Public Works about that. Much of the relationship between our municipalities and YTG is through Community Services.

I know that the community advisors are in touch with them, but in terms of when you say "remain unchanged", I am wondering if the minister would commit to giving the

opposition members a breakdown, community by community, of the number of personnel within the community and their functions — and whether or not that has changed year by year over the last 10 years.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Our community staff tends to be somewhat seasonable. The fire folks, of course, are seasonal. We have personnel from EMS in communities and other staff, but I don't have a 10-year breakdown of the ebbs and flows of those numbers. I think it would be a tremendous amount of work to collect that, but I don't believe there have been — as I have said, there have been no changes in the past 10 years from a Community Services perspective, as far as I know, in the allotment of personnel per community or the distribution among the communities. I can't provide that information at this time.

Mr. Tredger: Is Community Services responsible for the issuing of licences and permits?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The department is responsible for some licences and permits. Obviously Health and Social Services issues permits and Environment issues permits. I think there are some permits issued from Highways and Public Works as well. There are a range of permits. I am not sure exactly what the member means.

Mr. Tredger: I am just trying to get — when I go to various communities, I hear that services are becoming more and more centralized. I am just trying to see if I can get some hard facts so that I can say, “No, that is not true”, or “Yes, and here is where you can advocate for those services or bring it forward.” I apologize for my not being exact on that, and I thank the minister for his answers today.

Chair: Does any other member wish to speak in general debate?

We are going to move on then to line-by-line debate, starting on page 6-7.

On Corporate Services

On Operation and Maintenance

On Deputy Minister's Office

Mr. Barr: Can we get the number of personnel in Communications in the deputy minister's office?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The deputy minister's office is made up of the deputy and I believe an administrative staff or two.

Deputy Minister's Office in the amount of \$565,000 agreed to

On Human Resources

Human Resources in the amount of \$842,000 agreed to

On Finance, Systems and Administration

Mr. Barr: Could I get a breakdown of this please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The increase from last year of \$84,000 is made up of \$54,000 for merit, reclassifications and collective agreement increases, and \$8,000 for increased e-mail storage costs and \$22,000 for virtual services.

Finance, Systems and Administration in the amount of \$2,001,000 agreed to

On Communications

Mr. Barr: Could I know how many people are in Communications and get a breakdown of this?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There are 4.5 FTEs in the Communications branch.

Mr. Barr: May I ask who they report to, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That would be the Director of Communications.

Mr. Tredger: Can you tell me who the Director of Communications reports to please?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The deputy minister.

Communications in the amount of \$506,000 agreed to
Corporate Services Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$3,914,000 agreed to
On Capital Expenditures

On Office Furniture and Equipment

Mr. Barr: I see that has doubled. Can I get some clarification here?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This line item is for the purchase of office furniture, primarily required as a result of office moves. The department has undergone some consolidation and moves from offices to offices, so there is a requirement from time to time to purchase new office equipment.

Office Furniture and Equipment in the amount of \$85,000 agreed to

On Information Technology Equipment and Systems

Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$172,000 agreed to

On Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space

Mr. Barr: Could I get a breakdown of this please, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The budget of \$664,000 consists of \$119,000 for capital maintenance and renovations on a variety of CS buildings; \$195,000 for tenant improvements to the Lynn Building to accommodate Infrastructure Development and Community Operations; \$200,000 for tenant improvements to the Berska Building to accommodate Policy and Communications and \$150,000 to move Community Development from the main administration building here to the Lynn Building.

Ms. White: The Lynn Building — is that a leased building or is that an owned building?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That is a leased building.

Ms. White: What is the cost to lease that building for the Department of Community Services per year?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The leases are conducted as per my comments earlier. The space requirements are covered by Highways and Public Works, so the lease for that space is in the Highways and Public Works budget. The building belongs to one of the First Nation development corporations, I believe.

Building Maintenance, Renovations and Space in the amount of \$664,000 agreed to

Corporate Services Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$921,000 agreed to

Corporate Services Total Expenditures in the amount of \$4,835,000 agreed to

On Protective Services

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

On Program Administration

Mr. Barr: May I have a breakdown on that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This modest increase of \$15,000 in personnel costs is due to the collective agreement and merit increases.

Program Administration in the amount of \$549,000 agreed to

On Emergency Measures

Mr. Barr: May I get a breakdown?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: \$439,000 of that is for personnel, which includes salaries, wages and benefits for a manager, emergency management planning coordinator, office manager and a First Nation emergency preparedness planner position; \$176,000 is for Other, which includes travel, various contract-related services; \$11,000 is for repair and maintenance; \$8,000 is for rental expense; \$6,000 is for program materials; \$30,000 is for communications; \$21,000 is for training; \$24,000 is for various other requirements of the program; and there's a \$5,000 transfer payment, which is a contribution to the marine radio distress system.

Emergency Measures in the amount of \$620,000 agreed to

On Fire Marshal

Mr. Barr: May I get a breakdown of that please, Madam Chair?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is for the Fire Marshal — \$717,000 is for personnel, which includes salaries, wages and benefits for the director of Fire and Life Safety, four deputy fire marshals and one finance/administrative assistant. There is also another portion that is for travel; \$33,000 for volunteers; \$25,000 for outside Yukon travel; \$265,000 in honoraria for volunteer firefighters; \$74,000 for contracting services; \$48,000 for rental expense; \$33,000 for safety advertising campaigns; \$31,000 for petroleum; \$34,000 for program materials; \$112,000 for repairs and maintenance; \$83,000 for electricity and utilities; \$75,000 for heating fuel; \$69,000 for communications; \$135,000 for training and \$15,000 for various other requirements of the program.

Fire Marshal in the amount of \$1,787,000 agreed to

On Fire Management

Mr. Barr: I would like a breakdown of this amount.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This covers FireSmart, pre-suppression costs and suppression costs for fighting fires in the Yukon. That includes the personnel, obviously, salaries and wages and all of the other activities of the branch, which include rental expenses, advertising, supplies, program materials, repairs and maintenance, communications, training, memberships, computer system hardware and software, printing and, in general, implementing reduction and safety projects to reduce the risk of forest fires.

Fire Management in the amount of \$15,249,000 agreed to
On Emergency Medical Services

Ms. Hanson: I just have a question. In the supplementary information provided in the budget binder, it noted under this area, Emergency Medical Services footnote 2, that, beginning in 2014, the totals would differ from the total number of medevacs as community hospitals in Dawson

and Watson Lake can now medevac patients directly south rather than through Whitehorse.

So my question is: Who pays for that? If it's the Hospital Corporation, why are we not seeing a decrease in projected expenditure there?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Health and Social Services pays for that.

Ms. Hanson: The second part of the question then, Madam Chair?

Chair: Would you repeat the second part?

Ms. Hanson: If it's being covered by another department, then why is there not a projected decrease, based on the footnotes provided in the supplementary information?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Of course, Emergency Medical Services is a very important component of the Department of Community Services. They provide some important services to Yukoners.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Dixon that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Elias that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 18, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report of the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Mr. Elias: 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 5:26 p.m.