



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 264

1st Session

33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, May 3, 2016 — 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

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, May 3, 2016 — 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 at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Evelyn Mae “Babe” Richards

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is indeed an honour for me today to rise to pay tribute to a special Yukoner, Evelyn Mae “Babe” Richards, a true Yukon pioneer.

Babe Richards was born in Whitehorse on May 25, 1924, daughter of the late legendary T.C. and Bernadine Richards, known as the “TCs.” Babe’s father, Thomas Cecil, was born in 1898 in Leicester, England and moved to Whitehorse in 1915 from the BC interior where he had been a butcher. He met and married Bernadine Piper in 1918. Babe’s mother, Bernadine, was born in the west plains of Missouri in 1898 and arrived in Yukon with her parents in 1902.

Bernadine’s grandfather, Frank Bigger, operated a trading post at Dyea, Alaska, during the gold rush and moved to Whitehorse after the Skagway-to-Whitehorse White Pass & Yukon Route railway was built. The Biggers built a store in Whitehorse on 1st Avenue that was later known as the Sewell House. T.C. and Bernadine Richards were Yukon pioneers in their own right. T.C., as manager of the Whitehorse branch of the P. Burns and Company Ltd., a meat company that came to the Yukon with the gold rush, oversaw the first cattle drive into the Mayo area in 1921. In the same year, T.C. inaugurated a winter tractor-train freight and passenger service to Dawson and, in 1935, he and his business partner, W.L. “Deacon” Phelps had the Whitehorse-Dawson-Mayo contract.

T.C. Richards was inducted posthumously into the Yukon Transportation Hall of Fame in 1998. While T.C. was recognized for his contribution to the evolution of transportation in the territory, he is best known as the owner of the Whitehorse Inn. In 1937, T.C. was sitting in a high-stakes poker game in the famous “snake room” and won \$20,000 from the hotel’s owners, Ken and Mack Yoshida, which he used as a down payment on the hotel. Bernadine Richards, for her part, was content to play a supporting role in the lives of her husband and her children while managing the cleaning staff at the Whitehorse Inn. The family’s log home on Third and Steele Street is a tribute to her good taste where she acted as a gracious host to many, many friends.

Babe inherited her family’s adventurous can-do spirit. Babe started driving at 13 years of age before drivers’ licences were required and, in the summer of 1937, she drove a taxi for

tourists who wanted to see the sights of Miles Canyon and the Whitehorse Rapids. T.C. was Babe’s first boss, and she earned her first paycheque from washing dishes at the Whitehorse Inn café.

Her first paycheque was 50 cents — big money in those days. At age 16, Babe became a cashier at the hotel, but her parents wanted her to further her education. They sent her to an exclusive girls’ boarding school in Vancouver, where she graduated in 1942 and planned to attend nursing school at St. Paul’s Hospital later that year. Babe flew back to Whitehorse for the summer and, on July 26, 1942, tragedy struck. Babe’s oldest brother, Cecil — who was then 23 years old — drowned in Ear Lake. After Cecil’s death, Babe didn’t have the heart to return to her studies, so she went to work as a desk clerk at the Whitehorse Inn.

On September 17, 1943, Babe escorted the Governor General of Canada and Princess Alice around Whitehorse. Babe had survived so many ups and downs throughout her life that in later years her grown children dubbed her the “Unsinkable Molly Brown”.

Babe’s first child, a baby girl — named Cecil-Gayle, after her late brother — was born in 1946. In 1953, with baby number six on the way, she moved her growing family to Upper Liard. With the exception of Cecil-Gayle, each of the subsequent nine children was given a nickname beginning with the letter “B”.

In 1956, Babe married John Brown and moved the family from Upper Liard to the Brown brothers’ Yukon enterprise sawmill, which was then located at the confluence of the Rancheria and the Liard rivers. Babe’s mother, Bernadine, died that year in Whitehorse at the age of 58. Her father, T.C., was a frequent guest at the sawmill, enjoying the company of his grandchildren. However, he didn’t live long enough to meet Babe’s youngest child, born in Watson Lake in 1963. T.C. passed away in Whitehorse in 1961 at the age of 72.

As the children grew older, they left the sawmill to attend the Catholic boarding school in Whitehorse. Babe missed her children, so in 1960, she and John moved the family to Watson Lake and took up residence at mile 1.3 on the Campbell Highway. However when the supply of timber in one area ran out they set up residence 17 miles from Watson Lake. When the family moved the sawmill to Watson Lake, the planing mill moved with them. Babe cooked for 21 employees, her 10 children and four other boarders, one of whom was the former Premier Dennis Fentie.

After the birth of their 10th child, Babe told a sawmill employee named Petersen that the only time her name ever appeared in the paper was when she was having another baby. Babe and Petersen hatched a plot to get their names in the paper. Petersen would push Babe in a wheelbarrow from the Brown house along the airport road into town. When the big day arrived, John Brown followed the wheelbarrow entourage in the family station wagon with all 10 children and Babe’s life-long friend Phyllis Fraser.

Petersen was no longer a fit young man and Babe was no longer a petite young lady, so soon the wheelbarrow was holding up traffic coming from the airport. A policeman then

arrived and told Babe she needed a permit to ride along the road and handed Petersen a ticket. Petersen was not amused and, according to Babe, was swearing so hard the air turned blue. When the wheelbarrow transporting Babe arrived at the main drag in Watson Lake everyone was out to greet them, taking pictures. John and the children joined Babe and Petersen for a celebration at the coffee chop at the Belvedere Hotel. Petersen earned \$50 for his troubles. Babe's stunt was the talk of the town and she succeeded in her quest. Babe's photo and story describing the event appeared in the Fort Nelson newspaper. Babe later found out that it was her husband who brought the police in on the stunt. This is just one of Babe's stories of her adventurous spirit and I know that there are many more.

By 1966, the sawmill was no longer profitable and in December of that year, the family moved to Dawson Creek, BC, where John went to work for a trucking company. Three months after that move — on March 17, 1967 — Babe's brother, Bob, died at age 47, leaving Babe as the only surviving member of her birth family. In 1969, John's company transferred him to Fort St. John, BC, and the family moved with him. Babe and her family moved back to the Yukon in 1972; this time to Whitehorse.

In her almost 92 years of life, Babe spent only five years outside the Yukon. Babe raised her own 10 children, as well as a number of foster children who she took in over the years. As her own children grew up and started families of their own, Babe took on the role of the beloved grandmother to 23 grandchildren, eventually becoming great-grandmother to 15 and great-great-grandmother to three.

Babe experienced much of the Yukon's history first-hand: she travelled the waterways onboard the great sternwheelers; she witnessed the first aircraft landing at the Whitehorse airport; and she watched as American soldiers disembarked from the White Pass & Yukon Route to begin work on the construction of the Alaska Highway.

Babe shared many of these experiences with her lifelong friend, Gudrun Sparling. In 2008, she and Goody shared a Yukon heritage award as they together received lifetime honours.

I mentioned earlier that she had an adventurous, can-do spirit. The Heritage Yukon website stated that when she was honoured, her spirit was exemplified through the story of the time she borrowed a bulldozer from the highway maintenance crew and briefly took a few lessons before building a road to the lake where her family eventually built a cabin.

Many of her almost 92 years were spent volunteering her time to an endless list of charitable organizations, boards and committees aimed at making Whitehorse a better community. Babe, like her mother, Bernadine, was a very style-conscious woman, always impeccably dressed. In the 1970s, she owned and operated the dress shop, Broies Tienda, and she ran a busy daycare for many years where all the children called her "Grandma Babe".

Babe moved to Macaulay Lodge in March 2013 and soon became the unofficial greeter. Regularly sitting in the common areas of Macaulay Lodge, Babe would relay stories

of the past to anyone who would listen. She remembered the many birthdays and anniversaries and never failed to call and congratulate them every year on their special day. Babe will be forever remembered for her fun-loving, jolly spirit.

Babe was predeceased by her parents; two brothers, Cecil and Bob Richards; two grandchildren, Kimberley Rowe and Troy Latimer. She leaves behind to mourn her 10 children, and I'll start to mention names and perhaps we can just ask you to rise when I mention your name. I'll mention the children and their partners: Cecil-Gayle Terris and Dave; Bobbie Cebuliak and Jim; Richard Brown and Cookie; Douglas Brown and Sue; Bernelle Latimer, Charlie Brown and Gay; Mike Brown, John Brown Jr. and Geri; Nona Loveless and John; and Anita Pellizon and Mario; and all their grandchildren and great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren whom I mentioned earlier, as well as countless friends.

God bless Babe Richards. May she rest in peace. As Babe would say, "Bye for now. Until we meet again."

Applause

In recognition of North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I rise today on behalf of all members to recognize May 1 to May 7 as North American Occupational Safety and Health Week or NAOSH as it is commonly called.

Mr. Speaker, workplace safety is a Canadian tradition and, like hockey, Tim Hortons coffee and Justin Bieber, it's something that we love to share with people in other parts of the world.

In 1986, the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering founded NAOSH's predecessor, the Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week. Events were held across the country that promoted the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community. During the NAFTA negotiations in the 1990s, groups in the United States and Mexico saw what was happening in Canada and recognized the value of having a week filled with safety-related events. In June 1997, Canada exported its tradition of workplace safety under the NAFTA agreement and NAOSH was born. While NAOSH is distinctly Canadian and it is recognized and participated in across the country, events and activities now also occur throughout the United States and Mexico.

NAOSH is rooted in the community, so it should come as no surprise that, here at home in Yukon, a number of safety-conscious partners are working together to foster a new tradition under NAOSH — the second annual partners in safety barbecue. It is happening this Thursday down at Shipyards Park from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. It is a free event and everyone is welcome to attend. The event is being hosted by a number of local organizations that value and want to promote a message of safety: Air North, Yukon's airline, the Northern Safety Network Yukon, the Yukon chapter of the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering, the Yukon Contractors Association, ATCO Electric Yukon, the City of Whitehorse, and the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety

Board. An annual week of events that foster a community of safety is an admirable thing. I commend the businesses and organizations that participate in it.

Let's not forget, though, that the culture of safety is something that extends beyond NAOSH and involves everyone, everywhere, 365 days a year.

In recognition of Yukon School of Visual Arts graduates

Mr. Silver: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party and also the Official Opposition to tribute the grads of the Yukon School of Visual Arts in Dawson City. SOVA, as it is known, is an incredibly important institution to the residents of Dawson, and I hope that the students graduating look back at their time in the Klondike with great fondness.

The contributions made through direct programming of the school and the involvement of the students in community activities have an immense effect on the social fabric of the community. It is yet another great representation of the spirit of Dawson and its residents. I'm a huge believer in SOVA and also in Dawson's artistic community as a whole. It has a positive effect on our image, on both the national and international stage, and continues to gain recognition, whether it's in its galleries or in theatres or in film festivals. It is interesting to note that the majority of the full-time students this year who came to SOVA came from outside of the territory, which just showcases how strong the reputation has become.

This year, the students' art was quite diverse and widespread. Last month, a collection of art from the students called "All the Way" was on display at the Yukon Arts Centre for a number of weeks, receiving a lot of attention from locals and media. I had a chance to tour that gallery and there is some fantastic work.

To name a few more, there were performance art pieces on the dike in Dawson City and also a couple of students were involved in the Dawson City International Short Film Festival, where Jun Chen was awarded the made-in-Yukon Emerging Artist Award.

SOVA is the perfect stepping stone for any adventurous student looking to be creative and to have an experience of a lifetime. Dawson has a strong arts community and I'm very happy to see it grow year by year.

Congratulations to all the students this year and thank you for making the winter in Dawson just a little bit more exciting. I would also like to take the time to thank the many instructors and staff at SOVA for their dedication and hard work over the past year.

Hon. Mr. Graham: I would like to also rise today to pay tribute to the Yukon School of Visual Arts, or SOVA, as it is popularly known. This is the ninth year of this joint venture between Yukon College, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Dawson City Arts Society. I think that the partnership demonstrates the value of collaboration between partners in the community of Dawson to offer a real dynamic learning opportunity.

I had the good fortune, Mr. Speaker, of being involved there, working with the college when SOVA was first brought into being in Dawson, and I have to tell you that the excitement of the people there in Dawson and of young Yukon artists around the territory was really something to see. As we know, students in the program really grow and develop as individual artists in such a collaborative learning environment.

Students learn both traditional and contemporary visual art practices and media, with state-of-the-art facilities and inspirational surroundings in the Klondike region. The Yukon government provides almost \$500,000 annually to fund SOVA, making it possible for the students to have access to the studio, gallery, storage spaces, exhibition and performing venues, audio-visual lab, printing, photography, woodworking and video equipment.

Students from both the territory and — as the member opposite said — from all across Canada, complete a foundation year of fine arts training in wonderful Dawson City. Afterward, they can go on to universities and complete a bachelor of fine arts in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Halifax, at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, at the Ontario College of Art and Design, at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and at the Alberta College of Art and Design as well. These artists contribute, as again the member opposite said, to the community of Dawson because art, as we know, truly brings people together.

As the painter, Edgar Degas once said, "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see." These aspiring artists take what they have seen here in the territory — the dramatic landscapes of the Klondike, the hospitality of the Dawson City community, and the rich heritage of our lands and histories and share it with others in and beyond Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, at a recent performance in Dawson, the Premier, the member from Old Crow, and the northern premiers all had the pleasure of taking in a SOVA event and remarked at how wonderful it was. So congratulations to the SOVA students and many thanks to both the staff and our partners in Dawson City from the Yukon School of Visual Arts.

Speaker: Are there any visitors to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I invite all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Bev Buckway here today, former Mayor of Whitehorse. She is the executive director of the Association of Yukon Communities — an incredible volunteer in this community and a huge supporter of increasing the great quality of life that we all enjoy here and also a constituent of mine. I invite everybody to help welcome her.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Kent: I would like to introduce three people who are here in the gallery today: the chair of the Yukon Procurement Advisory Panel, Ms. Leslie Anderson, has joined

us; Kevin McDonnell, the ADM of Corporate Services at Highways and Public Works; and the director of the Procurement Support Centre, Ms. Catherine Harwood is also here.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to just quickly thank the members of the Procurement Advisory Panel, who aren't able to attend today for the tabling of their report: Mr. Paul Emanuelli, a procurement consultant, author and procurement lawyer from Ontario; Steven Bartsch, a local engineer and consultant; Marian Macdonald, a procurement specialist with the Government of Ontario; Mark Wallace, a Yukon-based lawyer specializing in contract law and procurement; and last, but certainly not least, Larry Turner, a local contractor with Grey Wolf Contracting as well as the chair of the Yukon Contractors Association, so if members could please join me in welcoming them.

Applause

Mr. Silver: I would like to ask everybody to help me in welcoming no stranger to the gallery, Dr. Friedhelm Fink.

Applause

Speaker: I am going to introduce Conrad Tiedeman, who is a constituent and friend of mine as well.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I have two documents for tabling today. The first is the *Yukon Procurement Advisory Panel Report*, and the second is a publication put together by the Property Management Division of Highways and Public Works, entitled *2015-16 Year in Review and 2016-17 Outlook*.

Speaker: Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 27

Mr. Tredger: I have for presentation a petition regarding the Hot Springs Road local area plan and the implication of lot development on that plan:

THEREFORE, the undersigned residents of the Hotsprings Road development area ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to request that the Member for Lake Laberge sponsor and support an amendment to Schedule A of the *Regulations* respecting the lands therein designated as "CMT — Commercial-Mixed Use/Tourist Accommodation" to remove the aforementioned "Special Provision".

Speaker: Are there any other petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use the 2016-17 budget to continue to invest in expanding 4G cellular service to all Yukon communities.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use the 2016-17 budget to invest an additional \$1.4 million to promote and enhance mineral prospecting and exploration in the Yukon through the Yukon mineral exploration program.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide publicly funded speech-language pathology services to adults not in continuing care or hospital care.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) acknowledge that the request for a government-run liquor store in Teslin did not come from the Teslin Tlingit Council; and

(2) hold a public meeting in Teslin to consult the community on this proposal.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Midwifery regulations

Ms. Hanson: On April 24, the Community Midwives Association of Yukon held a midwifery symposium to discuss options for regulation of midwifery in Yukon.

Yukon remains one of only two jurisdictions in Canada without legislated, publicly funded midwifery. Yukoners have been waiting for the Yukon Party to respond ever since the Yukon health care review confirmed a community-level demand for midwifery in 2009.

The April symposium was a combination of years of study and work by midwifery advocacy groups in Yukon. The Community Midwives Association of Yukon has been working with the government in good faith hoping last month's symposium would result in legislation and regulation of midwifery in Yukon.

What timeline has the government established for delivering legislation to regulate midwifery in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for this question. It certainly provides me another opportunity to highlight some of the good work that is being done here in the territory. Along with a number of other ministers, I did attend the midwifery symposium in the morning. We heard from a wide variety of speakers, including past presidents of the Canadian Association of Midwives. My colleagues and I found this to be an extremely educational opportunity for us.

We know that midwifery has long played an important role in Yukon's history. In fact, midwifery practice has existed throughout the world for millennia. This symposium was intended as a full and frank discussion of how and when to regulate midwives in the territory. I would certainly extend my thanks to those organizers and those who came forward with the proposal to put this symposium on. I think it is safe to say that all who participated found it to be very worthy and with great information that was shared.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, for the record: no answer. This government built two acute care hospitals in Watson Lake and Dawson City. Despite being called acute care hospitals, women cannot deliver their babies in those locations. Women still must travel to Whitehorse to deliver their babies in Whitehorse General Hospital. Midwives are highly skilled, professionally trained birthing experts. The regulation of midwifery offers an opportunity to allow women to deliver in their communities safely with the help of a skilled professional. Regulating midwifery will allow all women this option, not only those who can afford the service privately.

When will Yukoners be able to deliver their babies in their own community aided by a midwife as part of a public health care system?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, my appreciation for the member opposite in bringing this question forward to the House of the Legislature. Currently, midwifery practices operate outside of the formal Yukon health care system. We recognize the important role that the group, the committee, played in providing this symposium in the territory — bringing up those key speakers.

We know that across the country there are approximately 1,200 practising midwives, including three here in the territory. As a result of the symposium, there is a report that the group is working on — that is my understanding — and we are waiting for that report and are very eager to find out what information will be contained in that report. Right now, we will wait for the report. We will continue building a relationship with those who are working in this field and those who are interested in it, including YMA and a number of the physicians. Again, I thank the member opposite for her question.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the minister's empty words of appreciation ring hollow. Yukoners have waited long enough for regulated, publicly funded midwifery. A collaborative approach to childbirth that integrates midwifery into the public health care system will benefit the Yukon. Studies consistently show that integrating midwifery into public health care systems delivers health care benefits to both mother and child. Incorporating midwifery into public health care systems also offers a cost-effective birthing option.

This government has had since 2009 to develop legislation and to regulate the industry. Has this government produced a cost-benefit analysis of midwifery for the Yukon and, if so, could the Minister of Health and Social Services table it?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for her question. This is an area that we are paying very close attention to. We are very much looking forward to the report that will be coming forward from the working group that coordinated the symposium last week.

This government established the midwifery working group and supported the symposium, which, among other things, looked at how regulated and funded midwifery systems have been integrated into maternity care systems in other parts of Canada. The experts gathered and shared their experiences in a number of key areas — such as models of care, scope of practice, regulations, collaboration, hospital integration and more — that the Yukon needs to consider as we move forward together.

As indicated in my other responses, I am thankful for the work that the working group has done. I am thankful for the symposium that they put forward, and I am looking forward to the report that will be available for us likely in the coming months.

Question re: Local procurement

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, on April 7, 2016, the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works stated: "Mr. Speaker, of course the government recognizes that local businesses — small businesses — contribute immensely to our Yukon economy."

Yet, time and time again, we hear from Yukon businesses — small and large — that on many occasions, contracts are awarded to Outside firms. Mr. Speaker, this government has held two industry conferences, established the Procurement Advisory Panel and talks about building more local benefits into the bid tender process.

When will the Minister of Highways and Public Works actually change the procurement process to benefit local business?

Hon. Mr. Kent: As I've said on a number of occasions in this House, we are seeing some tremendous local benefit to projects that we're procuring here in the territory. Of the \$294 million spent on service and construction contracts in 2014-15, \$218 million or 74 percent of those dollars went to local companies. In that same year, of the almost 11,000 contracts in total, approximately 4,400 of those were services in construction contracts. Of those, approximately 3,600 or 82 percent of those contracts went to local companies. In addition, 19 of the 20 largest contracts awarded in 2014-15 went to local contractors — that's 95 percent of those contracts. The one that didn't — the F.H. Collins project — had close to 75 percent local labour components and a number of local subcontractors who worked on there.

We're seeing good numbers — I would suggest even great numbers — as far as local content on our contracting side of things. That said, we're not going to rest on our laurels. We have just commissioned — and I have just tabled here today — the report of the Procurement Advisory Panel. We will be actioning opportunities that have been identified for us from the panel experts and we're going to continue to try to enhance local opportunities in the contracting sector.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, a local company is more than just an Outside firm that applied for and received a Yukon business licence. “Local” is a business owner who lives in Yukon, whose workers live in Yukon — business operations that benefit other local businesses.

Mr. Speaker, a local business pays Yukon taxes, hires people who live here and also pay taxes here, who buy groceries in their community, whose children attend local schools and who spend their income in Yukon. Local businesses understand the terrain, the logistics and have local knowledge — valuable assets that are important for success.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Minister of Highways and Public Works look at what is best for Yukon when it comes to procurement and recognize the local economic benefits when awarding contracts?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Those local businesses are also able to compete on contracts outside of our border. We see Air North flying from Yellowknife to Ottawa, taking passengers from the Northwest Territories to the national capital region. We see Yukon Brewing putting their product in other jurisdictions. A very significant contract awarded to a local surveyor on the Site C BC Hydro project went out recently. I believe the value of that was close to \$10 million.

These same local companies that the member opposite talks about are competing for and winning projects outside of our borders, and we should be proud of that fact and we should celebrate that.

As I mentioned in my previous response, we have tremendous numbers when it comes to the contracts that are awarded — the Yukon government contracts that are awarded locally — and the one outlier of the 95 percent of the largest contracts was the F.H. Collins project, and we saw 75-percent local labour on that as well as a number of local contractors.

We certainly recognize what the local contracting community brings to our community. They are not only providing economic benefits; they are coaching our soccer teams and our minor hockey teams, they are involved in the communities and they are volunteering in our communities, so we want to make sure that they have all the opportunity possible to bid on and win our projects.

Ms. Moorcroft: Mr. Speaker, there are several examples of contracts that would have benefitted local companies and went to Outside firms based on a lowest bid that did not factor in local economic benefits — from the local company that used to run the employee assistance program, to the First Nation corporation partnership that bid for continuing work on the massive Faro mine rehabilitation contract — a contract that was awarded to a California-based multinational. These are lost opportunities to diversify, grow and strengthen our Yukon economy.

When will this government’s procurement policies accurately reflect the value of local economic benefits in its tendering process so that it works for Yukon businesses?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I won’t repeat the same percentages and values that I’ve talked about recently when it comes to the numbers. They’re quite

impressive. Local companies are bidding on our projects and they’re winning our projects at a fairly significant rate.

So again, when it comes to what we’re doing with the taxpayers’ dollars, of course, fiscal responsibility is something that the government is also tasked with. We need value for our money. That’s why we have competitive bidding processes wherever possible. Sometimes Outside companies win those bids. The Faro care and maintenance project that the member opposite talks about — of course, all members in this House recognize that the funds from that come from the Government of Canada, so they play a very important role in the procurement of that contract as well — something that members opposite conveniently don’t mention when they’re talking about that contract.

Again, we’re proud of the Yukon businesses. We’re proud of the contributions that those businesses make to the families of the Yukon — not only on an economic basis but, as I mentioned before, on getting engaged and involved in our community. We’ll continue to do work. We’ll continue to hold procurement industry conferences. We’ll continue to support the work of the Procurement Support Centre. We look forward to implementing the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel report that I just tabled here in the Legislature today.

Question re: Faro RCMP facility

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 20, 2015, the Government of Yukon put out a press release with the title, “Plans for a new Faro RCMP building move forward”. It said — and I quote: “The Government of Yukon is committing more than \$3.5 million this year to construct a new RCMP facility in Faro... The project is now in the design phase, with construction expected to begin this summer.”

Construction did not start last summer as planned. This year, as we discuss this budget, there is only one dollar in the line item. Can the minister please explain the current status of this project?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I should note, in fact, is that the Yukon government had the foresight to allow for the possibility that the project could come in over its target cost but within the estimate. In fact, it was due to the federal government refusing to allow us to issue the tender last fall — that is the only reason that project did not proceed.

I’m also pleased to table a copy of the letter that I wrote to the federal minister, asking him to assist us in this and pointing out that the additional federal share was only \$120,000 more than they were expecting to pay — but due to the federal government either being unwilling or unable to approve that, they prevented us from issuing the tender last December.

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that answer from the minister. What we are hearing is — just for the members’ sake and for the Legislative Assembly, it was supposed to come in under \$4 million, and the low bid was \$5.5 million. We are hearing from the minister that it’s now Ottawa that is saying not to build this.

I guess the tender is cancelled, but the question is: Is the government still committed to moving ahead on this project regardless of what Ottawa tells them?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I would have noted if I had had more time in my first response is that, in fact, that project is now proceeding. The RCMP is doing that, and that relates to the RCMP having a higher budget authority that did not require them to go back to Treasury Board for this project. I will again table my letter to Minister Goodale noting that the lowest bid came in slightly over the approved envelope with the federal share being an extra \$120,000: "We are being told by officials that we need to wait 4-6 months while RCMP seek Treasury Board approval for the additional \$120,000 before moving forward with this project. I am writing you now to seek your agreement to proceed with the current Government of Yukon procurement process, and allow us to move forward with the award of the contract to the lowest bidder."

Again, I will happily table a copy of that letter. I would also like to acknowledge and thank our Member of Parliament, who I did call and who did approach Minister Goodale about this topic. Unfortunately, again, Minister Goodale was either unable or unwilling to assist us in having this project awarded last December.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I am confused as to whether it is last December or last fall that this government found out they could not proceed with the tender as the bids came in over cost. A new tender has not been released by the Government of Yukon — as far as I know — to date, and the building season is underway. I am assuming from the minister's response here today in the Legislature that we will not see this project moving forward in this building season.

Can the minister please let us know what the new timeline for completion of this project is? What will be the new total costs for this project? What steps is this government taking — not the Ottawa government — to resolve this issue?

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To clarify for the member, the tender for construction of this project closed on October 22; however, it was in late November, early December that we were informed by the RCMP at the national level that they were not in a position to allow this project to proceed and would not — because of the constraints placed on them by Treasury Board guidelines — be able to allow us to award the project in December. As soon as I was made aware of that, I wrote a letter to Minister Goodale, noting and acknowledging the fact that because of the date on which we had been informed of that by the RCMP nationally, it was a rather short turn-around time. The tender was due to be awarded December 11. Again, as I noted in my letter to Minister Goodale, which I will table for the member and for anyone else who would like to see it, I wrote to Mr. Goodale seeking agreement to proceed with the current Government of Yukon procurement process, but the minister was either unwilling or unable to assist in that regard.

I would note that this project itself — right now we are waiting for the finalization of this from the RCMP out of their

national resources from E Division, which are assisting with the project and moving forward with it. We expect to be in a position to announce timelines very soon.

Question re: Speech-language pathology services

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services about publicly funded speech-language pathology for adults not in continuing care and not in hospital. I did not receive an answer so I will try again.

If a young adult is in a motor vehicle accident and suffers a serious brain injury, they are often sent Outside for rehabilitation. When they return home to the Yukon, there is no publicly funded speech-language therapy follow-up available to help them regain and retain their ability to communicate. Yukon residents without private health insurance or the means to pay for therapy out-of-pocket will not receive speech-language therapy.

Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing to address the gap in speech-language pathology services provided to adults in this territory?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addressing the member opposite — and I appreciate the question — currently in the Yukon, the member opposite is right, there are no publicly funded outpatient speech-language pathology services for adults. Private speech-language pathologists provide services to Yukoners.

Whitehorse General Hospital provides a speech-language pathologist for inpatient care as needed for all patients. Health and Social Services has two speech-language pathologists on staff in Continuing Care who provide service to all programs. Their role includes specialized work in a number of areas including swallowing disorders, which are prevalent in care facilities.

I extend my appreciation to those who are working in this field, as I did yesterday when the member opposite asked the question, and I recognize the significant investments that this government has made over the last 14 years in the area of persons with disabilities.

Ms. Stick: Mr. Speaker, the minister just repeated everything I have said, describing what services are available and those that are not. Yukoners with degenerative disabilities or diseases — such as Parkinson's or ALS — often lose their ability to communicate or swallow as a result of these conditions. This impacts not only their ability to communicate, but their ability to live at home safely. Speech-language pathologists can help Yukoners with degenerative diseases affecting the throat to remain in their homes longer, avoiding costly hospital and continuing care stays.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government provide publicly funded speech-language pathology to Yukoners with degenerative diseases who have not entered continuing care or hospitals and who want to stay safely in their homes?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As I indicated in my first response, Whitehorse General Hospital provides a speech-language pathologist for inpatient care as needed for

all patients. The Yukon Hospital Corporation is working to identify the actual inpatient and outpatient needs for adult speech-language pathology services. Speech-language pathology services for children are provided by the Child Development Centre and, as I noted previously, we are pleased to expand childhood prevention services by adding a speech-language pathologist in this year's budget.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I recognize the good work that is being done in the territory, and as indicated in my first response, I also recognize the significant investments that this Yukon Party government has made over the last 14 years in the area of persons with disabilities.

Question re: Tourism industry promotion

Mr. Barr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending the Tourism Industry Association spring conference.

At the conference, we heard the incredible success story of Iceland's tourism industry. In the face of serious economic hardship during the global recession, Iceland increased its tourism industry from 374,000 visitors in 2005 to 1,300,000 visitors in 2015. Since 2010, jobs in Iceland's tourism industry have increased 63 percent. The tourism industry has surpassed marine products and aluminum, traditionally two of Iceland's largest export industries.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government recognize the Yukon's potential as a tourism destination and make expanding the industry a priority?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member opposite for his question regarding the importance of tourism. In fact, I welcome any and all questions regarding tourism on the floor of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite has just articulated, tourism is very much an integral component of the Yukon economy and certainly very much sustains our economic future and remains the territory's very large industry. It contributes over \$250 million annually in our economy, generates jobs for approximately 25 percent of our employed residents and certainly is a very exciting industry. All of these reasons are, in fact, why this government has invested and continues to invest in strategic infrastructure in support of tourism — in particular, product development, visitor services, research, tourism marketing, the Yukon Now — one of which includes the single-largest marketing investment in Yukon's history of just under \$3 million over three years, in the coming years, in support of tourism marketing initiatives — in support of domestic marketing and all of our markets, for that matter.

We continue to invest in highway improvements —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Barr: In 2016, Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland will spend \$13 million on tourism marketing. This year, the Yukon Now funding commitment is \$900,000. In Newfoundland, the government introduced a tourism strategy in 2009, with the goal of reaching annual tourism revenue of \$1.6 billion by 2020. We might ask: How is Newfoundland doing? They

surpassed \$1 billion in annual tourism revenue in 2011. While other areas in the economy in Newfoundland have faltered in response to global commodity prices, tourism has continued to grow.

Mr. Speaker, will this government commit to developing a tourism strategy that includes consistent, long-term funding for tourism marketing?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Unbeknownst to the member opposite, this government continues to work in collaboration with industry. I know that members opposite shake their heads, but actually, in fact, we have all along been working in collaboration through the Tourism Marketing Committee and through the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon. Everything that we do is to generate long-term economic growth, maximizing socio-cultural benefits for our residents here on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, our mandate is to work in partnership with the private and the public sectors, First Nations, and non-government organizations, again to develop and to implement strategic tourism marketing, product development, research strategies and programs that grow tourism revenues. That is, in fact, what this government has been doing and continues to do. We're very much committed to doing that — research-based, market-driven partnerships with industry.

Mr. Speaker, I just encourage the member opposite to pick up a copy of the tourism plan and to take a look at all of the progress that we have been making in all of these various aspects to grow tourism revenues.

Mr. Barr: We could be doing so much more; the numbers speak for themselves. A concentrated effort to increase tourism in Yukon can be a success if we make the tourism industry a priority. The tourism industry is a strong option for diversifying our economy sustainably. A whole-of-government approach was the key to success for Newfoundland and Iceland. Newfoundland's strategy includes transportation information and communications technology, workforce development, environmental sustainability in addition to marketing, branding and product development. Iceland has established a taskforce on tourism that includes the minister of finance, the environment, industry and commerce as well as industry and municipal government representatives.

Mr. Speaker, will this government commit to a whole-of-government approach to tourism in Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the very fundamental importance of the tourism industry to Yukon's economy and to the quality of life that we as Yukoners have come to know over the years. That's, in fact, why this government continues to increase the investments to reflect just that in every single department. In fact, this year's tourism budget will see another increase to its budget, unlike other budgets across this country.

Mr. Speaker, this includes the Yukon Now investment — the single-largest investment in Yukon's tourism marketing history. It also includes investments in product development and the extension of our visitor information centres. It also includes research and marketing initiatives. It includes

highway improvements and airport upgrades. It also includes investments in Yukon museums and cultural centres, of which we have seen a 300-percent increase since 2002.

Mr. Speaker, it also includes the development and the opening of a brand new campground — the first in about 40 years that we've seen in Yukon. This government is very much supportive of the tourism industry and we'll continue to work in collaboration with industry every step of the way.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. Stick: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, May 4, 2016. It is Bill No. 107, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, May 4, 2016. It is Motion No. 1033, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 21: *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 21, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 21, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 21, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise to introduce Bill No. 21, entitled *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, for a third time.

Members of this Legislature will have noted that a special warrant was issued on February 5 in the amount of \$15,640,000. There may be critics who suggest that a warrant is not necessary, that a warrant does not represent open and accountable government, but as I have stated in previous comments before this Legislature, my colleagues and I do take very seriously and respect the importance of effective processes and procedures in support of our decision-making responsibilities. We prepare and table budgets based on the best and most current information that is available at the time.

Notwithstanding, the best laid plans are subject to change. Changes to the budget plan through supplementary estimates allow us to be responsive to emerging pressures and priorities of importance to Yukoners. Changes to the budget plan

through supplementary estimates maintain accountability to the Legislative Assembly and to Yukoners.

As identified in the *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16, Supplementary Estimates No. 2*, provides for the sums required of \$15,640,000. The sums required are offset by sums not required of \$34,448,000 and in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act*, the amounts authorized by the special warrant are identified in the *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16* and summarized in schedule C.

While the Legislature conducts its business, the amounts authorized by the special warrant ensure that the government officials have the requisite legal authority to make the expenditures delegated and entrusted to them to provide for the uninterrupted government operations while Bill No. 21 is debated in this House.

I also want to acknowledge the work that has been done by the Department of Finance and I move that Bill No. 21, *Third Appropriation Act, 2015-16*, be now read a third time.

Ms. Hanson: I am not going to speak at any length to this bill. I made my comments clear and known yesterday with respect to the tradition that has been established by this Yukon Party government to demonstrate an inability to both project and manage within the sums appropriated and so we now see this yet again played out in 2016.

The Official Opposition will stand on record as saying we just don't believe that's good enough for the citizens of Yukon.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Barr: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 11 yea, seven nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 21 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 21 has passed this House.

Bill No. 99: *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 99, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pasloski.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I move that Bill No. 99, entitled *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 99, entitled *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: It is my pleasure to speak to Bill No. 99, entitled *Second Income Tax Amendments Act, 2016*, for a third time. This bill before the House is a short and simple piece of tax legislation designed to ensure that the Yukon children's fitness tax credit and the Yukon children's arts tax credit are maintained at the current levels while the federal government reduces their credits by 50 percent this year and eliminates them entirely next year.

Section 2 of the bill deals with the Yukon children's arts tax credit, and section 3 of Bill No. 99 deals with the Yukon children's fitness tax credit.

Bill No. 99 includes a few minor consequential amendments designed to preserve the federal Minister of National Revenue's obligations to assess returns containing refundable children's fitness tax credits. Mr. Speaker, we believe these important activities should be supported through the tax system; therefore, we are ensuring the continuation of the Yukon credits with this legislation. There are approximately 1,700 families claiming the fitness tax credit and 650 claiming the arts credit. These credits save taxpayers approximately \$96,000 and \$25,000 annually.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Minister of Finance for his comments yesterday. I would also like to thank the officials who provided him with the information I requested of him during debate to explain the intended benefits of this taxation instrument. As I mentioned yesterday, the New Democratic Party believes fundamentally that taxation is an important part to the fiscal toolbox of a progressive government. It can and should be used in a judicious manner to ensure that there is underlying fairness and equity to tax measures that are implemented.

I asked the Finance minister yesterday for information to corroborate the numbers that we were given; that is, the total value of tax credits to eligible Yukon citizens in the last tax year available. The numbers we were given were the 1,700 families claiming the fitness credit and the 650 families claiming the arts credit, or the credits respectively representing \$96,000 and \$25,000. Further questioning indicated that in 2014, 2,839 children in those 1,700 families

benefited from the fitness tax credit. The Minister of Finance indicated that the 2,839 children represented 46 percent of children in the age range of 16 and under, the bracket that he says is covered by this fitness tax credit. Lastly, the Finance minister reiterated that this tax credit is in fact a refundable tax credit. The Finance minister said — and I quote: "It will benefit those people whose incomes are low and those who don't pay taxes will also see a return as a result of this being a refundable tax credit."

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is one possible tool in the taxation toolbox. Clearly, those most able financially to make the sports equipment purchases or pay for music and arts lessons benefit most. It is not the most equitable way of addressing the underlying desire of legislators to provide for all children, including the 54 percent of Yukon children who will not be able to benefit from these measures. It is not the most equitable way of addressing that need for children — to provide children with the means to participate actively in fitness activities or any one of the cultural and artistic opportunities that one would hope all children would have access to.

It is, however, a small step Mr. Speaker, and the Yukon NDP recognizes it as such and will support Bill No. 99.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 99 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 99 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Ms. McLeod): Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Do members wish 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.

Bill No. 23: *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise today to speak to the 2016-17 main estimates for the Department of Community Services. I am joined today by our Deputy Minister of Community Services, Paul Moore. Our acting director of Finance, Sarah Lewis, is also joining us today.

I will start by giving a bit of an overview as to this year's budget and then we can get into some of the particulars on the various branches as well as some notable issues that are at the fore of late.

Before I begin, Madam Chair, I did want to note that there was a press release that went out today from Special Olympics Yukon that noted that they were very pleased to announce that three Yukon athletes have been selected to Team Canada for the Special Olympics World Winter Games in 2017 taking place in Austria from March 14 to 25.

Those three Yukon athletes are Ernest Chua for cross-country skiing, Tijana McCarthy for figure skating, and Mike Sumner for figure skating. Those three athletes will join Team Canada, which will ultimately consist of 110 athletes, 35 mission staff and coaches, two team managers and one chef de mission, and will be competing in six different sports while in Austria.

Team Canada athletes were selected based on their performance at the recent Special Olympics Canada 2016 Winter Games in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador. Over 650 Special Olympics athletes from across Canada competed at those games, vying for a spot on Special Olympics Team Canada.

Of course, we're very proud and pleased to see those three Yukoners selected for Team Canada and we wish them all the best next year in Austria.

The reason I note that is because the press release just went out this morning from the Special Olympics, and I thought it would be appropriate to congratulate those three Yukon athletes. I had previously noted that two of them had been selected, and I jumped the gun a little bit. The formal announcement didn't go out until today, so I apologize for pre-empting Special Olympics when I mentioned that in my second reading speech on the budget.

Moving on, we can talk about sport and recreation, Special Olympics and a number of other sport organizations in a few moments, but I will start with providing some opening remarks about our 2016-17 budget.

The department's main estimates include more than \$51.6 million in capital expenditures and more than \$87.6 million in operation and maintenance expenditures. The Department of Community Services makes important investments in programs, services and activities that support healthy and sustainable Yukon communities. Our 2016-17 budget prioritizes investments for Yukoners and Yukon communities that will bring long-term benefits for the territory. Ultimately, the investments that I will highlight today support our government's approach to making Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

The breadth of the programs, services and support offered by Community Services is vast. I would like to begin by speaking to members about our investments in our Protective Services division. Our Protective Services division supports our communities and our quality of life, ultimately helping to make Yukon one of the best places to live. The division includes: Wildland Fire Management, Emergency Measures Organization, the Fire Marshal's Office, Emergency Medical Services and the Building Safety and standards section.

Every year, Yukon is at risk of experiencing emergencies, including wildfires, floods, avalanches, extreme weather, human-induced and technological failures and other related events. By investing in personnel, equipment, training and infrastructure, the government has strengthened inter-operability and coordination among the territory's emergency response agencies to bolster their preventive and response capacities. More than \$29.6 million of the department's total O&M budget for 2016-17 will go toward supporting Protective Services operations division-wide. This includes honoraria for our dedicated volunteers who help provide all the emergency services we manage in Yukon communities.

To simplify public access to emergency help, Protective Services is leading the Yukon government's effort to expand basic 911 emergency call service. In February, 2016, the 911

call centre and police dispatch service moved from the RCMP headquarters to the emergency response centre communications suite in Whitehorse on Two Mile Hill. This state-of-the-art centre is specifically designed for the Yukon-wide expansion of service. To date, we are on schedule to complete the expansion of basic 911 to rural Yukon by the summer of 2016, ensuring all Yukoners and visitors will be able to dial the same easy-to-remember emergency number used across North America.

I think our investment and work on this file, Madam Chair, came to light recently when an emergency situation happened in the Northwest Territories — our neighbour — and highlighted the fact that the NWT does not have territory-wide 911. That was cited as a reason for the extent of the damage of a fire that occurred there very recently. I think this expansion of 911 to all of the Yukon is a wise decision. I'm pleased to report to the House that it's on track.

With regard to Wildland Fire Management, the 2016 forest fire season has just begun. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our Wildland Fire Management team, which is starting to prepare for the season ahead and is ready to help protect all of us and our communities through their important work. Our Wildland Fire Management capital budget for 2016-17 includes a number of important investments, such as \$245,000 for upgrades to our fleet's aviation fuel systems and \$100,000 for equipment replacements across our entire branch. We also have allocated \$66,000 in 2016-17 O&M funding for our annual increase to the air tanker contract, which provides aerial support; also increases in First Nation firefighter crew contracts in the Yukon communities.

The Premier and I had a chance to join the Ta'an Kwäch'än development corporation president and crew of the Ta'an Kwäch'än-led wildland firefighters, who had recently passed a boot camp a few weeks ago to prepare for this year's wildland fire season. We had a chance to experience — at least verbally, not physically — the extensive training they went through in the course of their training.

That particular boot camp is an example of collaboration between our department and Yukon First Nations and First Nation development corporations to provide training and opportunities for their citizens to participate in our Wildland Fire activities. I know that there are a number of First Nations that do have these contracts in place, but I did want to highlight Ta'an Kwäch'än simply for the fact that they recently trained up a number of young firefighters who will participate this coming summer. It was an excellent experience for the Premier and I to attend their graduation.

Managing fires in Yukon's boreal forest is always challenging, but I know that we have the right people, partnerships, equipment and protections in place to safeguard our communities.

Moving on to EMO — Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization leads all emergency preparedness planning for the Yukon government. It focuses on the four pillars of emergency management: prevention or mitigation; preparedness; response; and recovery. In an emergency event,

EMO is responsible for drawing together the resources and expertise required to support a response in a timely and effective manner, whether from a local source, across Canada or across North America. In 2016-17, we will see capital investments for EMO that include a \$10,000 fixed-satellite unit to ensure emergency data and Internet connection to Outside locations in the event of a communication loss; a \$235,000 expenditure of O&M funding provided by Indigenous and Northern Affairs will support a trainer to work with non-settled First Nations to help develop capacity in emergency planning. This is in addition to similar work the branch does with self-governing First Nations, municipal offices and other community partners.

Madam Chair, the Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for reducing the loss of life and property to fire and other related emergencies throughout Yukon. It does this through leadership, education, enforcement, program development and first response. The FMO operates 16 volunteer fire departments, inclusive of 225 volunteer firefighters in unincorporated communities. In addition to the peace of mind a properly equipped and trained fire department provides to a community, this operation is also of enormous value because a local fire service has a direct economic impact on residents who are able to pay lower homeowner rates levied by insurance providers. The capital budget for the Fire Marshal's Office this year is more than \$3.6 million. It includes \$596,000 for fire protection, including fleet fire truck placements, turnout gear replacement, communications equipment and more.

Madam Chair, building on past investments we have made in fire hall replacements, we are investing more than \$3 million in 2016-17 capital dollars for the construction of a new fire hall in Carcross. This new fire hall will reduce operating costs and better meet the needs of the local fire department and other emergency services within the community. We anticipate construction on this important community facility will be completed within this calendar year.

Moving to the Emergency Medical Services branch — in addition to wildland fire, structural fire and emergency measures, the department continues to enhance Yukon's emergency medical services. Yukon's Emergency Medical Services provides safe, effective and timely emergency pre-hospital care to Yukon residents and visitors. In doing so, it is responsible for air and ground transportation of patients to and from health care facilities throughout Yukon and southern Canada. Yukon EMS is an essential partner in Yukon's health care system and works with Health and Social Services, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other partners to respond to emergencies whenever the need arises. In this way, Yukon EMS helps provide consistent, competent health care across the territory.

In 2015, Yukon EMS responded to 6,631 ground calls — 5,328 of those in the Whitehorse catchment area and 1,303 of those in the communities. Yukon EMS medevac, the air ambulance service, responded to 809 calls. Our Yukon EMS team members are there for us in our time of need. These

skilled men and women in the service, both staff and volunteer, do a tremendous job protecting our communities and making Yukon a great place to live.

The 2016-17 budget identified \$299,000 in EMS capital expenditures. This includes \$155,000 for ambulance replacement and \$114,000 to support phase 2 of the communications system upgrade. This second phase includes the purchase and installation of automatic vehicle location devices. These devices integrate within the updated system and help to monitor the location of our first responders. This helps ensure both patient and volunteer safety.

These devices assist with call taking and dispatching ambulances and can also help with response time by ensuring that the closest available unit is sent out. They help to make sure our fleet is back in a safe time frame or ensure that another team is sent out to confirm safety.

Community Services is providing emergency responders, both staff and volunteer, with the equipment, infrastructure and training they need to do their jobs to the best of their ability and provide care for Yukoners. Their service, on behalf of all Yukoners, helps to make Yukon a great place to live.

In recent years, our investment — specifically in training — has allowed Yukon EMS to provide unprecedented support to staff members and volunteer responders. We now have a dedicated training centre where we can provide consistent, professional training to EMS personnel, allied emergency responders and health practitioners from other departments. We have also developed an online learning management system that allows us to deliver training in the communities at a level that has never been available before. That's something we are very proud of, and I know that our rural volunteers have certainly appreciated being able to access that learning management system for certain training.

Feedback already shows that these exceptional training opportunities, especially the access to online training available locally within communities, are linked to higher levels of recruitment and engagement. This strategy has strengthened our ability to train and retain life-saving first responders across Yukon.

I'll move now to the Building Safety and Standards branch. The Building Safety and Standards branch is responsible for helping to keep Yukoners safe in their homes and in the buildings they use for work, recreation and daily business. The branch accomplishes this by developing, interpreting, administering and enforcing building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical standards.

Building Safety and Standards issues permits for and conducts inspections of building construction, plumbing, electrical, gas- and boiler-related work on buildings and facilities in rural municipalities, unincorporated communities and rural areas.

Moving to our Community Development division — whether it's providing essential services like drinking water, solid-waste and waste-water management, ensuring that sport, recreation and active living opportunities are available, building important infrastructure, bringing properties to market or supporting local libraries, the Community

Development division makes Yukon communities great places to live, work, play and raise families. In 2016-17, more than \$45.4 million of the department's total O&M budget will support the division's operations territory-wide.

Alongside that is Community Affairs. The Community Affairs branch supports and helps build the capacity, establishment and operations of affected local governments. It leads the division's work to foster effective working relationships between communities and the Yukon government. Communities rely on Community Affairs staff for their integrity and professionalism, which is evident in the successful partnership with the Association of Yukon Communities and work that has been accomplished with municipal governments and local advisory councils.

This government recognizes that municipalities make a major contribution to improving Yukoners' quality of life, and we are providing more than \$18.21 million in direct transfers to municipalities as well as \$7.297 million in grants in lieu of taxes and \$72,000 for funding LACs.

In 2016-17, the branch will focus much of its work with local governments across Yukon in continuing the great efforts that began in 2015-16 for asset management. Asset management is an important part of capital planning. It identifies and prioritizes infrastructure development to ensure sustainable service delivery now and in the future.

At an asset management conference in Whitehorse in November of last year, the Yukon government announced its plan to support a strong culture of asset management with Yukon's First Nations and municipal governments. This plan includes funding through the northern strategy trust to assist communities with asset-management-related projects. In 2016-17, that support will total more than \$1 million. Funding is flexible enough to benefit the individual needs of each community, and the Community Affairs branch will maintain an active role in facilitating communication among the asset management community of practice members.

The branch will also oversee the development of a Yukon asset management framework, a best practices document that will be an ongoing legacy of the community of practice. Finally, there is also \$10,000 identified in the capital budget of 2016-17 for the important civic addressing work that the branch is conducting with local advisory councils.

Returning to asset management briefly, I would note that asset management was included in one of the aspects of some federal funding that was announced as a result of the March 21 budget, and we have had it indicated to us that it would be funneled through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Going forward, we anticipate still maintaining a role in working with municipalities on local asset management but we will hope to work with them to tap into that federal money that is available for asset management through the FCM.

That may require municipalities to apply directly to the FCM, but we would be happy to help them with that. The Chair is indicating that my time has elapsed, but I will conclude those remarks and return to the other branches of the department at the next opportunity.

Mr. Barr: I would like to thank the minister for his opening remarks. I realize that he does have more to come, so I won't get into all of my questions at this point. However, I would like to welcome the officials from the department and thank them for their hard work as well as those who are not with us here in the House in Community Services. As we all know, it is a large and diverse department, and it touches everyone in the Yukon when we speak of Community Services. I would just like to start with that.

I would like to give a heads-up for further on in our discussions with this one issue that was brought forward to me today — before I make any of my further remarks. Maybe the department will be able to give some answers throughout the afternoon. It is an issue brought forward to me today by one of my constituents regarding civic addressing in rural neighbourhoods.

The program was designed to ensure that the fire department, ambulance and RCMP can quickly and easily find someone's home. There was a letter sent out to residents with new civic addresses in May 2015 stating — and I quote: "Please note that this address will only be used for emergency services and will also appear on your property tax notices. Your lot and plan number will continue to be the legal reference to your property and your mailing address will not change." As you know, enumeration for the upcoming territorial election is ongoing, and one of my constituents was enumerated using the civic addressing system that was rolled out last year. His concern is that the provided civic address will become confused for the purposes of electoral records as his actual address and that the civic address will not be sufficient at the polling station as he has no receipt or document in his possession indicating his civic address as his actual address. My constituent has raised this concern with Elections Yukon; however, he is concerned this could become a more widespread issue with the entire Mount Lorne enumeration process. Therefore, I thought I should provide the minister with this information in the House. I can further pass on by e-mail more information later. I will just leave it at that for now, and I would welcome the minister's other opening remarks. I have some of my own, and I will just continue that way if that's okay.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We can return to the issue of civic addressing in a few moments and talk about the issue that the member just raised with regard to a constituent of his and getting enumerated for the upcoming election. I know a little bit about this from work on Members' Services Board through the changes to the *Elections Act* and from the report provided by the Chief Electoral Officer. We can talk about that in a few moments, but I will conclude my initial remarks and then we can turn to this specific issue and other issues as they arise throughout the day.

Madam Chair, next for me is the Sport and Recreation branch of the Department of Community Services. The department, as we know, contributes to a better quality of life for Yukoners through its investments in sport, recreation and active living initiatives. We offer a wide range of opportunities to be active and engaged in healthy living. From

community recreation to funding that helps support the development of athletes, coaches and officials in their pursuit of sport excellence, Community Services helps make Yukon a great place to live, work and raise a family.

We have committed \$110,000 in this budget to support community organizations to repair and upgrade their recreation facilities territory-wide; as well as \$20,000 for maintenance at our community pools. This budget also includes more than \$1 million for the Dawson City recreation centre this year. Facilities like this provide sport development, social development and economic benefits for the community as a whole. We continue to support Team Yukon's participation in all major games, including the Arctic Winter Games, Canada Games, Western Canada Summer Games, Special Olympics, North American Indigenous Games, and the Canada 55+ Games.

Our support for Team Yukon provides substantial value, tremendous benefits and inspiration to the participants and organizations involved in these life-changing opportunities. Like the Olympic experience, these events bring our territory and nation together to celebrate sport excellence. Our support for major games and Team Yukon's participation in high-level competition contributes to the development of Yukon's athletes, coaches and officials and healthy communities. In March 2016, five members of Team Yukon travelled to the 2016 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Newfoundland and 320 members of Team Yukon travelled to Nuuk, Greenland and Iqaluit, Nunavut to compete in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games. Our Special Olympics team made a new record with each member bringing home a medal and a total eight medals overall. Our Arctic Winter Games team brought home 100 ulus and several personal bests. The Arctic Winter Games are an essential part of the sport development system in the north, giving youth the opportunity to compete on the international stage against their northern peers. To date, four Yukoners who have competed at the Arctic Winter Games have continued on to the Olympics.

We are pleased to announce that a new hosting rotation for the Arctic Winter Games was approved in Greenland and, together with the City of Whitehorse, Yukon is scheduled to host the 2020 games. This is a tremendous opportunity for Yukon and Yukon athletes. Hosting major multi-sport games is vital for sport development, local sport organization and our economy. I recently wrote a letter to the Mayor and Council of Whitehorse indicating that we would like to formally request them to move ahead with approvals to host the games and we hope to hear back from them soon. In that letter, we have committed to working with their officials to facilitate discussions between the international committee and the city to enter into a contract for hosting in 2020, so those discussions are underway and ongoing.

Our 2016-17 budget also includes an additional \$75,000 to support the North American Indigenous Games and \$50,000 for the Canada Summer Games, which will take place in Manitoba in August 2017.

I am confident that at both of these major events, our Yukon athletes will be ambassadors for our territory and their

sports. I am also pleased to note that \$60,000 has been budgeted to help host the 2017 Men's World Softball Championships. An additional \$300,000 of O&M funding is identified in this budget to provide core funding to five different sport and recreation organizations. This will ensure stability for these groups that have had to apply annually for funding, while also freeing up \$300,000 for other organizations and projects supported by the Yukon Recreation Advisory Council funding. Madam Chair, I should correct myself; I said five groups and it's actually four groups that would receive that money. I made a small error there, so I apologize.

As I'm sure all the members can appreciate, our investments in sport and recreation are appreciated by sports organizations, but this particular announcement this year of the additional \$300,000 for those four organizations, I think, is worth explaining a little bit more. Of course, the four organizations that will benefit from this directly are: Special Olympics Yukon, Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon, Sport Yukon, and the Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle. Those four groups were selected because of their broad nature and the fact that they are umbrella organizations that support, in most cases, multiple sports. Those four organizations, for the most part, won't see a substantial increase to the amount of money that they receive on an annual basis, but will very much appreciate the consistency, clarity and predictability of funding in the coming years. They will know exactly how much they are receiving and they will know exactly when they will be receiving it, so some of the uncertainty that used to exist will be eliminated.

Also, there is a significant amount of work, effort, and resource that goes into applying to YRAC for that funding, so they will be saving hours and human resources in not having to apply for that funding any more. As well, the indirect implication of that funding decision is that there is an additional \$300,000 left — roughly — in the YRAC fund for all other sports organizations to apply for. This is a substantial increase to the YRAC pot. The YRAC fund, of course, is administered by the independent board, which is appointed on the recommendations of the all-party select committee and this year, they will have the first opportunity to allocate significantly more money than has been allocated in years past.

I know anecdotally that a number of sports organizations typically receive about half of what they actually request, so this won't fully address the needs of all sport organizations, but it will certainly go a long way to improving the amount of funding available to sport governing bodies for them to conduct the business of their individual sports. So it's something that we're very proud to announce and a feature of this budget that we're very proud of. We can talk a little bit more about that, perhaps, in the hours to come.

I'll move on to our Public Libraries branch. There are 15 community libraries located throughout Yukon. These facilities provide important access points for information and so much more. The circulation of physical materials remains at the heart of libraries. This use continues to expand. In

Whitehorse, we estimate more than 185,000 items were borrowed in 2015-16. Patrons in the communities borrowed approximately 35,000 items.

Loans of electronic resources, like the e-library, continue to rise in popularity. An estimated 9,000-plus publications were borrowed electronically in the past year. The e-library is very successful, with some 2,400 e-books and audio books available for downloading. New titles in both English and French are added to the collection each year. Since its launch in 2011, nearly 1,500 individual users have borrowed items from the collection over 28,000 times.

This budget includes \$25,000 in capital funding for community library equipment. Libraries play an important social role in our communities and foster connections between people. Programs for all ages, public meeting rooms and Internet access are just some of the services offered by our libraries. Our libraries provide a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment to relax, study, read or play, and are a key pillar in making Yukon a great place to live.

I'll turn now to our Community Operations branch. It is through this branch that the Department of Community Services continues to invest in modern and environmentally responsible drinking water, solid-waste and waste-water management. This work will continue to provide essential services that benefit unincorporated Yukon communities and adapt to the changing needs of future generations.

For solid-waste management specifically, we have seen a significant transformation in the past decade in how the territory manages solid waste. This includes ending garbage burning practices and establishing modern systems of solid-waste management built upon principles of environmental stewardship and waste diversion. Establishing regional waste systems with our municipal partners has allowed us to reduce the number of landfills in our vast territory in exchange for transfer stations, which in some cases has led to the complete decommissioning of some sites.

We have been able to implement greater controls at our facilities through gates, hours and site attendant contracts that help prevent costly cleanups and lead to better awareness and understanding of responsible waste management at the facility itself and in the home. More robust permitting assessments and monitoring regimes for solid-waste facilities throughout the territory ensure environmental accountability in our solid-waste management systems. This encompasses important groundwater monitoring at all our sites, including even those we have closed.

The 2016-17 O&M budget sees more than \$1.8 million renewed for our continued implementation of the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* across the territory. Capital expenses include \$200,000 for solid-waste facility remediation and closure management and \$430,000 for various solid-waste facility improvements, including \$250,000 for specific improvements at Champagne, Pelly Crossing and Marsh Lake.

Funding through the federal gas tax fund also includes \$600,000 for a new solid-waste facility in Ross River, as well as \$190,000 for household solid-waste bins for our incorporated communities.

I'm happy to note our progress in solid-waste management includes significant support for waste diversion, including recycling. In recent years we have 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.

In 2013, Yukon government began paying diversion credits to processors. In early 2015, we responded when recycling processors requested even greater support. Last year we budgeted for more than double the previous year's diversion credit payments, and in this budget year we are allocating even more. As we work to negotiate a diversion credit agreement with processors for this year, we are pleased to commit an additional \$918,000 to support recycling.

As we work with the Department of Environment to finalize our review of recycling regulations, I anticipate that the important changes being proposed will modernize both the beverage container regulation and designated materials regulation and facilitate higher diversion of potentially harmful materials from landfills. I look forward to working with all Yukoners as we continue to evolve our solid-waste systems to provide more waste diversion and become more environmentally sustainable.

We have also seen a number of investments for drinking water and waste-water management in this budget. Our 2016-17 O&M budget includes more than \$2.2 million for operations of the new waste-water treatment plant in Dawson City. We've also budgeted \$100,000 in capital funding for water and sewer improvements in Deep Creek, Ross River, Carcross and Army Beach. Through the federal gas tax fund, more than \$2.2 million is budgeted for a brand new waste-water treatment facility in Ross River. Our gas tax projects are 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

I will turn now to infrastructure. While I will provide some opening comments, I know that we will get into infrastructure specifically in a little bit — but recognizing how much time I have left in this particular segment, I will begin to talk about infrastructure and perhaps we can continue it at a future time.

Replacing aging infrastructure and ensuring modern, reliable facilities for future generations of Yukoners continues to be a priority of this department. Working together with our Community Affairs and Community Operations branches, our Infrastructure Development branch leads the work on many significant projects. You will find highlights of more than \$24 million in capital projects through this branch. This includes projects that will mark the beginning of the New Building Canada fund in Yukon.

Since 2007, federal, territorial and municipal governments have committed over \$265 million to core infrastructure needs in Yukon under the original Building Canada fund. The New Building Canada fund, or NBCF, will provide approximately \$342 million to support Yukon infrastructure over the next 10 years in a 75-percent Canada, 25-percent Yukon split. There will be an investment of more than \$21.7 million in New Building Canada projects in

2016-17. Of that, up to \$15.7 million is recoverable from Canada. These projects help our continued efforts to address ongoing infrastructure needs, create jobs and improve the quality of life of all Yukoners.

These funding priorities are guided by the new Yukon infrastructure plan, which identifies projects within target areas for the funds. The plan was developed when Community Services met in early 2015 with municipalities, First Nations and local advisory councils to identify their local infrastructure priorities.

Specific New Building Canada fund highlights for this year's budget include: a new water treatment plant in Burwash Landing — construction will begin in the summer of 2016, with anticipated completion in early 2017; upgrades to solid-waste facilities in Haines Junction, Faro and Watson Lake — projects in this group will commence this summer and will be completed by the fall; upgrades to the Mayo reservoir will bring it up to regulatory standards — the project will commence this summer and is expected to be completed by the end of the year; a new waste-water lift station and building in Haines Junction is planned — this project will commence in the summer and is expected to be completed by year-end as well; a new Faro lagoon and sludge drying beds are planned — work will start this summer and is expected to be completed by the end of the year; design and construction of an education-receiving station for Carmacks' sewage system is also planned — design is underway and construction is slated for 2017; reconstruction of 6th Avenue between Jarvis and Ogilvie streets in Whitehorse, which consists of engineering and construction services and includes underground and surface work, is also planned; road upgrades, resurfacing with BST and improvements to drainage in Teslin are part of this package as well — this project will commence this summer and it is expected to be completed by year-end as well.

Madam Chair, you're indicating that my time for this segment is up, so I will conclude there and, when I return to my feet, will continue to describe some of the plans for infrastructure development in this budget year.

Mr. Barr: At this time, I just wish that the minister would continue with his overview and his opening remarks and then I'll move forward myself.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'll just continue right on. Outside of the New Building Canada fund, the Infrastructure Development branch also has more than \$1.5 million in capital funding for flood mitigation work in Mayo and Carcross, and roadwork here in Whitehorse on Hamilton Boulevard.

I'll turn now to our Land Development branch, Madam Chair. The department continues to work with the City of Whitehorse to ensure that a healthy inventory of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional lots are available in the Whitehorse market, and we strive to keep our costs as low as possible.

From 2009 to 2015, the Yukon government has invested a total of \$101.4 million to make more than 600 lots available in Whitehorse, specifically in Whistle Bend, Whitehorse Copper, Mount Sima, Burns Road and Ingram subdivisions. Sustained

efforts will help to overcome our collective challenges with respect to making land available in the future. Increasing supply will result in more housing options down the road, as contractors and individuals build and develop growing subdivisions. We are committed to working closely with the City of Whitehorse, other Yukon departments and stakeholders to ensure that we are responding to the local demands and the market. Investments in land development under this budget, together with recent efforts, will help to address the wider issues of supply and affordability of housing.

More than \$16 million in capital funding is budgeted for our Land Development branch in this year. This includes \$15 million for the design and construction of phase 3 and the overall planning of phases 4 to 7 of Whistle Bend. The Whistle Bend subdivision in Whitehorse is growing. Homes, landscaping and parks are helping to make this neighbourhood become a home for many Yukoners. The Eagle Bay Lookout will be a beautiful addition to the recreation space in Whistle Bend. The viewpoint is located close to the entrance of the subdivision and will provide residents with a view of the valley in which McIntyre Creek joins the Yukon River. In recent years, a number of eagles have returned to make this area home, which is, of course, the source of the name.

Our work, which began last fall, will continue this construction season to prepare infrastructure to service the new continuing care facility in Whistle Bend. This includes water and sewer underground utilities and surface works, such as electrical, sidewalks and roads. This project is expected to be completed in June of this year. We are also in the design phase for a secondary water main to service the facility and greater subdivision. We anticipate this installation will be completed in time for the continuing care facility's construction by spring of 2017. When complete, Whistle Bend is envisioned as a neighbourhood for approximately 8,000 residents complete with: transit service; a town square featuring public park land and retail shops; space for a school; plentiful greenspace; and many kilometres of paved and unpaved trails.

I think anybody who has been down to Whistle Bend recently would agree that it is becoming a very beautiful neighbourhood and one that many Yukoners are beginning to call home. We can return to some of the details about what we have planned for Whistle Bend this year when we get into some of the details, but I would be happy to provide a greater overview of how that \$16 million breaks down and provide some of the discussion about some of the larger ticket items within that envelope.

I will turn now to our Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs division. The Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs division provides a range of regulatory and professional services for all of Yukon. The division's operations are as diverse as they are important, from professional licensing and regulating the business industry to assessing our properties; providing dispute resolution for landlords and tenants and raising minimum wage, when appropriate. In 2016-17, more than \$8.6 million of the department's operation and

maintenance budget will support the division's work. The Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs branch is also associated with that.

In the area of Professional Licensing and Regulatory Affairs — formerly known as Consumer Affairs — our department continues to protect the public by regulating professionals and businesses, enforcing legislation and providing education and dispute resolution. This branch licenses well over 4,000 professionals including health professionals, medical practitioners and real estate agents. In 2014-15, the branch issued 138 bingo, raffle and casino licences that raised more than \$2.7 million for community projects and services. The branch has worked very hard to improve Yukon's regulatory regime. This includes the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, which passed in the 2015 Spring Sitting, and consulting on draft legislation for chartered professional accountants, which, of course, is before us in this Legislative Assembly Sitting as well.

Moving on to Corporate Affairs, Madam Chair — more than 50,000 transactions were managed and more than \$3.4 million in revenues were generated by the Corporate Affairs branch in 2014-15. A major reform of Yukon's business and not-for-profit statutes and regulations was completed and came into effect in 2015. This accomplishment was the result of years of hard work and will help make Yukon a more attractive place to register a business and contribute toward economic growth. The branch is also leading Yukon's participation in a national initiative to improve and enhance securities regulations in Canada.

As well, Corporate Affairs is transitioning online. The branch is working hard to change the existing personal property security registry to a modern online system and soon the public will be able to search Yukon's corporate registries on their computers and access documents as PDFs. Now, I know there will be questions about each of these individual initiatives, Madam Chair, and I look forward to answering questions about each of them.

I will move on to the Employment Standards and Residential Tenancies office. The new RLTA, the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, and regulations are now law. The Residential Tenancies Office is now open and dispute resolution hearings are being scheduled in a timely manner. Minimum rental standards will come into effect on January 1, 2017. The new Residential Tenancies website was launched in late 2015. It provides access to comprehensive information regarding the new legislation and a helpful security deposit interest calculator. There was an increase in forced collections, voluntary compliance and resolved complaints under the *Employment Standards Act* in 2015-16 due to proactive disclosure by employers, negotiated settlements and enforcement procedures carried out by the branch.

Moving to the Property Assessment and Taxation branch — more than 23,000 properties were assessed by the Property Assessment and Taxation branch in 2015 — this represents a total value of \$4.74 billion — and 14,500 municipal properties were reassessed in 2015 as part of Property Assessment and Taxation's biannual reassessment program. Approximately

8,600 rural Yukon properties are being reassessed for the 2016 year.

Twenty-three projects were completed under the rural electrification and telecommunications program to provide electricity and telecommunications services to Yukoners in 2014-15. In 2015-16, 50 projects are underway and \$600,000 in capital funding is allocated in this budget for that program.

Since 2004, the domestic water well program has provided long-term, low-interest loans to help Yukon residents in unincorporated communities to dig potable water wells. In 2014, amendments to the *Municipal Act* and *Assessment and Taxation Act* were passed to extend the rural water well program to property owners in participating municipalities.

All Yukon municipalities signed on to agreements last year at the AYC AGM in Haines Junction. After regulations to support the new program were passed, the legislative changes proved their value. Currently, 50 projects are underway, including 30 within municipalities. A total of \$1.2 million in capital funding is allocated under the 2016-17 budget to support this program.

Last but certainly not least is our Corporate Services division, which helps us to ensure our qualified and innovative personnel have the equipment and tools they need to provide essential services to all Yukoners. The total O&M budget of \$3.9 million is in our 2016-17 budget for that; \$344,000 in capital funding will be housed under Corporate Services in 2016-17. This includes \$195,000 for building and facility maintenance, equipment, furniture and workspace renovation. Some of these projects are performed in partnership with the Department of Highways and Public Works. A total of \$149,000 will be provided department-wide to explore, plan and implement better technology support for electronic services, from online licensing to Yukoners to upgraded water treatment plant watering systems.

Madam Chair, that is a brief overview of each branch of the Department of Community Services budget for this year. I know there will be a number of questions on each of them, so I will leave it up to the members opposite to determine what order we will walk through these, but with that I'll conclude my opening remarks and then turn it over to the member to either provide some opening remarks himself or begin with questions.

Mr. Barr: I would like to thank the minister for his overview and his opening remarks. I have some opening remarks and I am happy for us to be discussing Community Services in this budget debate. It's something I look forward to each Sitting.

I would like to start out by saying that I'm very grateful and honoured to serve the people of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and be able to not only bring their concerns forward to this House, but also for all those around the territory who I meet or who send me e-mails or who I see out and about when either doing community visits or travelling just to visit friends or partake in special events, festivals and so on and so forth throughout the territory. It is a great thing to be able to do and I'm very honoured that I'll be seeking the nomination the next

time around in this upcoming election to continue the work to build on what we have done.

I have some notes here. You may say I'm a dreamer, Madam Chair, but I'm not the only one. There are a number of individuals and community groups within my riding who have undertaken innovative new projects that show that, collectively, we can make the Yukon a better place. Along with these folks, there are all the LACs and volunteers who make the Yukon a safe place when we're sleeping and they're out training — we can't forget to acknowledge all those folks, whether it's the EMS, volunteer fire departments, the EMO or just moms and dads, and so on and so forth.

When we did our Volunteer Week tribute recently in the House — it's really the heart of the people that is the real gold here. I just have to acknowledge that and that it's us — the whole Yukon is really a community. It's not really a territory, when I think of the Yukon.

Some of the individuals who have demonstrated their passion are in the Mount Lorne hamlet. I think of Al Foster, who was very instrumental in moving forward with solar panels at the community centre. I would like to let the House know that they're up and running. The second phase of this solar project is getting underway and it will be at the Mount Lorne solid-waste transfer station. They'll have their own solar panels to provide electricity for their operations. I'll be heading out to an LAC meeting tonight in Mount Lorne. The one I was at last month — Yukon Electrical had come out to read the meter and hadn't looked up on the gazebo, but he went directly into the centre there — the club — and spoke with one of the persons working there, and stated, "Excuse me, but I have to bring this to your attention." He said: "We'll have to get somebody out to look at the meter; I was just here to read it and it's running backwards." He hadn't looked up to see the solar panels on the gazebo. Now I believe the meter has been replaced and shows how much the community is selling back to Yukon Energy.

It's a great new thing. I would hope and think this would be a great model for all community clubs or government infrastructure throughout the territory to move in that direction to help with reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, and to move toward renewable energies.

I do know that Carcross is also happy to see the long-awaited learning centre that will be completed — the first phase — this year, and they will also be having solar panels on this building. I believe it will generate in the neighbourhood of 14 kilowatts, which is a substantial amount of energy. It's just exciting to see what we can do in the territory and it's really individuals who are just moving ahead because they realize that reducing our fossil fuels is the way of the future.

A meeting was hosted in Tagish by YESAB and it was to discuss a hard rock mine on Jubilee Mountain. There was significant concern by the residents there in Tagish about this proposed project. Everyone in attendance who spoke — and the messenger here was opposed to the project because of the long-standing efforts with the Southern Lakes caribou herd that we spoke of in the House. This particular project on

Jubilee Mountain would have the whole area of this mine in the calving and wintering grounds of the Southern Lakes caribou herd. There is quite a concern that the herd — which is actually a miracle; it is the only inland caribou — I'm trying to remember the proper terms — woodland caribou herd that has actually come back, and so I'll be keeping track of that as we move forward and hopefully steps are taken to make sure this important caribou herd is not significantly impacted by this project.

I spent a lot of time in the communities in my riding and these communities are often relying on government spending and support and therefore intimately are tied to these budgets that we're discussing today.

I was encouraged to see the money in the budget to fix the Ross River suspension bridge and that the Dawson City recreation centre will be receiving funding. However, I did bring up and will future ask questions about that Ross River suspension bridge later on in the budget debate.

There were also many concerns brought forward earlier from the Whitehorse City Council motion to the AYC that there are concerns that the infrastructure needs of the community are not being met and that the government and the lists that are put forward by municipalities — the spending does not reflect their priorities, but government priorities. As infrastructure proceeds — and I know that the minister gave an overview of the things that are going forward — this issue is facing Yukon and disproportionately impacts Yukon communities. This government has set strong goals but since, in the area of waste diversion, has missed its 50-percent waste-diversion targets and it is unclear where we are going from here on.

Marsh Lake, Whitehorse and Dawson are all straining to keep up with the large amounts of waste that they are receiving and they are not alone. One of the things that we hear continually is that solid-waste facilities are filling up. Marsh Lake, for example, has a 10-year plan and they are approaching some of their thresholds in just five years. I know I have spoken with the Minister of Community Services before and, while I am no solid-waste expert, I know that, for example, Mike Bailey, who operates the Mount Lorne transfer station, has exceeded 50-percent waste diversion — the goal set — and that was almost a couple of years ago. He is now pushing a 75-percent waste-diversion target. When you go there, you see the clarity for people who are moving through that facility — as with Marsh Lake — and how things can be done. I know that there was a proposal put forward for Mike to be able to share some of his expertise throughout rural Yukon, which, I understand, was not approved.

I am hoping that, as we move forward as a community and the Yukon as a whole, we don't neglect the people who are really leading the way and that we empower them to be able to share the expertise that they do have, especially when I know places like Tagish and Burwash — when I see them — are requesting more help in understanding the things that they can do — working with school children, working on educating parents. This is part of the proposal Mike had put forward.

I do want to start with the first question that I have here. As I stated, we have heard a number of concerns raised throughout Yukon that solid-waste facilities and landfills are filling up faster than anticipated. Specifically, we have heard that Marsh Lake transfer station is filling up faster than anticipated and, as I stated, its 10-year lifespan — and the operators have said they are nearing their 10-year window as we speak. This is the most obvious example, but we have heard concerns raised from Dawson, Whitehorse and other communities.

Can the minister provide an update on where all of the other landfills and transfer stations are at in their lifespan? Are any others close to their limits? Can he confirm that Marsh Lake is close to its limit? Also, with the added pressure of having major demolition projects in Yukon — and some of those that come to mind are WCC, the old F.H. Collins Secondary School, the old McDonald Lodge and a number of buildings in Faro that will need to find a home. When these large buildings are brought down, are there any special considerations made for them, or are they processed by landfills like any other waste?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I guess I will start off by noting that we were very happy to support the Mount Lorne community by providing the solar panel project that the member was talking about. That was a project that we were able to support with some old Building Canada funds that became available later in the life of that fund.

When we originally began consultation on the infrastructure priorities for Yukon communities, First Nations, LACs and all other groups, we proceeded with three general criteria: the first being we needed to address regulatory issues; the next being we needed to address core infrastructure needs — water, waste water, solid waste, those types of projects; and the third criteria was that we wanted to see projects that would improve the life-cycle costs of operations — whether they belong to the Yukon government or whether they belong to a municipality or a First Nation. That type of project fits within that third criteria where we can install, in this particular case, solar panels, but other types of infrastructure are eligible as well, which will reduce the life-cycle costs of a piece of infrastructure.

In this particular case, it's the community centre and, as the member noted, it has obviously been a success if their electricity bills are going down. That particular group would have benefited as well from the increase to the CRAG that was done by my predecessor, but when we can make improvements to infrastructure that is run by those communities to reduce their costs, it's something we are happy to consider and move forward on.

We've done a number of other projects throughout the territory. Burwash comes to mind as being one where we've been able to add some solar panels to reduce the ongoing costs of operating a piece of infrastructure. That type of infrastructure is something that we consider in our criteria for infrastructure planning.

The member made some comments about infrastructure planning and the City of Whitehorse's motion that was

debated, passed and will go forward for debate and discussion at the AGM in a few weeks — I won't comment on that now because we can get back to infrastructure and the question at hand directly is: solid waste. I'll provide a bit of an overview of where we are on that and try to address the general questions that the member asked.

I'll start by saying that the Mount Lorne solid-waste facility is a marquee one for us — it's one of those sites that is owned by the Yukon government and we fund the operations. The local community organization has the contract to run that facility for us and we appreciate the work that they have done. It's often pointed to as an example of best practices for that type of transfer station.

The member mentioned — and he mentioned this, I think, previously as well — some sort of application that the individual from Mount Lorne has put forward. I have never seen an application of any sort of the nature he's talking about, so I can't comment on what it is or what he proposed. If it indeed was put forward and not supported by someone, I don't know anything about it. If the individual would like to forward something to me personally, I would be happy to review something, or if there's more information that can be provided to us, then we might be able to understand better what exactly is being asked for. Without actually having seen an application, I have a difficult time commenting on it or commenting as to why it did or did not go forward.

With regard to the overall issues of solid waste, we could talk a little about Marsh Lake as well specifically; but maybe I'll start by providing a little bit of an overview of a number of the solid-waste facilities in the Yukon. There are a number that are run by Yukon government and there are a number that are run by municipalities. I know the member is talking about both. He mentioned Dawson, as well as some of the ones that are run by us — Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne and others. I'll provide as general of an overview as I can.

We — “we” being the Community Operations branch of Community Services — manage 16 solid-waste facilities around the Yukon. Of those, we have converted eight into modified transfer stations and five into transfer stations. We have the one gasifier facility in Old Crow. We've worked with the communities to expand our services to include gates, hours and attendants at Destruction Bay, Champagne and Ross River. Each of those I can talk about individually. We can talk about some of the individual features, and we will, I'm sure, but I'll provide just a general overview to begin.

Together with the Department of Environment, we are finalizing our review of the beverage container regulation and designated material regulation. We believe the proposed changes will modernize both programs and help divert harmful materials from landfills. Once we have those in place, we'll have to discuss how to collect those materials, but we'll return to that as well.

As we work to negotiate a diversion credit arrangement with the recycling processors for this year, members will note that \$918,000 in our budget has been allocated for this. That considers the reports of the recycling experts, the processors

themselves, as well as the broader recycling and diversion initiatives across the territory, through the recycling fund.

In 2015, we allocated \$333,000 over three years to assist with groundwater monitoring in municipal facilities, matching similar monitoring programs at YG-operated facilities. If we ask any municipal government, they will be quick to point out that any time government comes out with new regulations for these types of facilities, it comes with a cost, and that cost is typically borne by the municipality. In this particular case, the need for additional scrutiny of the impacts on water of these solid-waste facilities came at some cost to municipalities, so we've stepped up to help out by providing these new water-monitoring wells at these municipal sites as well as our own sites. As I said, that is accounted for in this budget as well.

We also continue to invest in modern, environmentally responsible solid-waste management that will adapt to the changing needs of future generations. In the past year alone, we have continued to take steps to implement the *Solid Waste Action Plan*. We've worked with the Department of Environment to review regulations. We've increased our commitment and support toward establishing more sustainable systems of waste diversion, including recycling.

We've worked with municipalities and First Nations to regionalize solid-waste systems and increase waste diversion and environmental protection in Yukon communities. In 2015, we established an agreement for regional solid-waste management with the Town of Watson Lake. This allowed us to decommission the facility at Upper Liard.

As well, we continue to make significant investments in solid-waste infrastructure. To that end, in recent years, we have developed partnerships to pursue community-based approaches to solid-waste management. For example, agreements have been established to regionalize municipal solid-waste facilities in Dawson City and Watson Lake. We have worked with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow to establish a model of co-management for solid waste in their community. Government continues to provide funding to Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation so they can offer local employment for the operation of a solid-waste facility and gasifier. The Old Crow gasifier is a very modern piece of infrastructure that is being closely studied by other northern communities in Canada. The gasifier allows us to minimize the amount of materials put in the ground while ensuring that air emissions follow strict standards. Training has been provided to a number of local residents to ensure capacity for the operation of this sophisticated equipment.

In other communities, such as Destruction Bay and Champagne, we have engaged with the First Nation governments, as well as residents, to implement greater management controls at local solid-waste facilities. In recent months, gates have been installed and site-attendant contracts have been established at these facilities. Positive results are already being seen in terms of proper separation of various waste streams. For example, site attendants in Destruction Bay are providing home, blue-bin recycling bins, supplied by Yukon government, to any interested residents. The site attendants then help sort materials when residents bring in

their recycling to the transfer station and ensure all materials get placed in the appropriate bins.

Greater controls at rural transfer stations promote proper use of these facilities and mitigate the potential for inappropriate dumping of materials without proper separation. Patrons are much more likely to place various types of waste in designated areas within a facility, with the guidance of a site attendant. The site attendants are also there to help educate the public about proper use of the facility and about waste diversion generally. These measures are an important step toward increasing public awareness of the need for responsible household practices for waste diversion.

The Yukon government is also engaged with Ross River Dena Council, the RRDC, and residents of the community of Ross River to promote and improve solid-waste practices and greater waste diversion. The Ross River facility has been gated, with attendant services recently established. The Ross River Dena Council has expressed willingness to promote higher levels of waste diversion as well.

The Yukon government is working with RRDC to establish a community recycling depot. The goal is to increase diversion and reduce the amount of waste being disposed of at the local solid-waste facility. This work has included discussions with the Town of Faro on the idea of potentially transferring household waste from Ross River to the Faro solid-waste facility, similar to regional systems with Dawson City and Watson Lake.

The Yukon government is committed to community-based engagement to enable local involvement in developing and implementing improved systems for solid-waste management and waste diversion. Community meetings in Destruction Bay, Champagne and Ross River have allowed residents' input in establishing operating schedules for each solid-waste facility. Attendant services at these facilities also bring local input into public education efforts around waste diversion.

The Yukon government continues to modernize solid-waste services and improve waste diversion in other unincorporated communities as well. Working with local champions and NGO groups such as solid-waste societies in Mount Lorne and Marsh Lake, we are seeing increasing levels of waste diversion, as was noted by the member. The Mount Lorne Solid Waste Society reports that it has already eclipsed the three-percent diversion mark, which is something the member also noted.

By working with the Marsh Lake Solid Waste Society, Yukon government has also assisted in the establishment of a composting pilot at the Marsh Lake facility. The pilot saw a growing number of residents utilizing the compost collection area. The first step in promoting separation of the various waste streams in rural homes is to provide opportunities for sorted collection. This is exactly the sort of service being provided by Yukon government in unincorporated areas.

In spring 2015, Yukon government ran a workshop that provided a forum for solid-waste facility operators throughout the territory to network and turn their minds toward common issues. In addition to these measures, Yukon government also

continues to work with the City of Whitehorse and the Association of Yukon Communities to pursue further progress and consistency with solid-waste services throughout the territory.

In addition, Yukon government has provided municipalities with capital funding support. Ultimately, the level of success with waste diversion and responsible waste management in the territory will be determined by the public. We must all do our part to keep harmful as well as recyclable materials out of our shared environment.

I think I have provided a little bit of an overview of some of our unincorporated sites. When we look at the west end of the Alaska Highway, Haines Junction has an excellent facility and we are making further improvements to it through investments made in this budget. We're working with the First Nation in Destruction Bay to improve their facility, and we have an example there of a pilot project where we're providing recycling bins to the community that are then collected at the transfer station. We're doing something similar in Champagne; we have a gate in place and attendant services there. The hours of operation are derived by input from the community.

Oftentimes we find that we get very strong input from the communities about when they want the facilities to be open. I think some of it is because they like to set those hours to be unattractive to Whitehorse people and very attractive to locals, and that's fine. That is a tool that we have to control some of these sites — the hours of operation.

We continue to explore the opportunity of entering into discussions with the municipality of Haines Junction about making that facility a regional site. Obviously there is a giant sign at the entrance of that site that says "regional solid-waste facility". It is not a regional solid-waste facility. It was originally contemplated to be, and that's why they put up the sign, but the previous mayor and council had very little interest in that so we haven't gone down that road. I think that we will have to reengage with that community to discuss the opportunities for that site, especially now that the surrounding sites that we would transfer waste from are much more controlled now and much better managed. It makes a stronger case to Haines Junction that they know exactly what they're getting with regard to the waste.

In the southeast part of the territory — with Watson Lake we have a regional agreement. We have closed Upper Liard. That site is now being decommissioned. There is money in this budget for Watson Lake to improve their solid-waste facility as well, so we'll make upgrades to that site to help them not only promote diversion but improve the quality of their facility there.

With regard to Dawson, we have had negotiations about renewing the regional agreement with Dawson for Quigley. We're optimistic that we will be able to sign an agreement with the mayor and council and me very soon. We hope that will set the groundwork for the coming years for that site. That is a regional landfill that takes in waste from the surrounding area.

Quigley — it depends on who you ask as to how many years Quigley has left. I was originally working with the understanding that it was roughly two to three years, but my understanding is that they have recently done some drone work, which has determined that the Quigley site may have more years than they originally thought. I don't know what the answer is; I don't know exactly how many years Quigley has left — but I'm not sure anybody does. We'll continue to work with the Town of Dawson City to explore options for their regional agreement.

With Mayo, their site is currently unmanned and ungated. They are okay on the capacity side, but I think they would like to see some more controls, checks and balances put in at that facility. We're working with them, as well as Dawson, to look at some regional opportunities for the whole north-central Yukon, which would incorporate Keno and Stewart as well, but those discussions are at an early stage and we're exploring what that might look like.

Coming south along the Klondike Highway, the Village of Carmacks has a pretty well-run site. It's gated and has a pretty solid recycling depot there. We recently provided them with a new baler. I think it had some challenges in transportation to get there. It may have fallen off a truck or something like that, but we're providing infrastructure there and working with them.

With regard to the Southern Lakes area, the member opposite and I have discussed this numerous times. Where I think we'll end up going there — and this is nothing new and the member has heard me say this before — I think what we'll need there is a regional plan that incorporates the needs and uses of Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne, Tagish, Carcross and everything in between in that Southern Lakes loop.

What that may include has yet to be determined, but what I've discussed and mentioned in the House previously is — I think what will have to happen is that not every site will be able to take all materials. That's something that local residents don't like to hear because they want to be able to continue to go to that one place where they've always taken their stuff, but we'll have to have that conversation. It's one we're not going to force on anybody, but it's something we'll have to consider, going forward.

Madam Chair, I know my time is up, so I'll leave it there. It's a bit of an overview with regard to the solid waste action plan as a whole. Just to conclude, this still stems from the 2009 *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*. It is still sort of our guiding philosophy for how we're setting up our sites. We're regionalizing where we can, we're closing down unneeded sites, and we're moving to a transfer station model for other sites that we run.

We do still have the oddball one — Old Crow being one, where we have a gasifier, which is unique. Beaver Creek continues to be a landfill as well, just because it's not feasible to ship that material all the way down the highway.

I recognize my time has elapsed, so I will conclude with that on solid waste.

Chair: Prior to taking the next question, 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 on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Mr. Barr: I would also like to thank the minister for being open to seeking further clarification regarding that proposal application from Mount Lorne transfer station — particularly, Mike Bailey. I will inform him, send more information and possibly just connect both of you with the ability to further discuss some of those recycling and waste-diversion tactics that they use there in the Southern Lakes.

In listening to the response from the minister, there was a lot of information, and I thank him for that. Near the end, I got some more clarity as to some of the things that I asked about specifically. One thing that the constituents of Marsh Lake have been wondering about — and it wasn't answered clearly — is if Marsh Lake is ending its capacity for the landfill part of its site? I know that the minister stated that particularly in Southern Lakes — looking at maybe deciding that not all products will go to each specific site in Tagish, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne or Carcross in the future. I heard that, but I want to know specifically if Marsh Lake is at its capacity now.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Specifically with the Marsh Lake transfer station, I should note that it is indeed a transfer station, so the only materials that are being landfilled there are construction and demolition waste — to my knowledge, at least. That's the only input that would contribute to the declining life of the site. I don't know, based on my current information, how many years left that facility has.

What I was getting at, with my discussion of the regional discussion, was that, if it did run out and if tomorrow they told me that Marsh Lake doesn't have room for any more landfilling — that it was maxed out — then what we would probably have to do would be stop letting people dump C&D waste there. That's the conversation I'm talking about having with the community — that moving to a regional system where you consider the other sites and consider the fact that certain things can't go to certain sites. I know that's fairly general, but what I mean by that is saying that, if Marsh Lake doesn't have the capacity to take any more solid waste for landfill purposes, then we would have to take it somewhere else. That's just the reality. If the site doesn't have the capacity to handle it, then that's what we would have to do.

That being said, I don't know exactly how much space or how much capacity is left at that particular site. I do know that we are trucking the majority of household waste from that site to Whitehorse, where we pay a special government rate for tipping fees at the Whitehorse landfill. That's where we take our solid waste from that and other sites around the Whitehorse periphery.

I've tried to answer the question as best I can. I don't know the actual number of years, but if there was a need to stop taking C&D landfill waste at the Marsh Lake transfer station, that's something we would have to look at.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. Speaking specifically now to the Mayo solid-waste facility, the Village of Mayo has recently indicated that they would be interested in becoming the regional receiver of waste. Can the minister update me on the talks, or if they have begun or where they're at with those negotiations or discussions?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I mentioned in my overview earlier, we have a regional solid-waste agreement with Dawson City for the Quigley site. Mayo continues to be a landfill, not a transfer station. They may transfer some materials, but I believe it's just a straight landfill. Aside from general areas that are designated for different materials, there is no other sort of diversion that occurs at that site. There is a recycling centre and a free store in the community that we have provided support for over the years where that type of recycling diversion occurs, but at the actual landfill itself, I believe it's strictly a landfill, not a transfer station.

It was actually making the rounds on social media recently, as a result of an individual finding a video or taking a video of a lynx passed out after gorging himself on some yummy garbage and falling asleep in the landfill, but I digress.

I haven't heard from the mayor and council that they want to become a regional facility and if they do, I would wonder — other than Keno and Elsa — what other regions would feed into that. What we have had discussions about are regional discussions for the northern central region as a whole. What I mean by that is discussions with Dawson and with Mayo around the possibility of looking at a regional agreement with both of them and those discussions are at a very early stage. We're hoping to sign an agreement in the coming weeks that would provide some guidance as a structure of those conversations and would outline some of what we're talking about. I don't want to get ahead of myself and start talking about some of those initiatives before we have actually signed an agreement with those two municipalities, so I won't say too much more about that, but that's the general status of the discussions with Mayo and there is more to come — probably in the coming weeks — as we move to negotiate and possibly sign an agreement with Dawson and Mayo for some sort of regional agreement for that area.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. I would like to speak a little bit about waste diversion. I know that the minister has given lots of information through the overview of my previous question and this is to seek some more clarity. We've talked a lot about waste diversion in the House over the last five years and we've talked about the need for education and a fundamental shift in our approach to waste management in the territory. I know these goals take time. In the meantime, we need to be taking immediate action to reduce our waste diversion. I was wondering: Has the government updated their waste-diversion targets since failing to meet the 2015 50-percent diversion target?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, we haven't.

Mr. Barr: We've heard a number of concerns raised throughout Yukon that solid-waste facilities and landfills are filling up faster than anticipated. However, as I move over to my other page, I'll continue with my remarks.

The Association of Yukon Communities released a document that sets out their thoughts on a territory solid-waste strategy. In addition to increased capacity, they recommended — and I quote: "Shift from a tax-based model to a user-pay model through a combination of tipping fees/user fees, DMR and eventually EPR." It is my understanding that currently the Yukon has only tires on the EPR list. The AYC document also contains a list of BC items that are found on DMR and EPR lists. Has the minister reviewed the Association of Yukon Communities' solid-waste management strategy document and has the department considered adding any new items to the EPR list?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Before I turn to this specific question, I will just say that we did provide input on the development of that framework document that was put together by AYC.

It does cover a range of issues from fees, financing and the operations of facilities to how we can deal with landfill liability and the relatively complex calculation of that liability. In many of these cases, municipalities are operating landfills as per usual, but in some cases these landfills have a complex history. I'll use Teslin as an example — Teslin has a landfill and the Yukon government has acknowledged that we have a shared liability in that landfill. Well, it's actually a transfer station now; it was a historic landfill. We have a shared liability for that site. That site has had a range of users and operators over the years: the federal government, the army, the territorial government and now ultimately the town, so calculating the liability there is a complex matter and one that we, to be perfectly honest, don't have our heads completely around yet. What we have done is acknowledge to the Village of Teslin that we have a shared liability and that we need to work together to deal with it. Every different landfill around the territory has a different story on liability — we can get to that a little bit more.

What the AYC document does a good job of, I think, Madam Chair, is highlighting some areas where we need to have more conversations about how to deal with these issues, and that includes the financing and fee structure model.

With regard to the list of products included on the designated materials regulation, the member is correct, it is only tires — that is something I noted in debate in Question Period with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King recently. We do have plans to add products to that list, which we will be making known in the coming weeks. Beyond that, the AYC has expressed a desire to add additional products in the future. We are interested in doing so and we'll engage the AYC with regard to the type and timing of when those additions will be made.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. While attending some local advisory council meetings, the release of the AYC's document has created some concerns for some of the local folks in the Southern Lakes.

Many individuals are very stringent about their waste diversion and they go to great extremes to do a good job themselves personally — families, individuals and so forth — and I know this is all hypothetical, but what was raised were thoughts on the possibility of tipping fees. They felt it would be unfair for some of those local people to be paying tipping fees because of other people who use rural transfer stations or landfills to bring stuff. It would not be fair to them. They were considering some of the suggestions around maybe further talks. Just a heads-up as to where we may be heading with tipping fees in general in the territory — locals, for example, in Mount Lorne or in Marsh Lake or wherever, would receive a sticker so that they wouldn't be subject to tipping fees themselves per se, but others wanting to bring their waste away from where they are — maybe those people would pay tipping fees. I would like to hear maybe the minister's thoughts on this but just also bring forward this idea that it is out there at this time.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is an issue that was raised in the AYC document. It's one that deserves further conversation for sure. The conversation the member just began is one that we've had over the past little while.

What the AYC document contemplates is the idea that, where municipalities enact tipping fees, there is often a peripheral impact as a result of people — to use the term — “dump shopping”. They will try to avoid the tipping fees at a municipality by going to a regional site sometimes many kilometres away, but nonetheless they will go there to avoid that tipping fee.

What AYC is talking about is the possibility of everybody doing tipping fees all at once. That way you get rid of that possibility. It would be a complex thing to undertake. These discussions are just beginning with AYC and with other municipalities and communities, so I am providing more of my own opinion than the state of our discussions, but it would be a difficult thing to administer tipping fees at some of our sites. They're very remote in some cases. They're not set up to be handling money.

In the cases where we have site attendants, the site attendants' contracts are not inclusive of them collecting money from people. There would be difficulty in putting in place the necessary controls around the collection of money at some of those sites. If people are driving to a site and then they find they are only able to pay cash for tipping fees, they may not like that. That means we will have to consider how we can have credit cards or any other types of payments set up. These are the types of challenges that we face and these are the discussions that we're going to have with municipalities, with AYC and with others. It's not as simple as snapping our fingers and saying there are tipping fees at all sites. There are a lot of things that need to be considered — some of them I have just mentioned.

Likewise, the idea that we would charge tipping fees at some of our peripheral sites but then not apply them to certain Yukoners based on where they live is again a very difficult thing to get into. At these sites — the ones that are owned and the operations are paid for by Yukon government — there is a

certain fairness aspect where all Yukoners pay those taxes and all Yukoners deserve to have access to those services. We have a certain obligation to be fair about how we provide these services. To say to one group of people that, if you have a certain sticker, you're allowed to dump your waste here, but others who live too many kilometres away don't — that would be very difficult to administer and would put some of our attendants in a difficult position.

I'm not saying that this is impossible and I'm not saying that these are insurmountable challenges, but they are complex and they are challenges nonetheless, and these are the types of conversations we need to have with AYC, with municipalities, with communities and with others.

I don't know if there was a specific question there that I haven't answered, but I think I have provided a general commentary on topics so I hope that addresses the member's comments and questions.

Mr. Barr: Yes, I do thank the minister for his comments. It wasn't a specific, direct question, but it was basically to acknowledge that what AYC is proposing isn't something that, as the minister stated, can happen overnight. It does and will require — and I do acknowledge that the minister also feels the same way. Consultation will be necessary — if and how and what is implemented — as we move forward, because it is varied. There is much input that people have in making sure we get it right, but at least by allowing for the conversation to happen, we can make the best-informed decisions with the input from people affected by possible tipping fees. We need to take the time to listen and move forward. I am glad to hear that the minister appreciates that and he knows, from listening to his response, that it is not a simple task, but it is a necessary one as we do move forward. I thank the minister for his comments.

Moving on, it is our understanding that dozens of barrels of unidentified liquid in sealed oil barrels were dumped at the Haines Junction landfill over a lunch hour. The liquid has to be disposed of. What support has the department offered to the community to deal with the liquid at that landfill?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am not familiar with this specific case that the member is talking about but, as a general comment, I am aware that from time to time we receive products that are deposited at our facilities that are unidentifiable or we are not sure what they are. Sometimes they are contaminated waste and sometimes they are unidentified liquids like the member is talking about, and we are forced to deal with them. There are resources in Whitehorse here that provide support for the disposal of those types of wastes. If it is a simple matter of waste oil, then we have programs for that. But if it's a mystery substance that we are talking about — it could be anything from brake fluid to antifreeze, and the list goes on — there are some resources in town that can deal with that. KBL Environmental is one. It is a private company that deals with those types of things, and they can dispose of whatever it is that we can find.

The only challenge is the cost, and that is a cost that we, as the operator of the sites, have to deal with. We find that deposited at our sites from time to time and we have to deal

with the costs of disposing of that material safely. That is part of the reason why we have begun to gate and have site attendants at so many of our sites. While it does cost money and it does take resources, it does provide a greater degree of control over these sites. In a certain sense, we may be saving money if we can limit the amount of mystery substances we have to deal with.

The same goes for municipalities. Municipalities, from time to time, will be faced with similar challenges, and the unfortunate reality is they have to deal with them the same as any other solid-waste facility operator. We can work with them, from time to time, if they have an exceptional circumstance and, if they do, they can contact us and we can try to see if there's a way for us to help them, but typically that's unfortunately part of the business and why so many solid-waste operators are going to gated, manned operations — so we can limit the amount of mystery dumping that occurs at some of our sites.

Without knowing the details — the quantity of barrels and material dumped at Haines Junction — I can't comment on exactly what they should do with it. One resource is KBL Environmental here in Whitehorse; another resource is our Community Operations branch. The operator at Haines Junction will be very familiar with the Community Operations branch and will know that's available to them.

It's an unfortunate reality with solid waste that we have to deal with these things sometimes.

Mr. Barr: I appreciate the minister being unable to specifically state an official response because he is unaware of the situation. I believe it was a couple of months ago. The people who dropped off these — and I know it's dozens of barrels and it's not clear as to what was in them. It's good to know they can contact and possibly work out some assistance with Community Services. When this did happen — it is an incorporated community, so I understand there could be the possibility that YG would work with them in maybe helping out, if it turns out to be a contamination that's going to require X amount of dollars to cover this. It did happen, as it was stated — someone possibly cased the landfill and waited for the attendant to leave and then, through their own surveillance, managed to get in and out and left this number of barrels. That's the situation, as I understand it.

I will relay this information to those folks and if they haven't already done so, there will be a willingness to see what can be done about this particular situation. It is an unusual and unique one. I know that's why we have moved forward to having gated landfills with attendants there. It's said that, if a thief wants to get into your place, no matter how many locks you have, they'll find a way. It's one of these situations where it seems as though this is something that has happened, and it has possibly left the taxpayers of Haines Junction on the hook. It's just not a good thing to have happened — period. So anything we can do to work out these extenuating circumstances is appreciated — the efforts of those at Community Services. I'll pass along this information.

I do recall in the last budget debate that we spoke of the Watson Lake hospital, and that the demolition went to a

private landfill. I forget the name of the landfill, but I remember that's how it was dealt with.

Under what legislation can a private dump be created or permitted, such as, I believe, the situation in Watson Lake?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That legislation would be the *Environment Act*.

Mr. Barr: I think I will leave waste at this point, for the time being — something might come back to me. In Question Period, the Minister of Community Services indicated that the money for the Ross River suspension bridge had not, in fact, yet been approved through the Building Canada fund. My understanding is that the minister has committed to phase 2 of the suspension bridge, pending the Building Canada fund coming through.

My question is: Will this government commit to covering the cost of the Ross River bridge out of the government's budget if we cannot secure the money from the Building Canada fund?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I noted, that is a project that we have applied to the New Building Canada fund for. It's a fairly substantial project, coming in at about \$2.7 million. We've already spent \$1.5 million, approximately, to stabilize the structure, so we are hopeful that Canada will be able to approve that project soon. Once that occurs, we'll be able to move forward with the work.

I am unable to make a commitment as to what we'll do if Canada denies us that application. It would be, to my knowledge, a bit odd because of the fact that it is an eligible project under the New Building Canada fund. But, if it were to be denied, then we would have to take stock of what we're going to do with that bridge, because \$2.7 million is not unsubstantial; it's a substantial amount of money and not one I want to speculate on based on a hypothetical situation. We'll wait to see what Canada says. We'll wait to see whether or not they approve that project and then we'll take it from there.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. Certainly, we on this side of the House will be ready to advocate for the folks that the Ross River suspension bridge repairs will be done. As the minister stated, we don't know that yet, but certainly it will be our position to continue to encourage the government to move forward regardless of Building Canada funding.

First off, as we began today's debate and the minister was speaking in his opening remarks and the general overview, I had raised the question about civic addressing and enumeration — about the recent situation with the enumerators using the civic address, which may create confusion come voting day and people turning up and maybe not being able to vote — having the possibility of lot numbers and civic addressing confusing the situation.

Is the minister able to respond with clarity as to what possibly some folks may be encountering out there — or to this person individually — to alleviate concerns about being able to cast their ballot?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: With regard to being enumerated, the Chief Electoral Officer has a significant amount of flexibility in dealing with these sorts of things. I would encourage

somebody who has a concern about getting enumerated or getting on to the voters list to contact the Chief Electoral Officer. My understanding is that she can resolve those types of issues through existing procedures and policies.

Without committing her too far, I would suggest that an individual who is having a challenge of that nature contact the Chief Electoral Officer to make sure they get on the voters list. Once they're on the voters list, I don't think there would be a problem voting regardless of civic addressing and lot numbers and those types of things.

If an individual has a problem with the enumeration and with getting on the voters list, I would encourage them to contact the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister. I will pass on those remarks and just keep tuned into any further difficulties that others may be having. Maybe it's something that, with a conversation with the Chief Electoral Officer, we can nip in the bud, as they say, and just educate the enumerators out there — to be able to explain the situation when it comes up at the door with those whom they may be coming into contact with.

I would like to turn some focus over to the Dawson water treatment facility at this time. Two months ago, the Government of Yukon announced that it would be taking responsibility for the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant. The plant was built in response to a court order that stated the city needed to deal with the waste it was dumping into the Yukon River by 2011.

The facility was opened in 2012. The operation and maintenance costs for the plant will be \$2.4 million. In March 2014, the Yukon government official estimated the yearly costs of \$340,000. So my questions — and I will just have three here — are: Why have the operation and maintenance costs increased so much over the last year? The former Minister of Highways and Public Works stated that Yukon government had — and I will quote: "... invested significant additional capital in the development of the facility in order to minimize the longer O&M costs." What was this significant additional capital that the former minister was referring to, and why was it not successful in the reduction of O&M costs?

In Question Period two weeks ago, the minister said they would get back to me on the total capital costs of the Dawson water treatment plant. Can the minister provide the total capital costs of the project and how that reflects on the projected total capital costs?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The total capital costs of the project were just about \$30 million. The issue the member was talking about — citing something the Minister of Highways and Public Works previously said — is something I don't know exactly. I would have to refer back to his comments and put them in context to understand what exactly he was talking about, but we have made a number of capital changes to the plant over the years that have been aimed at improving the facility.

I know we've changed some valves. We've experimented with different polymers to try to improve the operations of the plant. That's that particular question.

With regard to the first one, the simple answer is that the plant isn't operating the way it was originally intended to operate, so the costs are exceedingly high. We're doing our best to bring those costs down to a more sustainable level. Obviously, the current level — over \$2 million — is not a sustainable amount for a waste-water treatment facility so we will have to look at ways to bring that down. We're working with the current contractor to do that and we're looking at options for meeting our requirements under the water licence currently. As a result of the decision to take over the plant fully, we have had to enter negotiations to break up the water licence and have the water licence come under Yukon government.

The total capital cost of the actual construction for the waste-water treatment plant was \$29.3 million. I'm sorry, just to provide a more specific — no, that doesn't include any of the legal fees.

Speaking of legal fees, Madam Chair, if at the end of the day we aren't able to get the plant operating as it was originally intended to operate, then we'll have to explore options within the contract to determine what to do. That may include the dispute resolution aspect of the contract and beyond that we may have to look outside of the contract for redress, if that's the case. I'm not able to get into the technical jargon of what is happening in the plant or not happening in the plant. What I can say is that it's not working as it was originally intended; it's not operating at the cost we had hoped, and we're doing our best to bring that cost down.

Mr. Barr: I look forward to hearing how we're going to bring this down — \$2.4 million from \$340,000 is quite a substantial amount of money. I didn't really hear how that happened in a year; however, it does beg the question, for sure. I just think and reflect back to the fact that this was something that the City of Dawson felt wouldn't work in their community — this type of transfer station. They had to move forward with the Yukon government of the day to this type of facility over their objections. Something that was built in was that until it was able to operate without continual work, the City of Dawson wouldn't take it over. Now here we are and the costs are escalating, and I guess it's part of the things I think of when communities have been voicing their opinions. It's an example of the government not hearing what folks are saying.

We'll continue to keep tabs on the situation and hopefully figure out how to bring these O&M costs down in the future.

Switching to the Miles Canyon bridge, I understand there has been progress there. It's great that folks in Whitehorse and those visiting this tourist attraction — and also a running trail that continues in a loop if we're coming from Riverdale, or so on and so forth. It's something that really is a sight. I love going there myself and walking across. It's close; it's accessible; and the fact that it will reopen for the summer is a good-news thing and does show, as I stated in Question Period, that there is a will, and there was, and it has worked out. We're happy for that, and for the folks who will be able to use this bridge.

Can the minister fill me in on some more of the details: the costs, the ongoing work that will need to be done after this interim work is finished?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The story with the Miles Canyon bridge is that, as a result of some degradation to some of the wooden beams on that bridge, we unfortunately had to close the bridge down last year for safety reasons. We have addressed those now on a temporary basis. That initial work, as indicated by the member opposite, has in fact been completed and the bridge is now open. The cost of that initial work was about — I am not sure of the actual number, but it was below \$50,000. That was work done to get the bridge open for the summer months.

After the summer months — roughly the Labour Day weekend — we will begin work on the longer term fix to that bridge, which will see it positioned to be opened on a go-forward basis. The contract was just — I believe it was just awarded. I saw on the tender website that they had all been opened, so I don't know if it has actually been awarded yet, but I think the costs on the website suggest that it was in the neighbourhood of \$300,000 that it was going to cost to do that work. Combined with roughly something less than \$50,000 for the initial work, all in all, it should cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$350,000 to get that bridge back to being accessed by Yukoners and visitors alike.

I don't know what other details the member is looking for. If he is looking for an engineering breakdown of what they are doing, I am unable to provide it. I know that they are replacing a number of the wooden members, and they will be doing that work after the Labour Day weekend in the fall, and it should be good to go for next year.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for his response. That is sufficient at this time. I saw in the overview, and understood that there were some monies for rural recreation.

I go back to Carmacks, as we spoke previously in this House several times, whether it was in budget debate or Question Period — the roof on the rink in Carmacks is still not completed. It is condemned. The youth are not able to utilize that space. I would like to know if this is something that will be completed this year and if this is part of the monies that are allocated in this area? It is a long-standing issue, and I know the youth would appreciate being able to use that space. Is the condemned roof going to be up and running for the folks in Carmacks?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Where that project is right now is that the Village of Carmacks has developed some options for their council to consider. We provided some input at the officials' level to help with getting costs and finding support from some engineering at the engineering level to get some options together. The Village of Carmacks is currently considering what option they want to go with. They are obviously considering the ongoing operation and maintenance costs of whatever they decide to go with. Once they have selected what they want to do — once they have an idea of a project that they want to do — we've indicated that we would be happy to talk to them about it. They haven't done that yet —

they haven't selected a model or a design for what they want to have in place — we are waiting for them to do that.

Last year it wasn't perfect, but they had an outdoor rink behind the school. It's not the same — I know that — but it is a sheet of ice. I walked on it, and it was a decent sheet of ice and the kids were able to go skating if they wanted to, but I recognize that it's not the same as a rink with a roof.

The member was asking about the roof. I stand to be corrected, but my understanding is that all of the options they were looking at included the roof being removed altogether. That roof won't be used, to my knowledge, and they're looking at alternative structures that would work, but they haven't come to a conclusion about what that is. When they do, I look forward to hearing from them about it.

Mr. Barr: Switching to some more localized questions in communities — because it's an opportunity to get some clarity on some of these things, and not in Question Period. There's a request that possibly the minister could entertain the Tagish volunteer fire department — and I would like to state that throughout the territory, all the volunteer fire departments and all the firefighters work very hard to make sure that, in a time of need, they're ready and they're prepared.

On one of the recent long weekends, it was very warm and I went to Tagish, and there were volunteer firefighters there and had been on the previous day. While many people were watching swans and enjoying the first spring hot weather, they were there training — so a huge shout-out to those folks. They had come from various parts of the Yukon to do the training in Tagish that weekend, so there was travel involved and people staying over. It was great to see them there and observing the depth and the repetitive behaviours that they do to solidify in their mind — because when the fire happens, it takes this ongoing training and the repetitive actions over and over again to be tuned in, in an emergency, and so that's what they were doing.

I had recalled that part of what they do train for is doing burns of vehicles to practise putting out fires of different degrees. There had been, as the minister mentioned earlier, at the transfer stations or landfills that are owned by the government — there is a request that has to go into Community Services and then approved and there's some time to hear a response that would allow them to do the training and an oversight of that past weekend was that the training plan to do burning at — I believe it was the Tagish transfer station. They weren't allowed to go forward, and this is not by any means a diss to anyone; it was just an oversight.

The request was that, in order to facilitate more training and expedite the option of being able to do some of this burn training — the fact that they do this in Tagish from time to time is that there is part of a parcel of land that's treed. FireSmart has happened, but it was a request of the fire chief there — that possibly Community Services could look at the clearing of those trees that would allow this on-site burning to happen. They had attempted a clear space out by the road but realized this wasn't really conducive and that it would be best in the area that they had kind of scoped out themselves. Would the minister or his officials look at a request put

forward by those folks doing some training in the Tagish area to open up that area in the back of the fire hall — if that's something that would be accommodated or looked into further?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That's certainly not something I would ever engage in myself. I would encourage the fire chief to talk to the Fire Marshal's Office, if that's a request. It's not typically the type of decision that would come to my desk but I would encourage the fire chief, if he has a concern of that nature, to raise it with the Fire Marshal's Office.

I should also note that they would have access to the mobile training unit that's available through the Fire Marshal's Office if they want to do some training of that type. I know that it has been used in other areas and it's an excellent resource for fire crews wanting to do some training. There are a couple of options, but for that specific request, I would encourage the fire chief in that area to talk to the Fire Marshal's Office.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister for that and I will pass on that information. This isn't some of the burning — and I'm aware of the training module that is at the Carcross Cut-off — it's a different type of fire extinguishing that they would practise.

While I'm speaking about Tagish, I know that there was a long wait time in receiving the pumps for not only water for public consumption — the jug-type or people with 250 gallon tanks on the back of their pickups — there was a long time in getting the pump here, as it comes from Germany. Then the second pump, which also comes from Europe — I believe it was four or five months in getting it there, so that people could not fill the water trucks — which was a safety issue — but also for local drinking water. Back then, I had asked if the minister would consider water pump replacement parts that would be able to be rebuilt and would on hand, because it certainly is a long way for people to have to go elsewhere for water in a community the size of Tagish — which is about 400 or 450 people, but swells to a population of 1,200 in the summer months — and unable to access drinking water or, in a fire emergency, fill the pumper trucks in a manner that would expedite safety — so has the minister followed through with the possibility of having rebuilding parts? They're available, I understand, for these pumps. Have they been ordered so that these wait times would be overlooked — not wait for whole pumps to be brought in a time fashion of up to a four-month wait?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That is something that I would certainly take under advisement and take into consideration.

Mr. Barr: In the Protective Services branch of Community Services, the capital budget for fire management has been more than halved from \$1.2 million to just over \$400,000. We had heard that there may have been a fire pumper that had the delivery delayed or cancelled. Is that correct? If so, can the minister fill us in on what has happened?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that there was a truck that was going to be for Carcross that had been delayed, but will in fact be here later this year. So there is a new fire

truck that was designated for Carcross that will come later this year.

Mr. Barr: I thank the minister. I realize that some of these questions — while they are important for those who are living day to day in the communities and oftentimes we focus on these big questions, some of these questions may not seem that relevant — but when we live out there, we want to not travel back and forth to town as much as possible, as I do. I know that people who live in rural Yukon have a different way of life and different schedules and so on and so forth to be — that these are sensitive to them. They are issues that they do appreciate hearing responses about and I'll be able to reflect these back, and I do thank the minister for his responses.

Something else that was brought up previously — and we know that it has been an ongoing situation throughout the territory — but recently the news made it quite popular in Ross River when dogs attacked local folks. It's something that I know comes up in Carcross and it comes up in many of the unincorporated rural communities that the *Dog Act* does not really cover the same amount as incorporated municipalities that are able to enact bylaws that would protect people more and also be able to have folks deal with dogs even with noise — barking after 11:00 p.m. as in Whitehorse, for example.

I had some information that I had brought forward in a motion in this House for the government to look at the *Dog Act* as it stands in the Yukon and work on modernizing the legislation that is in place — the *Dog Act* in the overall Yukon. I'm wondering if there has been any movement from the minister in this area. I would also like to relate something. Whether or not he's aware of it, there was some talk with the AYC about if there could be a resolution at the AGM of the AYC in Watson Lake this spring. I do have some information here that there was a draft resolution that will be coming forward on maybe updating the legislation for nuisance dogs in unincorporated Yukon. I have this here. I don't know if the minister has seen it, but is he aware of this or has there been any movement on updating the *Dog Act*? If so, I would like to hear that and just acknowledge that there will be something coming forward in the upcoming AGM in Watson Lake later this month.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As members may recall, early in my time as Minister of Community Services, we transferred the responsibility for the *Dog Act* and the animal protection officer to the Department of Environment, so that program and those policies are now with the Department of Environment under the Animal Health Unit and are now supervised by the chief veterinary officer. That program and those responsibilities are now with the Department of Environment.

With regard to a resolution being put forward to AYC, typically AYC provides us with resolutions beforehand. That was not one of them, so if they were intending to surprise us with a dog resolution, that is fine and that's their prerogative, but I don't know anything about it.

Ms. White: I thank the minister and his officials for being here. I'm going to focus nearly entirely on the

Residential Tenancies Office, which I'm sure is not much of a surprise.

Last fall, I had the opportunity to go to both the information night for landlords and the information night for tenants. I just wanted to thank the presenters for that because they did a good job of walking people through the various brochures and the information. There was pretty good attendance for both nights, so I want to make sure I thank the people from the office for that.

Understanding that the regulations came into effect for January 1, as did the legislation, we've been seeing a lot of things in our office, and it has to do with the information that people have been given, and some of the dispute resolution processes. Prior to the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, anyone could take anything before a judge, so it could be an issue from the tenant's side to the landlord, from the landlord to the tenant's side. Now we have this process that is binding arbitration through the office and has no appeal process. So once the decision is made, the decision is final.

Some of my questions come from the fact that — once a decision is made, is it setting a precedent, and will other decisions be viewed in the same way, or is every case on a case-by-case basis?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'll start by noting that, even after the Residential Tenancies Office makes a decision, there is still the opportunity to go to court. There will always be that opportunity. That is the case there.

With regard to the decisions made by the RTO, yes, once they make a decision, there is some precedence set. Then there will develop, over time, a body of decisions that will inform others — landlords, tenants and anybody who is interested — as to what might be expected in any given case.

Now, that's not to say that every single case is the same and that even similar cases will be guaranteed to have the same outcome. It is to say simply that those previous decisions are considered by the RTO, but every case is looked at on its own merits and its own facts.

Ms. White: I have some concerns about precedent-setting decisions, because some of the cases that have been brought to us after the arbitration period, or after the decision was rendered — it seems to me that some of them are contrary to the legislation. I have an example of a mobile homeowner who owns the mobile home and who rented a pad within a park. They received an eviction notice. The owner, within the right amount of time, took their concerns to the Residential Tenancies Office. They asked for arbitration. Arbitration happened, and the person was told that the decision would be within 10 to 14 days. They went home. They then travelled to one of the communities, because there was an incident with their family. The decision was rendered in four days. It was sent by registered mail, and there was no contact with the owner. What happened is that the Residential Tenancies Office gave the mobile homeowner until the end of the month to vacate the premises.

If you look at the legislation, the legislation for mobile homes is that you have a 12-month period once you have received an eviction notice. Now that there has been a binding

decision put forward by the Residential Tenancies Office that has evicted this mobile homeowner — so it was three months from when they first got the notification instead of giving them the full, 12-month period. Will that be something that the Residential Tenancies Office uses as an example? Will that form their future questions?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Elias, on a point of order.

Mr. Elias: I believe the rules of debate are that — it seems the member opposite is asking the minister for a legal interpretation, and that is not allowed in debate in the Assembly. Also, it is not allowed for a member to seek an opinion, legal or otherwise, in debate in the Assembly.

Chair: Ms. White, on the point of order.

Ms. White: I am trying to figure out how precedence — if a decision is made — will affect future decisions. I am just asking, if a decision is made that is contrary to the legislation, what a homeowner is supposed to do.

Chair's ruling

Chair: This is a dispute among members for the time being. Carry on.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, again, I don't want to get into an individual case and the facts, as presented by the member in that case. If she's alleging that the RTO made a decision that's inconsistent with the law, that's pretty serious, so I would encourage her to write to me and perhaps we can deal with it more formally than simply asking questions in Committee of the Whole.

If her question is whether or not the RTO's decision can be reviewed, it absolutely can. An individual can seek redress from the courts, either through a judicial review or otherwise, so there's that to take into consideration as well.

Ms. White: I apologize. I should have gotten all the questions out before I flipped it over to the minister.

With evictions, it says that the deadlines to appeal an eviction are tight, so you are given a 14-day notice and you have to respond within five days to do that. But there is no requirement within the legislation with evictions to let the tenant know that there is a five-day window to appeal. There's no requirement of notice for landlords to notify the tenant.

The five-day appeal time is very tight. There have been concerns that people who need to be able to do the appeals aren't aware of their rights. There are concerns that, if that's the deadline that we're going to go with, the Residential Tenancies Office could advertise that there's a five-day appeal time so that people are able to go in to appeal the decision earlier.

There are examples where it says that, under extraordinary circumstances, if you miss that five-day appeal time within those 14 days, that the office can hear your concern. We have had conversations with a stroke victim who went in and paid the \$50 fee and started the process, and then

was told by the office that they were wrong and that you couldn't go past the five days.

We have heard examples of people who had concerns about a pest infestation, and then they were told that wasn't considered a serious enough issue for the landlord to have to act before the year was up because, as we know, the changes will happen in 2017.

There have been concerns from the landlord side with some of the regulations — for example, having to install locks on bathroom doors in bachelor apartments and the onus of responsibility to store abandoned goods — those are things within the regulation.

There have been examples of the notification of the decision being sent out by the office by registered mail, but there wasn't a phone call, so the letter sat there unclaimed and the tenant didn't realize what the decision was and, by the time they got the piece of mail, they had 24 hours to vacate the premises.

I guess as the office is open longer and the processes are going through, there will be more questions about process. I'm sure the office is also learning about how to manage some of those situations better, but if the minister could talk about any of those examples, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There was a long list of specific issues that were raised there by the member, so it would be difficult for me to comment on them all individually. I guess what I would say is that it is a new piece of legislation. It is a new office that has recently been established and it is going through the process of learning how it's going to operate.

To date, I think they've done a pretty good job of trying to interpret the law as it stands and to reflect the law in their decisions. If there are individual cases, I haven't heard them. I know that they haven't been raised — any of those particular issues raised by the member haven't been brought forward to me before. They haven't been brought forward to a deputy minister or the ADM, or anyone in our group. If there are strict legal matters that are of concern to either landlords or tenants, I would obviously encourage people to bring them forward.

With regard to the office as a whole, obviously — as I've said — it's a relatively new office that has begun to operate with the new law. Since opening, they've had 22 matters set down for formal dispute resolution, with decisions being issued and sent to the parties. My understanding is that they also have had 17 matters resolved through early dispute resolution between the parties before a formal application was filed.

The RTO was set up at the Yukon Trade Show in Whitehorse and was apparently very well-attended. Over 300 RTO handbooks were taken by members of the public. Hearings are currently being scheduled and decisions are being issued in a timely manner, with most decisions being sent out within one to three days after the hearing.

In the months that the office has been open from January to April, they have had 376 tenant phone calls. They have had 171 tenants at the counter — physically in their office, that means. They have received contact from tenants by e-mail or

other letter form 18 times. On the landlord side, they have received 387 landlord phone calls, 129 visits by landlords at the counter and 39 inquiries by e-mail or letter from landlords.

Obviously they are certainly doing their best to engage with both tenants and landlords and trying to sort out all of these enquiries as they come in. Some of them are basic information and some of them result in actual formal processes.

Of course, they also have to deal with housing agencies, such as the Yukon Housing Corporation, Grey Mountain Housing Society and First Nation governments, which now fall under the new law. Stays in motels, hotels and other tourist establishments of six months or longer are also subject to the new legislation.

As we have discussed, the Residential Tenancies Office helps settle disputes by educating landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities. It also provides dispute resolution and issues final and binding decisions and orders. As I've noted before, if individuals wish to, they can proceed with a judicial review of those decision if they feel it's necessary.

In the last fiscal year, the Residential Tenancies Office handled almost 3,000 telephone, e-mail and walk-in inquiries and has scheduled numerous applications for dispute resolution. The Residential Tenancies Office is delivering a broad public education campaign to inform landlords and tenants of the changes. I appreciate the input that the member has provided around that education campaign. If there are ways we can improve it and provide additional information or different information, we're certainly willing to explore that and I'll review the Blues and consider the input provided by the member and pass it on to the RTO.

The campaign they have done includes public information sessions in Whitehorse, in Watson Lake and in Dawson, as well as a new website that provides the handbook, information sheets, forms and an online interest-rate calculator. That public education will continue with additional information sessions, as required. Perhaps we would consider making changes as suggested by the member.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, 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: I will now call the House to order.

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. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Mr. Elias: Mr. Speaker, 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.

The following documents were filed May 3, 2016:

33-1-128

Yukon Procurement Advisory Panel Report (April 15, 2016) (Kent)

33-1-129

2015-16 Year in Review and 2016-17 Outlook — Property Management Division (Kent)

33-1-130

Faro Detachment Construction Project, letter re (dated December 7, 2015) from Hon. Brad Cathers, Minister of Justice, to Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Government of Canada (Cathers)