



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 108

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, March 13, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2023 Spring Sitting

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

CABINET MINISTERS

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, March 13, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper.

The following motions were not placed on today's Notice Paper as the motions were not in order: Motion No. 615, notice of which was given by the Hon. Premier; Motion No. 616, notice of which was given by the Member for Riverdale North; and Motion No. 620, notice of which was given by the Member for Whitehorse West.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: The Chair has observed a trend with regard to members rising during the rubric Notices of Motions to give notice of motions that they are aware are not in order and that will either not be placed on the Notice Paper, or else require time and rewording efforts by the Table to review and bring into order. Such out-of-order motions include motions seeking explanation, motions urging someone or something "to recognize" something, or motions urging someone or something to respect the role of something.

As well, members are aware that it is not in order to include within the text of a motion an argument in favour of the motion. An argument in favour of the motion is something that the member is free to offer if and when their motion is called for debate, not when the member provides notice of the motion. If a member is aware that a certain form of motion is not in order, especially if the Chair has already ruled that a certain form or construction of a motion is out of order, the member should not give notice of a further motion using that same out-of-order form.

It appears to me that members are attempting to engage in debate by delivering what amounts to members' statements during a rubric of the Daily Routine — Notices of Motions — that is neither designed nor intended for such use. This rubric, Notices of Motions, does not provide an opportunity to engage in debate.

In addition to being extremely disrespectful to the Chair, who has previously ruled on these topics, the intentional misuse of the rubric Notices of Motions consumes the limited time that is available to the Table — who must spend time to ensure that the motions are in order before placing them on the Notice Paper — and should stop.

At present, we have received over 600 motions in the 35th Legislative Assembly so far and, while some have been removed from the Order Paper for a variety of reasons, there are still between 400 and 500 active motions on the Order Paper.

The Assembly debates somewhere between 10 to 20 motions per Sitting, but it adds hundreds per Sitting. The vast majority of the motions tabled will never be debated. Most other jurisdictions limit the number of motions on the Order Paper, and in many jurisdictions, motions must be approved by the Table prior to tabling. Our Assembly currently does not restrict motions in this way and we rely on members to govern themselves.

As I have advised members previously — and I will use this opportunity to strongly advise members again — if members would like to deliver members' statements, provision for which exists in most other Canadian legislative assemblies, then members should add a provision for this rubric to the rules.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would ask my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly to welcome two visitors. With us today, we have the Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Malton, Ontario, Mr. Iqbal Singh. Mr. Singh was first elected in 2021. Mr. Singh is a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security and is also a member of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. He is here this week meeting with stakeholders and is accompanied today by our own Member of Parliament, Dr. Brendan Hanley.

Thank you both for visiting us today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Today, from our Yukon Public Libraries, we have Melissa Yu Schott. We also have Carmen Brar, who is our public programs librarian. We also have Callie and Theo Yu Schott, who are Melissa's children, here to see how we do business here in the House. I hope you all give them a rousing welcome.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We are doing a ministerial statement today on the convention centre. We have several guests. Could we please welcome Adam Gerle, who is the president of the Yukon Convention Bureau; Eduardo Lafforgue, who is our director of tourism; Jonathan Parker, who is the assistant deputy minister in Tourism and Culture; Alida Munro, who is the managing director of the Yukon Convention Bureau; and Eddie Rideout, who is the vice-president of the Yukon Convention Bureau. As well, we have Blake Buckle, from Northern Vision Development, and Dylan Soo, who is the executive director of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon — if we could welcome them all.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Social Work Month

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to recognize March as National Social Work Month. Social workers play an essential role in our communities and, in my own life, with family members and friends being dedicated to the profession. Social workers work in hospitals, in community health centres, in home care, in long-term care, in correctional facilities, in universities, and in non-governmental organizations — just to name a few. They all have a common goal: to improve the lives of people and communities in which they work. These hard-working professionals offer valuable support to Yukoners of all ages in many different circumstances. They help to improve outcomes in people's lives — coordinating care and connecting them with the services and supports that they need to lead happier and more independent lives. They also help people to realize and develop their own inner strengths, skills, and abilities.

In Canada, the national voice of the profession is the Canadian Association of Social Workers. This year, the theme for celebration is "Social Work is Essential", and it is. Social work is fundamental to the multi-layered fabric of our society. The role of social work in our communities cannot be overstated. If you have had the privilege of meeting even one social worker, then you know that we are talking about exceptional people.

They possess unique human qualities which are complemented by specialized training and access to resources. They play an essential role in keeping our communities healthy. They are essential to hearing first-hand the hardships and the challenges and the hopes and the dreams of individuals and communities. They are essential to navigating systems — those in which individuals are involved — including health, mental health, education, employment, and justice. They are essential to advocating for the promotion of equity, diversity, and inclusion to overcome racism, oppression, and marginalization. They are essential in these ever-changing times of life and uncertainty because social workers support people in navigating complex systems and coordinating care to meet their needs. They are essential because they are skilled at identifying systemic gaps, providing key services and programs, and strengthening communities to achieve what they need, all with the goal of building a more just and equitable world.

Social workers support people. They mobilize, they advocate, and they are accountable. The job that we all ask them to do is a very difficult one.

Today, I acknowledge and thank our social workers, in particular, those listening in today, including my sister, who is an extraordinary social worker, educator, and leader.

Yukon social workers support our communities through Family and Children's Services, Continuing Care, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, through income supports, disability services, community outreach services, adult protection, and Yukon hospitals — again, just to name a few. Social workers support Yukon's children, families, and individuals.

We should all remember and appreciate the extraordinary impact that social workers and their profession have on us all.

Today, I am so pleased for the opportunity to give them the acknowledgement, the recognition, and the thanks.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to social workers across the Yukon during National Social Work Month.

This year's theme is "Social Work Breaks Barriers". The work that social workers do helps to break down the barriers that prevent families and individuals from thriving. They work to assess clients' needs and determine what resources they require to succeed, given their situations.

Social workers are crucial to building a healthy community. They help people, and often children, adjust to changes within their lives and family units. The work is challenging and requires qualities and attributes that will help people deal with different situations and ultimately support the empowerment of individuals and families. They possess compassion and empathy, perception, and purpose.

I would like to acknowledge all social workers for their continued dedication to our community and thank them and all other individuals who provide supports within the scope of social services. Thank you, as well, to all those working toward an education and potential career in social work. You are choosing a path that will not only be of benefit to yourselves, but will help contribute to the building of a vibrant and healthy community.

Salamat po, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. White: I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate social workers, not just during the month of March, but each and every day. These folks support people in navigating complex systems. They are uniquely positioned to identify and address systemic gaps, provide key services and programs, and connect communities to what they need, all the while applying their skills to build a more just world.

Social workers are found in every community in the Yukon. They are employed by governments, NGOs, and in private practice. They work with families, they work with children, they work with our seniors and elders, and they assist and support people to make life decisions and plans that promote a healthy lifestyle and enhance community. Social workers are critical to building a fair and just society. We thank them for their dedication, perseverance, and especially for the care that they share with those around them.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Public Libraries programs

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise to pay tribute to the Yukon Public Libraries March break workshops here in Whitehorse happening March 14, 16, 17, 21, and 23.

The health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture, and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries —

that's according to American astrophysicist Carl Sagan. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, I suggest that the inverse is also true.

Our libraries very much support us. In fact, they shape our world and our understanding of the universe — have served this role for thousands of years. Think about that for a moment. They are a critical tool to transmit information from one generation to the next and today provide space for social interaction that improves the mental well-being of Yukoners. Heck, they are also a great place to read a potboiler, print a document, and read an e-mail, if you are so inclined. Our libraries are reaching more people, implementing innovative programs that recognize that literacy grows through mediums beyond reading.

In that vein, this March break, we'll be asking folks to try something new at the Whitehorse Public Library. So, head to a library to do something that you haven't done before: write a zine or a storybook; build a Lego robot; master the monologue with a local playwright; create swan sculptures from milk jugs; or play around with a guzheng, a traditional Chinese zither; and if that's not your thing, shadow puppets that you can take home. Take home a shadow puppet? Now I'm a little intrigued.

Like many Yukoners, I'm thankful to have the safe social setting to get together and enjoy these innovative offerings. Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were, but without it, we go nowhere. That's Sagan again. I encourage everyone to visit the Whitehorse Public Library or the library in their area and sign up for whatever might be planned for the March break. While there, I hope you also take the chance to thank your local library staff for the critical service they provide to our communities.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the upcoming programming for students over March break at the Whitehorse Public Library. A series of five workshops will take place over the next two weeks, centred around storytelling and crafts. This will be a great opportunity to complement the numerous spring break camps and programming happening throughout the territory, put on by different levels of government and community organizations.

I look forward to hearing about the success of these workshops and whether there is an opportunity to expand this initiative to benefit students over March break in other communities across the Yukon.

Thank you to the librarians, staff, and guest hosts for organizing some exciting programming for students. Thanks as well to all of those working to offer dynamic and exciting programming for students throughout March break.

We hope that all students have a wonderful spring break and have plenty of opportunity to get outside and enjoy the beautiful weather that we have coming our way.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the spring break programs of the Yukon libraries. Our

public libraries here in Whitehorse and in all of the Yukon communities are wonderful places for children and family programming throughout the year and especially during the two weeks of spring break when even more families are looking for activities.

This morning on the radio, a staff person was talking about the exciting projects over the next two weeks: robot-building with Lego, illustrating songs and stories, shadow puppetry, and more. My only concern is: How come I don't get to attend? I would love to learn how to build robots and make shadow puppets.

All joking aside, these are wonderful and exciting programs and we are lucky to have them. I would be remiss if I did not congratulate our libraries for the programs that run year-round, thanks to the hard work of the staff. These would include the Indigenous book club and the drop-in pathfinder role-playing game. Libraries are so much more than book lending, and our libraries here in the Yukon show us that every day. Thank you for all your work.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to review the literacy programs it uses and consider moving to evidence-based programs and practices for literacy and language development.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide a breakdown by community of the following information related to Emergency Medical Services coverage:

(1) the number of active volunteers;

(2) the total hours in the past year where there was a gap in local coverage by volunteers;

(3) total calls in the past year where paramedics from Whitehorse were dispatched by air to provide ambulance coverage; and

(4) total cost of sending paramedics by air from Whitehorse to substitute for volunteer coverage.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to make protection of Canada's Arctic sovereignty a top priority by taking immediate action to modernize and strengthen detection and response capacity of Canada's air force, navy, army, reserves, and Coast Guard.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a rural land development strategy that emphasizes the need for an increased supply of market and non-market housing in communities outside Whitehorse.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a small business minimum-wage adjustment program that will help small businesses to offset the impact of the recent minimum-wage increase.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop clear policy parameters and eligibility criteria for its new \$50-million community emergency contingency fund.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult with the Village of Haines Junction, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and the public regarding the potential impacts that above-average ice levels on the Dezadeash River could have on the Dezadeash bridge or the Haines Road.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Village of Carmacks and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to plan for and fund a seasonal pool.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop and introduce a homeowner protection act that includes mandatory licensing for home builders and contractors and an effective warranty program for new home construction and home renovations.

Finally, I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to backdate the \$100 increase to social assistance rates to include an increase for February and March 2023.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

New Whitehorse convention centre development

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am pleased to announce that, this past Friday, a request for proposals was issued by the Yukon Convention Bureau, in partnership with the Yukon government, for the development of a new convention centre in Whitehorse. The Yukon Convention Bureau is an important, non-profit organization that aims to promote the Yukon as a unique meeting, conference, and event destination.

Over the past 25 years, the Yukon government and the bureau have formed a strong and productive partnership, resulting in a significant increase in convention business across the territory. In fact, we have reached a point where demand exceeds supply, particularly in Whitehorse. Our industry stakeholders have told us that there is an immediate need for modern, purpose-built, and multi-use space for the Yukon's growing events and conferences market.

We have also heard about all the ways in which COVID-19 has altered how we think about gathering. As our tourism sector continues to rebound from the impacts of the pandemic, there is a clear need for modern, accessible, and safe event spaces.

Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the request for proposals, or RFP, which presents an opportunity to address this need. The RFP seeks comprehensive proposals for the design, construction, and operation of a full-service convention centre in Whitehorse. It calls for a facility with capacity to host up to 1,000 attendees in various styles of gathering, including performances, presentations, banquets, festivals, and more.

Conventions, conferences, and other forms of meetings are strong economic drivers, attracting tourists year-round and contributing to significant spending in local economies. According to Yukon Convention Bureau statistics pre-pandemic, the direct, local economic impact of convention and meeting tourism was \$6.5 million. Market research also shows that convention centres create a range of benefits for the community at large, generating economic spinoffs of \$500 to \$1,000 or more per attendee. Based on that data, we estimate that a new, centrally located Whitehorse facility, with twice the capacity of our former venue, could double the direct economic impact of convention business.

Right now, due to the current gap in our convention infrastructure, the Yukon is turning away business. A new convention centre in Whitehorse will help us build back stronger than ever. Working with knowledgeable local partners, this will be a strategic development that will drive private sector investment in accommodations, visitor services, attractions, and transportation and will grow sustainable tourism revenues and benefits. Indeed, we have heard from potential hotel investors that building a new convention centre will be key for their entry into the Yukon market. Such a facility will also lead to a range of benefits extending beyond Whitehorse to other Yukon communities through satellite events, tours, and associated business and employment opportunities. In addition to being a place for visitors to convene, it will also be a gathering place for Yukoners to hold local events and festivals.

As a government, our role is to help create infrastructure today that will help build a strong and prosperous tomorrow. The RFP package is available to industry subscribers on the merx.com platform, with hard copies for others available from the Yukon Convention Bureau. The deadline for responding to the RFP is July 14, 2023.

Our government is proud to be working in partnership with the Yukon Convention Bureau to stimulate and facilitate this important initiative. Supporting a new convention centre is a key component of my new mandate letter. I can't imagine a better partner to work with on this initiative than the team at the

Yukon Convention Bureau. Their invaluable knowledge and experience is a critical element in ensuring project success.

Ms. Van Bibber: I would like to begin by congratulating the Yukon Convention Bureau on this exciting announcement. It has been clear for some time that the Yukon is sorely in need of a new convention centre and space to host larger events. As the minister has noted, the Yukon has been turning business away over the recent months and years due to the lack of such infrastructure.

I do, however, have some questions for the minister about the Yukon government's involvement in this project. At a recent Business After Hours event, the minister announced that a convention centre was coming. That announcement was well-received but light on details. Can the minister tell us what financial contribution the Yukon government will be making to this project? I noted that it is not in the budget speech, nor is it in the five-year capital plan. The government has been quick to tell the business community that if they want to know what's coming in terms of construction, they should just look at the five-year capital plan, so it's odd that the current plan doesn't reference a convention centre.

We are also curious about a location. There was a recent request for available land for a convention centre in the fall. Can the minister tell us what the result of that process was and whether or not a site has been selected?

I would also like to ask about the ownership model of this planned convention centre. Is it the intent for the Yukon Convention Bureau to own the building, or does the Yukon government anticipate an ownership stake? What role does the minister envision for the federal government, and has this project been raised with the federal government as a funding priority?

Overall, this is an exciting announcement, but I know that many folks in the business community and the tourism industry will be paying close attention to the minister's answers to these questions. We look forward to hearing his response and we look forward to seeing the results of this RFP this summer.

Ms. Tredger: We have heard rumblings about the need for a larger convention centre for a while now, and we are very excited to hear this announcement. We are very excited about the idea of the convention centre, and we want to congratulate all the people who have been working very, very hard to get this far.

I was interested in some of the information that was in the ministerial statement and also some of the things that weren't. The minister said that the convention centre needs to double the capacity that we have currently. We know that we don't currently have capacity to put that many guests and visitors up in local hotels, and I wonder what the plan is for finding people a place to stay when they visit.

I also want to echo my colleague's calls about location. The minister has mentioned the need for this convention centre to be in a central location. I assume that means downtown, and I am wondering where in downtown a centre would be feasible. I think 5th and Rogers is already committed to residential and

commercial; although, if I'm wrong about that, please correct me. There are a number of vacant lots downtown, and I am wondering if one of those is being considered or if something has been settled on.

One of my fears is that this government is looking at the site of École Whitehorse Elementary School. I have talked many times about the need for a community school in downtown Whitehorse for the many current and future families and their children. We know that schools bring vitality to residential areas.

We certainly support the idea of a new convention centre. It would add to tourism dollars and help many service industry businesses in the shoulder seasons, but I do hope that it is not being prioritized over a downtown school. I am wondering if the minister, in his reply, could give us some details about the location — or possible locations — being considered and how they will be selected. I am hoping that he can commit to prioritizing a location for a downtown elementary school.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will answer a few of the questions right now. The Premier, in his previous role as minister, went out with an expression of interest in conjunction with the Yukon Convention Bureau to look at potential projects. There were a couple of them that made it through. One was downtown; one was up at the university.

These are all possibilities. The location will be part of the bid package. We have not been considering Whitehorse elementary; that school is still standing, so it would need to be a site where work can happen.

The ownership could be private; it could be in conjunction — that's also part of the RFP — is for the proponents to give us their business model on not only the cost of building it but also the cost of operating it over the lifetime. It is about making sure that we have enough rooms in the territory, as well. The two things go hand in hand.

So, as I have said, we've been working in collaboration with the Yukon Convention Bureau and other industry partners to help create the conditions for a new Yukon convention centre to operate successfully and sustainably.

Under the terms of the request for proposals, a diverse evaluation committee comprised of knowledgeable, local stakeholders will be established to evaluate the proposals. The evaluation process will consider location, design attributes, financial strength, and the long-term operational viability of a site provided by the proponent. Evaluation criteria will award points for strong northern experience and Yukon First Nation involvement to align with the goals of both *Our Clean Future* and the Yukon sustainable tourism framework. We are also prioritizing the high standard of energy efficiency and eco-friendly operational values and a low overall carbon footprint.

Discussions are ongoing regarding funding as well as how the facility will operate. We will continue discussing the availability of federal funding to support the project with the federal Tourism minister, Minister Boissonnault, and our MP, Brendon Hanley, both of whom have expressed strong interest in supporting these costs. By the way, of course, I have written to Minister Boissonnault, but so has my predecessor, and I'm

happy to share that correspondence together with the Yukon Convention Bureau and building proponent. We look forward to developing a future Yukon landmark and attraction.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Capital plan for schools

Mr. Kent: This year's five-year capital plan includes a page titled "Strategy for reducing the Five-Year Capital Plan". That page notes that there was an annual process for the re-evaluation of capital projects and some projects that would benefit from further planning, design development, or stakeholder engagement and may be adjusted or deferred. An example cited in the budget is the replacement of École Whitehorse Elementary School. According to the budget, that school replacement has been deferred by several years. So, can the minister explain why the replacement of this school has been delayed and what is the new timeline for construction?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: The government is investing in the Yukon's education system by building new schools and renovating existing ones so that they meet the needs of Yukon students for years to come. Yukoners will note that, in addition to new schools like the one in Whistle Bend and the replacement of the Kluane Lake School in Burwash Landing, we will continue to replace or renovate existing schools on a priority basis. École Whitehorse Elementary School is the highest priority for replacement because of the age and condition of the building, its energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and the need for significant seismic upgrades.

A new school in the future will be much more energy efficient and could see a reduction of up to 260 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year, compared to the current school. The new school is currently in the early planning phase being led by the Department of Education. The exact location of the new school on the Takhini educational land reserve has not yet been determined. Education and Highways and Public Works will be working with the First Nation School Board to determine the best plan moving forward on the site.

Mr. Kent: So, last year's five-year capital plan document showed construction beginning this year for École Whitehorse Elementary School, but the new plan shows a significant delay and that the earliest date for completion is 2028. Assuming no further delays, this means that children will not be attending the new school until the 2028-29 school year.

So, when we asked about this project in the fall, both the Education minister and the Highways and Public Works minister said that they were working closely with the project advisory committee to seek the views of the school community.

So, can the minister tell us if the project advisory committee for the replacement of this school was consulted or even notified of the significant delay in construction?

Hon. Ms. McLean: As my colleague has indicated, our government is investing in school infrastructure in our territory and École Whitehorse Elementary School has been identified for replacement. We are very excited about this project. It is a very popular program in Whitehorse. École Whitehorse

Elementary School, as folks know, was built in the 1950s. It is one of our oldest school infrastructure buildings.

In terms of how we have been working with our community, we are working with a project advisory committee. It was established in October 2022. We have been engaged with the project advisory committee, working closely with them to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas between key partners, stakeholders, and the Government of Yukon. This group meets regularly. The project timelines will be determined through further work as we undertake those discussions.

Mr. Kent: I had a specific question about whether or not the project advisory committee was notified of the timeline changes, and I didn't get a response to that specific question from the minister.

In the fall, the Minister of Highways and Public Works told this Legislature — and I quote: "... more details on the design and building location on the Takhini educational land reserve are being investigated." So, the location for the replacement of École Whitehorse Elementary School has raised some significant concerns. I am hoping that the minister can tell us if the government will use this significant delay in construction timing to reconsider the location of the new school.

Hon. Ms. McLean: The Takhini educational land reserve is a central location that can accommodate the French immersion students from around Whitehorse. Again, the Department of Education has established an advisory committee to facilitate collaboration and an exchange of ideas between key partners, stakeholders, and the Government of Yukon. This group is meeting regularly. The project timelines will be determined as we move forward.

The Takhini educational land reserve provides a central location that has better access to green space, desired for modern learning, and an initial step in the work is to identify potential locations for the future school on the Takhini educational reserve, at which point engagement with the First Nation School Board trustees as well as Softball Yukon will occur. Engagement with the broader Whitehorse community and partners will inform the long-term plan for replacing and renovating aging Whitehorse schools. That will be underway as well.

The public can definitely participate in the engagement, and we will be talking a lot more about it this week, I am sure, around what this process will look like. I am really looking forward to continuing to invest in school infrastructure in the Yukon for the future of —

Speaker: Order, please.

Question re: School replacement

Mr. Dixon: The location on the Takhini educational reserve of the replacement of École Whitehorse Elementary School has generated a fair amount of concern among several important stakeholders. The impact of dropping the largest elementary school in the Yukon in the backyard of another school will obviously have an impact. The City of Whitehorse will certainly be concerned about what this will mean for traffic on Range Road. The residents of Takhini will be losing at least

some of the greenspace, and Softball Yukon will likely lose three heavily used softball diamonds.

Has the Yukon government consulted with any of these stakeholders about the location of the replacement of EWES?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, I am very proud that our government is investing in school infrastructure. We are seeing the Whistle Bend Elementary School being built right now. That is the first new elementary school to be built in a couple of decades in our city. We are definitely a growing city — and one of the fastest growing in the country, in fact — and have a lot of demand. École Whitehorse Elementary School — yes, they provide a very popular program, the French immersion program, which is essentially bursting at its seams, and there is a lot of demand for this type of programming.

We are continuing to work with our project advisory committee to facilitate collaboration and exchange of ideas. The Takhini educational land reserve provides a great central location, as I have just stated in the previous question — access to greenspace — and our desire to create modern learning spaces. As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, we will, of course, be working with all of our partners and talking to folks who are impacted — the First Nation School Board being one and Softball Yukon being another.

Mr. Dixon: So, I will take that answer as no — that, no, the minister has not engaged with any of the stakeholder groups yet.

But I would like to turn to one in particular. Last year in the fall, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said — and I quote: “... there is awareness that Softball Yukon fields are heavily used, and that if any of the fields need to be taken up for the construction of the new Whitehorse Elementary School, we will certainly be having discussions with the executive at Softball Yukon.”

Can the minister tell us if there has been any contact at all between the Yukon government and Softball Yukon so far to seek their views? And will the minister commit today that, if any of those fields will be lost due to the construction of the new school, the Government of Yukon will ensure that they are replaced?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, this is a very prime location for the relocation of this school, École Whitehorse Elementary School. The Takhini educational land reserve provides — as I have stated a couple of times today already — a central location that has great access to greenspace and the desired type of location for modern learning spaces. Initial steps are in the works to identify the potential locations for the school on the Takhini educational reserve — are underway at this point. Engagement with the First Nation School Board and Softball Yukon are really important discussions that will occur.

We also, of course, will be working with our First Nation governments, being the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation. I am excited to be working with the project advisory committee on this. It is made up of folks who are directly involved in this school community. I look forward to continuing this work and, of course, our government is very proud that we are investing in school infrastructure.

Mr. Dixon: I note that the minister did not answer my question about replacement of the softball fields that could be lost.

The location of the new school won't just affect the Takhini neighbourhood. Last fall, we saw a petition from downtown residents who were concerned about the loss of a school in the downtown core. Many residents of the downtown core have been saying that a school is a critical aspect of the health of their community.

My question is to the Premier. Did the NDP request that a downtown school be a commitment in the confidence and supply agreement? If so, why did the Liberals not include it?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, our government is investing in Yukoners by investing in school infrastructure. In addition to the Whistle Bend school, Burwash Landing, and École Whitehorse Elementary School, we are planning for more investments in school infrastructure. It's important that we ensure that the portfolio of schools meets the demands of our growing population and provides modern learning environments for students to learn and grow for years to come.

A public engagement will start this spring, and it will inform the long-term plan for replacing and renovating aging Whitehorse schools. We want to hear from the public and the school communities to better understand their user experiences and their school facilities and how to better meet the K to 12 programming needs. Again, we will be talking a lot more about this in the days to come.

I am very excited to have this initiative underway. Mr. Speaker, we are so proud to be investing in infrastructure for our youngest Yukoners and investing in our schools. This is something that hadn't occurred. Whistle Bend is the first new school to be built in Whitehorse, and we are also investing in Burwash Landing school, which is a reconciliation project —

Speaker: Order, please.

Question re: Affordable housing and land development

Ms. White: Yukoners continue to face a housing affordability crisis. Rental units, single-family homes, condos, apartments, or mobile homes — it doesn't matter where you live; you are probably feeling the effects of the housing crunch, but no one is feeling it more than the nearly 400 Yukoners on the wait-list for Yukon Housing Corporation or the 150 seniors on that same list. These hundreds of Yukoners are waiting for affordable housing, yet this government continues to sell off public land for private development. Yukoners have expressed concerns about the selling off of the Macaulay Lodge site for condos and commercial space instead of affordable rental housing.

Will the Premier listen to them and pause the sale of the Macaulay Lodge lots and go back to the drawing board to ensure that this lot will have affordable rental units?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will start by saying that I don't believe that there is just one approach that is going to work to take on the challenges of the growth that we have seen. I think that it will be very important that we work with the private sector. I think that it is very important that we work with non-

governmental organizations, and I think that it is very important that we support the work of the Yukon Housing Corporation. So, we will do that; we will have a diverse set of strategies that we put into place.

With Macaulay Lodge now, it is clear that this government will be seeking a private sector partner to purchase and develop the property. That does not mean that the accommodation that would be built by the private sector would not be suitable to alleviate some of the pressures that we are seeing. Ultimately, what we intend to do is provide a mix of commercial and residential spaces. Affordable housing will be an important part of this development. We are currently working with the city to have the zoning changed to comprehensive neighbourhood commercial. This zoning allows for a higher density, multi-family development, as well as commercial use on the main floor — making the most use of that land. Once the zoning is in place, we plan to tender the lot in the summer of 2023.

I believe that this is a comprehensive approach. We are taking into consideration the wants and needs of the residents of Riverdale and maximizing the use of the land. I look forward to question 2.

Ms. White: I would just remind the Premier that there are more than 400 Yukoners on that Yukon Housing Corporation wait-list.

So, we know that working with the private sector is important, but the responsibility to provide social housing cannot be carried by the private sector alone. To combat the growing wait-list at Yukon Housing Corporation, this government's approach has been to kick people off the list and tighten eligibility criteria. At the same time, this government is also selling off some of the only available public land within the City of Whitehorse to build condos and storefronts.

The thing about public land in Whitehorse is that there is only so much of it. Once it's gone, it will be very expensive to get it back. Public land should be kept public and used for the benefit of all Yukoners, not sold off for a profit. Why doesn't the Premier think it's important to build affordable public housing on the old Macaulay Lodge site?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think it's important that I clarify a few points that were made that were absolutely inaccurate. Our goal is not to sell off public lands for profit; it's about making sure that we help the private sector thrive and it's about making sure that we have the right partnerships in place. So, that's the first thing.

The second thing is that we are not kicking anybody off the wait-list. The criteria for Yukon Housing are very clear. We go out to individuals who are potentially going to be our clients. One of the things that they have to do is provide in that their notice of assessment. That has been the standard for many, many years. Individuals then put that in place, and that gives us a sense of where they are in a financial position, because they want us to use taxpayers' dollars to help support them in their ability to get proper housing. I would say again that this is important.

The third — I just want to flag that the House has the right information. There was a number that was stated by the member opposite. I wasn't exactly sure — and maybe it can

come back — but I think that it is not an accurate number concerning our wait-list. Maybe on the third question, that number can be put out and I can provide my most up-to-date number, which I got this morning.

Again, we understand that it is important to be supporting a number of individuals, and that is what we want to do with these lands. I look forward to question 3.

Ms. White: We are using the most recent number that we have. Not being government, maybe the minister can tell us how many people are on that Yukon Housing wait-list.

Social housing is an essential part of the housing continuum and is necessary to maintain a vibrant and just community. The 2022 report of the Auditor General of Canada on Yukon Housing found that the Yukon Housing Corporation — and I quote: "... did not provide Yukoners with the greatest housing needs, including those who are homeless, with adequate and affordable housing." The Premier has been clear that he prefers to leave housing to the private sector, but as Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, he also has a duty to provide safe, affordable housing for low-income Yukoners.

What measures will be put in place to ensure that any new development on the site of Macaulay Lodge will actually lead to affordable rentals?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The numbers that I have for March 9 — I believe we are at 250 individuals on the wait-list, not 400, so I want to state that for the record. That is the most up-to-date number I have.

You would see a very significant ability for us to meet the demands of Yukoners over the last number of years. You are also seeing record investment in partnership — in some cases, with First Nation development corporations. We are also meeting the needs with our partnerships with the private sector, both in our communities and here in Whitehorse. It is going to be a diverse set of strategies that will go into place. We believe that the private sector is going to be a key part of this.

That is not the only thing we are doing. We are building — ourselves — with NGOs and we are building with organizations such as the Council of Yukon First Nations. We are looking for all of the appropriate partnerships that are going to help us deal with what is a complex set of challenges.

I would think that the member opposite would want us to use all of the possible avenues available to us to ensure that all Yukoners have a safe and good place to call home.

Question re: Mining sector greenhouse gas emissions

Ms. Tredger: We already know that this government has decided to create intensity-based emissions targets for the mining industry, instead of absolute emissions targets like the rest of the territory has. The government is okay with big polluters measuring how efficiently they pollute as opposed to how much they pollute. But, to add insult to injury, the government has now missed its own deadline to implement mining intensity emissions standards; so much for the climate emergency.

This government is letting the territory's biggest polluters off easy, while everyday Yukoners are being asked to do more to protect our climate. When will mining companies be required to do their fair share in reducing emissions, and will their progress be made publicly available?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We have been working to get mining intensity targets out. They are an important part of *Our Clean Future*. They are an important part of the overall strategy. I had ongoing meetings with the industry when I was at Roundup this past January. We are very close now to putting out the mining intensity targets. I just have a little bit more work to do in working with the industry to make sure that we are all on the same page.

I will say that, in my work with the industry, they understand that we need to get off of fossil fuels. It's not that it is an easy transition; that's a hard thing to do, but they agree with the overall sustainability of the Yukon and of Canada and of the industry itself — that we need to make this transition.

So, we will work with them. I will get those targets out shortly. We finished the engagement last fall and there is a "what we heard" document coming out shortly, and we will publish the targets in short order. I am happy to talk about this important initiative for Yukoners.

Ms. Tredger: I am glad to hear that the targets are close, but I'm not reassured, because Yukoners know that this government has a history of giving mining companies a free pass. From backing down on Minto's increased security payments to their unwillingness to protect wetlands, it is the same story over and over again. Yukoners are concerned about how this government is dragging its feet on addressing the environmental damage and climate impacts of the territory's mining industries.

Yukoners want to know: How will the minister make sure that mining emissions targets are met every year, and what penalties will be put in place if they are not?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just want to start by saying that, if the mining industry were here, I'm not sure that they would say that I have been easy on them. I think that they would suggest that I have been working very hard to help them make this transition; it is a not an easy transition. We will work diligently with the industry. We always publish greenhouse gas emissions — I think that we do annual updates on *Our Clean Future* — to make them publicly known. So, of course, we will talk about how this sector is doing and how that progress is being made. The interim target that we engaged with the industry on was for an interim target of 2035, with the ultimate target of 2050 being net zero.

So, will we publish information in the interim? Of course.

Are we looking at sticks to get there? No, I think that we already have a lot of tools in our tool belt. What I think we should work with are more carrots — how to help the industry to get there — and I will happily work with the industry in making that energy transition.

Ms. Tredger: Here is what I heard: The rest of the territory meets their targets by 2030, mining companies by 2035, and there will be, apparently, no enforcement. Some people have suggested that the government is backing down as

a result of vigorous lobbying efforts by mining companies. So, I had a look at the lobbyist registry. There are only three mining companies listed and some notable absences. Hecla — not there. BMC — not on the list. Minto — not on the list. The minister is always telling us how closely he works with industry partners, so it's hard to believe he is not in regular contact with some of the biggest mining players of the territory. So, what is going on behind closed doors that Yukoners don't get to hear about, and how is it affecting the emissions targets?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just to qualify here — a little bit of information that it sounds like the member opposite might not be aware of — facilities that emit between 10 and 50 kilotonnes of CO₂ each year can voluntarily register for the OBPS, and registration is mandatory for facilities over 50 kilotonnes. So, currently there is only one facility in all of Yukon that is actually registered in the OBPS in the Yukon. Some facilities could volunteer to register, as I said, and some may require registration for their emissions based upon their thresholds.

So, again, to characterize this as if we're somehow giving the mining industry a pass is very conveniently forgetting that we do have a carbon-pricing mechanism set up for most mining already, and this is just the qualification for those companies, both present and also on the horizon, as the member opposite mentions — Hecla, but a mining company like Minto just wouldn't register in these sizes.

Question re: *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* implementation

Ms. Clarke: Last week, I asked the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate about a request from the Yukon Women's Coalition for increased core funding. The minister did note that federal funding under the bilateral agreement for the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* is under negotiation and would be reflected in a future budget, but the minister did not answer my question about core funding. So, would the minister use the 2023-24 budget to provide additional core funding to the eight women's organizations that requested it in their February 28 letter?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, Yukon was very proud to endorse the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* at the 40th annual FPT meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women in November 2022. As I stated last week, bilateral negotiations with Canada are underway to determine details of the funding agreement, including territorial priorities for investment, especially those that align with Yukon's MMIWG strategy. We look forward to working in partnership with the Government of Canada in preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Certainly, as I stated last week, I hold our equality-seeking organizations in very high regard. I intend to work with them to determine their needs and to continue the conversations that I have been having with them. I look forward to seeing these new resources really coming to the Yukon, as they are across Canada. This is new funding — funding that we have not historically seen to work toward ending gender-based violence in the nation.

Ms. Clarke: We have heard from several of these organizations that they feel that the minister is quick to use the organizations for declarations and promises but has been slow to respond to actual requests for funding and action.

Here is what the group said in the letter, and I quote: “We struggle with squaring Yukon Government’s declarations to address and mitigate gender-based violence in our territory while your funding decisions reflect the opposite.”

So, when will the minister provide adequate core funding to the eight groups that have requested it?

Hon. Ms. McLean: We are very grateful for the work that the equality-seeking organizations do in the Yukon to reduce gender-based violence and build safer communities. This fiscal year, equality-seeking organizations are receiving a total of \$2,190,000 from the Women and Gender Equity Directorate in operation and project funding. A great deal of programming is offered through this funding, and it ranges from drop-in meals, peer support, violence-prevention projects, women advocacy support, legal system navigation programs for residents of the Whitehorse affordable housing complex, programming for 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners, and implementation of Yukon’s MMIWG strategy.

We continue to respond and recover from the pandemic. We know that women were disproportionately impacted by the global pandemic. As I stated last week, I was happy to be meeting with the equality-seeking groups and will continue to do so as we work toward establishing a bilateral agreement with Canada on new funding for the national action plan.

Ms. Clarke: Last week, the minister also committed to working closely with women’s organizations with respect to implementing the national action plan, but she did not answer my specific question about whether the Yukon government would create a formal working relationship in the form of a memorandum of understanding to allow these groups to participate in the rollout of the funding that will come to Yukon to implement the national action plan.

So, will the minister commit to a formal relationship with these groups to include them as decision-makers on prioritizing how the federal funding rolls out?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I am very happy to be working with Canada and all of the other provinces and territories on the national action plan. We worked very hard to get to where we are in terms of a declaration to end gender-based violence in our country and to establish a national action plan — the first of its kind. It’s historic, Mr. Speaker. It was a very emotional day for us to all sign on to that.

Bilateral negotiations between Canada and Yukon are underway to establish a funding agreement. Again, these are bilateral negotiations that will include territorial priorities for investment to end gender-based violence in our territory and to work alongside all of our colleagues across the country to meet the goals of the national action plan. New funding that we are talking about here, Mr. Speaker — I will continue to work with our equality-seeking groups to ensure that priorities that they put forward in the work for the national action plan are met.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Government House Leader’s report on length of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 75(4) to inform the House that the House Leaders have met for the purpose of achieving agreement on the maximum number of sitting days for the current Sitting. I am informing the House that the results are that there shall be a maximum of 32 sitting days, with the 32nd sitting day being Thursday, April 27, 2023.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare that the current Sitting shall be a maximum of 32 sitting days, with the 32nd sitting day being Thursday, April 27, 2023.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Speaker: We are now prepared to receive the Administrator of Yukon to grant assent to the bills that have passed this House.

Administrator Webber enters the Chamber announced by the Sergeant-at-Arms

ASSENT TO BILLS

Administrator: Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Administrator, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed a certain bill to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2023-24.*

Administrator: I hereby assent to the bill as enumerated by the Clerk.

Administrator leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Department of Community Services

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Deputy Chair and honourable members of the Assembly. I have with us this afternoon officials from the Department of Community Services — John McGovern, our finance wizard, and Matt King, our deputy minister — to help us out this afternoon. Thank you both for being here.

I am pleased to present the Department of Community Services *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* for 2022-23, totalling \$2.49 million in operation and maintenance expenditures. The community operations branch oversees vital water delivery and waste-water education services, as well as solid-waste management, in unincorporated communities across the Yukon. As with everything else, costs to deliver these services have increased. Increased costs associated with labour and material shortages have been a challenge in many sectors, including water, waste-water and solid-waste management. The additional budget we have identified keeps these services going with a focus on sustainable and local service delivery, community capacity building, and providing contractor opportunities.

We are requesting \$1.43 million to cover additional expenses incurred: to operate unincorporated solid-waste management facilities; for new or expanded sewage lagoon operations in Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, and Ross River; for year-round water delivery in the communities of Old Crow, Carcross, and Ross River; and for a new water treatment plant at Judas Creek to serve residents south of Whitehorse. This funding will also help offset the cost of flood impacts of the Dawson waste-water treatment plant this past summer when that community was dealing with the extreme water conditions that challenged so many of us this past flood season.

Deputy Chair, we are requesting \$754,000 that will provide one-time funding to the City of Whitehorse to offset their transit operational shortfalls. Among COVID-19's many impacts last year was the significant decrease in ridership on city buses. We were pleased to provide this support to the municipality and note that this figure is 50-percent recoverable from the federal government.

Last year's fire season tested communities, contractors, and crews, first with an early start to the flood season in communities around the territory. It was, in fact, one of the worst flood seasons on record, but it was also followed by a hot July that brought unprecedented lightning strikes and 136 fire starts in late June and early July. Staff in every fire management

region faced up to six weeks of flood response, wildfires, evacuation alerts, and critical infrastructure disruptions. This work is carried out through the partnership with our Wildland Fire Management staff, Yukon First Nations Wildfire, and contracts with other First Nations across the territory. The Yukon First Nations Wildfire crew conducted prevention and mitigation work around Whitehorse. The crew was also deployed to flooding instances in Teslin, Ross River, and Carmacks and worked alongside Wildland Fire Management and imported crews on wildfires in Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, and Mayo.

Wildland Fire Management and the Yukon First Nations Wildfire have a three-year agreement to provide a 20-person unit crew. This agreement reflects the positive working relationship between the Wildland Fire Management branch and their First Nation partners. This agreement provides guaranteed work each season through which the Yukon First Nations Wildfire unit crew conducts community-resiliency-type projects, including firesmarting, fuel breaks, thinning, and other projects.

I am requesting an increase of \$300,000 in this supplementary budget for the First Nation Firesmart projects. This funding will come from the federal emergency management assistance program. It is 100-percent recoverable from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Northern Affairs Canada's emergency management assistance program. This funding is specifically for First Nations to use for wildfire-hazard-reduction projects.

I am now going to turn to capital. The Department of Community Services was approved for just over \$116 million in capital in the 2022-23 budget. We have identified \$10.1 million in reductions in that budget to better reflect the cost of our land and infrastructure program for this year.

Yukon government-, municipal government-, and First Nation government-led projects have faced delays this past year. The reasons for these delays include long lead times in procuring building supplies and shortages in the labour market. To better reflect this reality and the pace of anticipated spending, the Infrastructure Development branch will defer \$6.7 million in spending to future years. We are working with every municipality and many First Nations to advance land development projects from the feasibility stage to the planning stage to the construction stage. A few rural land development projects originally scheduled for this fiscal year did not progress to construction, requiring us to adjust the budget down by \$3.4 million and defer to a future year. As we move into the next fiscal year, we will continue to maximize work in land development across the Yukon and will work within the land development budget envelope to maintain progress.

Our government remains committed to the delivery of sustainable infrastructure and development of lots in the territory. Thus far, in the 2022-23 fiscal year, we have seen completion of projects such as the White River community centre, Faro fire hall, Carmacks arena, and the Watson Lake public works facility. I am also pleased to note that construction on more than 200 lots in rural Yukon and in Whistle Bend has been substantially completed or will be finalized early this

season as we stay on track to meet our lot development goals for Yukoners. I'm going to end it there, Deputy Chair, and I open the floor up to questions.

Ms. McLeod: I want to, first of all, thank the officials for joining us here today. The minister made reference to \$754,000 allocated to the City of Whitehorse to help them cover funding because of reduced ridership during the COVID pandemic. So, can the minister tell us what the status is of the requests from all those other Yukon communities with regard to their requests for funding to cover their losses?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are working very closely with the Association of Yukon Communities on many mutual priorities, including the resolutions they passed in May 2022. I was just at the AYC quarterly meeting a few weeks ago. We had a very good meeting with the Premier in attendance, and I was gladdened to hear how generally happy — I guess, is a way to put it — AYC was at that meeting. There were very few questions.

Last fall, we worked with the Association of Yukon Communities to launch a public engagement process on terms of office for elected officials in municipalities and local advisory councils. This engagement identified that a majority support increasing terms to three to four years. We will be debating that here on the floor of the Legislature in the next couple of weeks. That is really incredible progress made by the Department of Community Services, the stats branch, and others that I have mentioned in the House before — how quickly we were able to get that done. We were happy to do it because we know how important it was to AYC.

Three resolutions were voted on and passed unanimously at the 47th annual general meeting of the Association of Yukon Communities on May 14. They called on the government to mandate the Yukon Energy Corporation to change their rate policy to charge municipalities an actual utility rate and discontinue demand charges. They wanted the term of office for municipal councils in organized communities raised to four years in the next general election, which, as I just mentioned, we are happy to do and we have done it in record time. They wanted us to work with the Association of Yukon Communities on an engagement process with Yukon citizens to seek their input on this change. We did that, of course; that is how we got the bill here before us in the House. They wanted us to consult with municipalities on an appropriate financial relief program to offset increased costs and lost revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Energy, Mines and Resources minister responded to the Association of Yukon Communities on June 20, noting that the Yukon rate design model has three groups: residential, general service, and industrial. Municipalities are classified as general service. General service rates are consistently applied to all commercial buildings and charged demand energy charges and applicable rate riders at the time, based on the amount of electricity required by the building.

He also provided options such as energy incentive programs, disconnect seasonal buildings, and to contact the power provider to discuss options. We remain open to discussing COVID-19 financial relief with the Association of

Yukon Communities. Although no substantial new information has been provided by municipalities recently, we are asking municipalities to work to justify COVID relief funding. We did give \$4.35 million in COVID restart funding in 2021. Half of that money was provided by the federal government and half by the Yukon government. This funding also included \$500,000 to support transit shortfalls for Whitehorse, which, of course, we are talking about this afternoon. The restart funding was intended to address revenue shortfalls, to manage operational changes and challenges, and to improve their technology during the pandemic. An additional \$754,000 went to Whitehorse in 2022 to support transit shortfalls; half was provided by the Yukon government and half by the federal government. We are talking about that this afternoon.

We are also investing in Yukon municipalities in many ways, from assistance for infrastructure projects, land development, disaster relief grants, and municipal financial transfers. The range in value of investments is substantial and helps municipalities to manage many pressures that they face in the delivery of service to their citizens.

Ms. McLeod: So, I guess the short answer to that was that the minister has nothing new to report, because I believe that this idea of municipalities having to prove that they suffered some losses has been — it has been on the table for quite some time now, and if I understand the minister correctly, there has been no movement on that — if he could just confirm.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I guess what I am reporting this afternoon, Deputy Chair, is that the municipalities have provided no new information. So, there has been no new information provided by municipalities to our request, and we await that information.

Ms. McLeod: I have a couple of questions about the revote, and one of those revotes, I think, is fairly self-explanatory — the \$3.4 million that is not going to be spent on rural residential development. If the minister has some information on which communities that is going to affect, I would appreciate that. But I want to move on to the other part of that revote, which was scaled decreases to project envelopes based on historical spending patterns, and that is \$4.93 million — if the minister could give us more information on how he got to that position, I guess, to scale back at that rate.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: To the Member for Watson Lake, she is talking about capital, I believe, and how we have downgraded the budget this year. I will just go through a few examples.

The Investing in Canada infrastructure program, for example, is being reduced this year by \$6.2 million. Some of the projects that have been delayed are: Dawson north end, \$100,000, is a transfer payment agreement that we have with Dawson City, and they weren't ready to proceed, so that \$100,000 lapsed; the Whitehorse transit station hub, which is another project; Whitehorse services building, which is another agreement with Whitehorse that they haven't advanced, so that money is lapsing and moving forward; Whitehorse city hall energy upgrade, which is over half a million dollars pushed again; \$1.5 million from various smaller projects in Whitehorse; and \$3.3 million due to claims not being received

on time, which is \$2.6 million for the Whitehorse asphalt overlay and \$700,000 from the Whitehorse downtown reconstruction. In land development, we have a couple of projects deferred to future years; \$3 million of that land development money comes from Watson Lake — the Frances Avenue, which was hoped to get done last year, is not happening to this year, so that is not going to flow to this year; and there is some work in Dawson; and about \$425,000 from lower than anticipated land purchases in Carmacks, Dawson City, and Whitehorse — that was land that just didn't go, so we have deferred that money as well. That is where it's coming down to.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the minister for his responses today and those are all of my questions.

Mr. Istchenko: I just have a couple of quick questions for the minister. As we know, the Yukon government and Hecla Mining Company have an agreement to manage solid waste in Keno. They have been providing that door-to-door pickup since December 8, I believe, of last year. I am just wondering if there is a plan for the garbage that is going to come with all the tourists who come this year.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said before — and will repeat again, because I have been given a great opportunity on this platform to do so — we are working toward a modern vision for solid-waste management in Yukon. It addresses many long-standing challenges in this sector while ensuring sustainable access to waste-disposal services for all Yukoners. The department is modernizing facilities across the territory to reduce operational and environmental risks. We are investing in regional agreements with our municipal partners by investing in the facilities themselves.

There are certain transfer stations where the necessary upgrades and operating costs to meet these new standards are prohibitive. Keno is one of those places where the investments discussed earlier are not reasonable, given the remote locations and small number of users. We are closing the transfer station and adapting to a more sustainable solution, and we are committed to working with residents in these locations to design reasonable solutions and to ensure a positive transition to the new service levels.

I am not entirely sure where the member opposite sits on this issue. I have been very clear on this issue — that I want to make sure that our waste management is sustainable in this territory. It wasn't on the trajectory in the past, and we are trying to bring it to a more sustainable model. That means that we are going to have dumps that are supervised and controlled. Those that are not supervised and controlled are going to close. We are going to get the waste that we generate as a society — and there's way too much of it — into a controlled setting so that our management systems are better, they are more robust, and we are not getting noxious chemicals and waste oils and paints into the environment as readily. Producers of garbage will pay a small fee — a portion of the cost of disposing of that garbage into the future. I think this is the way that it is done in most of the country — if not all the country — with few exceptions like us, and we are changing that.

Now, as far as Keno goes, which is where the member opposite is asking his questions, I really want to thank the mining company in Keno, Hecla, for stepping up and actually helping with this issue and providing a community service to the community that they operate in for residents and getting that garbage from Keno and the Keno residents to waste facilities. We are working with Mayo to get their dump upgraded so they can actually take some of the waste from Keno into their facility there. I'm sure that will be a vast improvement over the way it's done now, but the mining company stepped up and did this for Keno residents. Community Services provided garbage handling bins, and we have actually provided a few extras so that places like the campground will have some waste bins as well that can be used for collection, and then the mining company has assumed the responsibility for making sure the waste that is collected gets to the dump and is dealt with appropriately when it gets there. So, we really do appreciate that good citizenship on the part of the mining company, and we really do think we have found a great solution for the residents of Keno on this issue that they were very passionate about.

Mr. Istchenko: One more question about rural dumps — and I would be remiss for not thanking the staff here today for all their hard work. I do want to thank the staff. Actually, where I'm going with this question on Champagne — I went to a meeting there regarding the dump and we were given some updates on it. One of the things that they updated was — one of the minister's opening remarks on increased funding — I'm just wondering. They are being told that there is going to be a compacter put in at the Champagne dump, which, I believe, is a good thing because they won't have as much of the traffic hauling back and forth to where their garbage goes, to Whitehorse. So, I'm just wondering if there are any other rural dumps that will be getting a compacter also.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question this afternoon. This is a fairly specific supplementary budget with very few line items. We will be discussing, of course, again, when we get to the mains in fairly short order — I encourage the member opposite to bring that question forward in that debate. My officials have said that they will look into it and get back with more information. It would be a great opportunity to discuss that at that time.

Mr. Istchenko: I would hope that the minister will have an answer then, so I will cede the floor to whoever else wants to ask questions.

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

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

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

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

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

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,488,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures underexpenditure in the amount of \$10,136,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures underexpenditure in the amount of \$7,648,000 agreed to

Department of Community Services agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Department of Justice

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: First of all, I would like to take an opportunity to welcome Mark Radke, the new deputy minister for the Department of Justice. With us today is Navneet Nijhar, who is acting director of our financial branch at the Department of Justice. Thank you very much to both of you for joining me. I know you will get a great reception from my colleagues here. I think this is both Mark and Nav's first time in the Legislative Assembly to assist with anything, really, but certainly to assist with budget debate. I appreciate their attendance. Welcome.

I will just take a moment, Deputy Chair, to note what is in this Justice supplementary budget for 2022-23. This is supplementary budget no. 2, and I am pleased to be able to speak to it today. There are a number of expenditures that are offset by full recoveries from the Government of Canada, and I will highlight these as I go through.

Throughout this fiscal year, the department has continued to work diligently toward a justice system that is responsive to the needs of all Yukoners in a fiscally responsible manner.

Through the strategic investments in our future, we continue to build healthy, vibrant, safe, and sustainable Yukon communities; it is our goal.

The supplementary budget that I present enables the department to continue to offer certain programs and support initiatives that meet those objectives. I will speak to the program budget first. In this supplementary budget, the Department of Justice has allocated an increase of \$22,000 for the community safety officer program. My colleagues and most Yukoners will be familiar with that program. The increase of \$22,000 is the full additional funding requirement for 2022-23. For both the First Nation government programs — the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Selkirk First Nation — it represents a total cost-shared amount with the Government of Canada through the federal First Nations and Inuit Policing Program. The increase is 52-percent recoverable from Canada.

We have funding in this budget for the Integrated Restorative Justice unit. In January 2023, the Government of Yukon approved an extension of the integrated restorative justice pilot project, which will now go until March 2025. This includes an increase in the funding of \$149,000 for the 2022-23 budget. This increase is for salary dollars for both the Integrated Restorative Justice unit, for a total of \$84,000, as well as the Negotiations, Collaborations and Partnership unit has an increase there. These increases will support the Government of Yukon's pilot project to advance and increase restorative justice practices in the Yukon. It is an integrated unit, so it is integrating both youth and adult justice initiatives there.

We are pleased to have earmarked funds for legal aid through the Yukon Legal Services Society, recognizing the importance of those services provided by legal aid to Yukoners. We remain committed to ensuring that the society has sufficient resources to discharge its mandate, having increased their funding each year since we have been in government. As per a new access to justice agreement, an increase of \$240,000 has been earmarked for legal aid. This funding is recoverable from Canada.

There is a one-time increase of \$100,000 allocated to outside legal services, particularly related to a case challenging the government's actions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to speak today to a \$175,000 increase earmarked for Gladue report writing. In late 2021, the Government of Yukon approved two-year funding to the Council of Yukon First Nations for a Gladue report-writing program. This project is administered by CYFN and supports the preparation of Gladue reports as well as the important training of new report writers, program evaluation, and program administration. There's a \$175,000 increase in this supplemental budget for that program and it is 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

I can note that there is funding in this supplemental budget for Indigenous courtworkers to support the important work that they do. There is an increase of \$34,000 earmarked for a three-day in-person training event in Whitehorse that will be hosted by the Integrated Restorative Justice unit. That training brought together courtworkers and participants in Crown and

legal aid, Yukon Justice workers, and RCMP program experts. That increase was 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

Secondly, the Integrated Restorative Justice unit did training for nine of the 12 Yukon Indigenous courtworkers in November and December of last year. The total budget for that was \$21,000. The Integrated Restorative Justice unit also received \$22,000 in funding from the Government of Canada for fiscal year 2022-23 to explore the concept and development of a framework for a Yukon Indigenous family courtworker program and the expansion of that.

With respect to community supervised housing in the territory, the Government of Yukon has earmarked an increase of \$347,000 for supervised housing for justice-involved men, which is also known as the “SHARP” program — a supervised housing and reintegration program.

This funding will continue to support Connective, which is the contractor to run that program with their operations in providing the important service, and we have an increase of \$89,000 for this particular budget — the supplementary one for 2022-23 — that is allocated to a supervised housing pilot program for justice-involved women, with a budget of \$740,000 per year. The newly launched service is provided by Connective. I look forward to answering questions about the integration of that very important program here in the territory.

We have also allocated \$250,000 as an increase in time-limited funding for the Community Wellness Court and the Justice Wellness Centre — 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada’s drug treatment funding program, which is in its fifth and final year, but we expect it to be continued. That funding provided a second full-time probation officer case manager and the full-time clinical counsellor at the Justice Wellness Centre, totalling \$220,000. This funding agreement is in place, as I said, until the end of this month, but we anticipate continued work with the federal government on those important initiatives.

The sexualized assault response team, also known as “SART”, was officially launched, as most of us and Yukoners will know, back in March 2020. Our government is committed to expanding the services of SART to Yukon communities beyond Whitehorse. In order to expand services in that way, we are planning engagement for the spring and summer for First Nation governments, Indigenous women, organization service providers, and people with lived experience, including victims of previous sexual assault, and how we can better provide those services. As such, we have earmarked an increase of \$125,000 for SART, which will support the engagement work to be done.

We have allocated an increase of \$428,000 to the territorial police service budget for RCMP resources, which represents our commitment to ensure that our territorial police service is adequately resourced for the important work that the RCMP does in Yukon communities. This includes a one-time investment of \$82,000 and then ongoing funding of \$346,000, as we work with the Yukon’s RCMP to address funding pressures in a manner that is both sufficient to support effective service delivery and is sustainable in terms of growth. We have taken a measured and incremental approach to increasing our territory’s funding for policing and a true partnership with the

RCMP. This supplemental increase of \$428,000 includes a number of initiatives for the RCMP and the work that they do. If there are questions on that detail, I am happy to provide it. The RCMP’s most recent quarterly variance projects the work that they are doing through 2022-23 and onward.

Lastly, I would like to note that there is an increase of \$77,000 for the gun and gang violence program, which comes with a carry-forward amount of unspent funds from 2021-22. This funding is, again, 100-percent recoverable from the Government of Canada. The gun and gang violence action fund has been an important addition to the Yukon government’s programming, and we can speak more about that if need be. The purpose of that funding is to support police services and other organizations to prevent, disrupt, and combat gun and gang violence and increase awareness and understanding of the related issues. I think we are all acutely aware that there has been increased activity in the Yukon with respect to that, and the responses that are available with that funding are truly important.

Lastly, I should note that, in the capital supplementary budget, we have earmarked here an increase of \$185,000 for the morgue and the coroner’s office. The Department of Justice is working to provide appropriate office and morgue space for our Yukon coroner. This has not been addressed in many, many years and is inadequate. Of course, the Coroner’s Service is currently in a separate building from the morgue. I shouldn’t say “of course”, but they are in a separate building from the morgue, and it is important that we work together to make sure that there is an appropriate space available for that important work and to respond to the needs of Yukon families.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has worked on this budget. It contributes to ensuring that the justice system is administered for the benefit of Yukoners. Lastly, thank you to the Department of Justice staff, not only for their dedicated work in the programming going forward, but for working to make sure that these numbers come to the Legislative Assembly in a format that is digestible and supportive of the work that is before this Legislative Assembly. Deputy Chair, I look forward to answering questions — if there are some — about this supplementary budget.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to welcome the officials here as well as congratulate Mark Radke on his appointment as Deputy Minister of Justice. I do have a few questions for the minister in follow-up to the numbers she provided in her speech. We had understood from the briefing with officials, as well as from the minister’s remarks here this afternoon, that there is funding included under Community Justice and Public Safety for the RCMP. From officials at the briefing, we understood those matters to be related to one-time increases such as salary, body armour, and standby pay. What I would ask for now is if the minister can provide us with more of a breakdown on what that funding picture relates to — a breakdown of that total amount and what exactly those main individual items are that it provides to the RCMP.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The supplemental increase, which I understand to be asked about, for the RCMP funding includes the following: There is \$106,000 in ongoing funds to cover

salary increases for commissioned officers which are already in effect but not yet reflected in the RCMP's operating budget; there is a one-time amount of \$82,000, which is an investment in hard body armour for regular members as part of the RCMP's nationally mandated equipment and modernization initiative, so the federal government has certain requirements, of course, for the police service that provides service in the territory; there is an inflationary offset of approximately \$91,000 in ongoing funding to offset the cost increases in fuel services and utilities that have occurred in the past number of years; and \$149,000 in ongoing funding to reflect increased costs for RCMP standby pay, which is a critical component of our police service's ability to maintain 24/7 service delivery, particularly in our small community detachments. Those are the total amounts in this supplementary budget for RCMP.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Deputy Chair. I appreciate that breakdown.

One area, as the minister will be aware — the RCMP does at times face challenges in filling some vacancies, including within rural communities. I had some concerns expressed to me by people in one of our rural communities this summer about the impact of turnover and vacancies in those areas.

Does the minister have information on what vacancies the RCMP has experienced over the previous year and where they currently have vacancies within the Yukon structure, particularly as it relates to Yukon communities?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The question is about RCMP vacancies and the challenges that they can present. Certainly, it is a topic of conversation that I have had with senior officials — as have our department officials on occasion had that conversation.

At this stage of COVID — which has always been a factor in the last number of years because individual officers were not necessarily able to move jurisdictions or transfer as they had in the plans for how officers would be stationed or designated to certain locations. But that seems to have settled down a bit. There is a lot of catch-up to do. My recollection from my most recent conversation with officials with the RCMP here in Whitehorse is that their vacancy rate was quite low and they were quite pleased with the number of officers and members who had signed up for positions here in the territory and that they were able to keep their numbers quite well.

I should also note that there is a team of designated officers who are used to fill vacancies if somebody needs to be away on training or away on vacation and those kinds of things that would leave a position vacant. There is a designated team of individuals who are assigned to go to those communities to fill those spots from time to time. I know that this is still an important part of the operation of the RCMP. I don't have specific numbers if the member is interested in those.

Mr. Cathers: I look forward to receiving more information later. Of course, we continue to be very concerned about the impact of the increase in organized crime, particularly that associated with the drug trade. As RCMP officers indicated publicly last summer, it was even associated, in some cases, with human trafficking as well. We are very concerned about

that, and we will be asking more questions in the future, especially as we get into debate on the mains.

I want to touch on an area that the minister spoke to, as it related to outside legal costs pertaining to the case referred to as "Mercer et al." in the budgetary documents. The total increase reflected in the supplementary budget was an increase of \$100,000 for those outside counsel contracts. My question for the minister is: How much has the government spent to date on outside counsel related to the Mercer et al. court case?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I can indicate that the legal counsel for the Yukon government with respect to this matter is a law firm known as Arvay Finlay LLP. To date, we have spent \$236,272 with respect to those legal fees to date. The case began in 2020. There is also a legal contract with McCarthy, which is the official name of the firm. That amount for document production is \$844,750 to date, for a total of a little over \$1 million to date with respect to these two contracts to support that legal case.

Mr. Cathers: Could the minister please indicate — she made reference to the \$347,000 for community supervised housing, both for justice-involved women and for justice-involved men. Could the minister please indicate what services are provided under this respectively for women and for men? How many clients do they have the capacity to serve and what does that supervision look like?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The supervised housing for justice-involved men is a program development that may be known to the member opposite — previously called the "ARC", which stood for the "adult residential centre" which, years ago now, was run by the Salvation Army to provide a supervised housing component for men who were involved with the criminal justice system and who might otherwise be held in custody. Our government supports the non-custodial but supervised housing that enables justice-involved individuals to either gradually reintegrate into their community or remain supervised in the community while their matters are proceeding through the court system. Connective has been operating the supervised housing and reintegration program for men who are justice-involved since May 2020, and they have provided services to 97 bail and probation clients and to 12 federal parole clients. So, individuals who are on parole might reside at the centre as well.

The men's supervised housing program provides structured support and a home environment for men transitioning from corrections or, as I have said, awaiting their matters as they proceed through the courts. The residents receive in-person support and person-centred supports and programming based on individual needs of those individuals and their goals. Programming options include criminogenic programming, employment support and education, Indigenous-focused programming, homeless prevention programs, reintegration services, community living services, peer support, inclusive community drop-in centres, and food security support. Additional programming and referrals are completed based on an individual client's needs.

The supervised housing program is operating for men and is co-located, yet with a separate area of entry and exit at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre building, and it is a separate

exit off to the side for the purposes of allowing individuals to come and go from that location. I think it's important to know that supervision is 24 hours a day and that the men's programming is at that location.

With respect to the program and the pilot program for justice-involved women, in February of this year, we officially announced the opening of the supervised housing program for women. It is located in what's known as the "Takhini Haven" building, 25 University Drive in Whitehorse — again, just off to the side of the location on the road that goes up to Yukon University but near the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. We signed a transfer payment agreement back in December 2022 with Connective to provide the supervised women's housing program. It will provide, again, an alternative to custody and support women's access services through the Yukon's treatment courts. It is the first program of its kind in the north.

I will take a moment to say that I am personally very proud of the development of this program. I worked in the court system for many years, and it was always a gap — that there were no such services for women. The program will support reintegration of women into their communities and the safety of women in their residence 24/7 — again, supervised — while they proceed through the court system or are reintegrating into their community following a disposition.

Yukon community corrections is currently working, again, with Connective to identify potential referrals and client needs. We are planning on meeting with those who work in the court system for the purposes of them knowing about the SHARP program for women and the courts' Crown defence, legal aid, et cetera, probationary services and others, and the Indigenous courtworkers so that the women who might be appropriately classified for this supervised housing process — their supports through the court system will be aware of it and be able to ask them whether or not they are interested in such an option. Both services are supported by the Council of Yukon First Nations for the purposes of helping with programming and making sure that there are culturally relevant, person-centered, trauma-informed options.

Women at Takhini Haven — there is availability for up to eight, but their preference is for six beds to be open for women who will be in the SHARP program. In the men's program, I am told that there are 20 beds available. I have already provided how many people have gone through that in the last number of years since it has been open. Thank you for the question.

Mr. Cathers: My next question for the minister is: What is the total amount of public money this fiscal year that is flowing from the Department of Justice to Connective?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would like to clarify the question if I can. We are talking about 2022-23. I know that there are numbers in the budget going forward in the mains for these programs. I am just wondering if the question is around what was in the budget or is now in the supplementary budget — the total for Connective for 2022-23.

Mr. Cathers: My question is: How much money in the current fiscal year is going to Connective, whether that is reflected in the supplementary budget or has been approved subsequent to that in a Management Board submission? I don't

have access to that detail of information. My question is: To this point in time, for the current fiscal year, what is the total amount of money that the government is expecting to provide to Connective from the Department of Justice?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The transfer payment agreement with Connective with respect to the men's program is \$808,000 for 2022-23, including any budget that might be approved in the *Supplementary Estimates No. 2* for 2022-23, and for the women's program, it is \$472,000 this year.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate that information. In the interest of time and the many other areas of the budget, both supplementary and the mains that we have to deal with, at this time, I will wrap up my questions and hand over the floor to the Third Party.

Ms. White: I just have a couple of questions for the minister around Takhini Haven and where the women's transitional housing unit will be now. So, that building was vacant for a great number of years, and one of the things that we had been told was that it required renovations. Could the minister expand on what renovations were required to make that space usable? So, my understanding is that it has been empty since the Takhini Haven group home left, so it has been a little over three years.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the question. The renovations to that location would have been managed by Highways and Public Works rather than through the Justice budget. I am happy to look into that and find out what the number was. There were some significant renovations that I am aware of, including the opportunity to make the residence — I am going to say "homey" — where there is a main area — I know that the member opposite was in the location, but there is a main area with a co-op kitchen and living room area and then individual bedrooms and bathrooms. I don't know how long it has been vacant. I know that there were, at one point, offices in that location, including for the Department of Health and Social Services prior to me being responsible for that department. So, I can certainly get a number from Highways and Public Works with respect to how much the total renovations were over the past number of months to prepare for the SHARP to be housed at that building.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that answer from the minister. When did the building responsibility transfer to the Department of Justice?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't want the member opposite to rely on my memory, and it shouldn't be considered to be accurate all the time, so I will find out the date. I do recall that the responsibility was transferred from Health and Social Services, and whoever was responsible for it at the time, to Justice. I can find out the date that occurred.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further debate on Vote 8, Department of Justice?

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

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 8, Department of Justice, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 8, Department of Justice, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 8, Department of Justice, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,745,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$192,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,937,000 agreed to

Department of Justice agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Department of Economic Development — continued

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the opportunity to return to this subject matter. Of course, we will have a number of other issues in the Department of Economic Development that we will get to in the mains, but since we have already begun the discussion on the floor, I think that we will continue today.

Where we left off, we were discussing the infrastructure needs of the mining industry in Skagway vis-à-vis the port, and I will start with a question about the near-term needs. It is my understanding that the existing ore loader will be removed in the coming months. In the view of the Yukon government, what is the plan throughout the next year or so, when that ore loader is disassembled, for the Yukon mining industry that exports out of Skagway?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Those discussions to date — I think that there have been tripartite discussions. First of all, the Yukon government has engaged with the community in Skagway to understand when the infrastructure that is currently in place will be removed. Our understanding is that this is in the very near future.

We know that there is one operation currently using that infrastructure to access tidewater. We are aware that there has been engagement between that organization and the community of Skagway. We are aware that there are other options available. That is information that has been passed on to us previously by at least one operator that is using it. We are aware that there has been some due diligence done by Minto Metals on using other infrastructure. That is what we are aware of at this time.

We are waiting to see what the decisions will be by the private sector. That will give us a sense of what will happen over the next year.

Our goal right now is to ensure that we work effectively with the community; we think that is very important. We think it is important to understand the needs of the industry here, but we also think it's important that industry continues to engage with the community.

The community of Skagway has flagged that they want more engagement directly with the private sector. That is information that we have passed on to the Yukon Chamber of Mines, as well as to the producers group and to specific companies. We think that this is important.

In the near term, we will be working alongside the private sector to understand their needs. We do know that there could be a short gap — when you really look at the continuum of this port access — and we want to ensure that we get the right infrastructure put in place.

What we didn't really get to talk about when we last were on this subject was that it seemed like the conversation was going into what infrastructure was going to be put in place.

The leader of the opposition talked a bit about this concept — when he and the Member for Copperbelt South had gone to the community to visit, that the community had stated that they were looking at a new type of infrastructure. That infrastructure, really, for anybody listening, at the end of the day — it is really moving concentrate in a container and then moving it to port, which is different from what is there now. What is there now, of course, is a conveyor system, and it is a bit archaic, I would say, as compared to the conveyor systems that we see around the world now. We have heard from industry in the Yukon that a conveyor system — a modern one — could be something that would be very effective. We know that these systems — I know from my predecessor, who had discussions on his trip to some Nordic countries this year, that it could be a good system.

We have offered to the community — the leaders in Skagway — that we would be able to organize some trips out to look at that type of system here in the Americas — North America or even South America — and to take a look at, really, both of these options. We have also gone out and talked to and had correspondence with Lynden Transport, which has been the primary operator coming out of Skagway into interior Yukon to move concentrate, and I think there has been at least a letter that we have received talking about the fact that the modernized conveyor system is something that could be used.

But what I will say is that the conversation has been extremely sensitive. I know that the leader of the opposition

publicly stated last week that we and I — our government — should “influence” — I think that when you use that word, there is a lot of sensitivity toward what the state is in Skagway. You have a community — we did a tremendous amount of work to bring them to the table. We have gone to the table in a very respectful way. I know I am going to be having further conversations. I am a bit concerned about some of those public comments about how it may change the situation, because, yes, we are always going to be looking to support the local industry. But it is really important to understand — and I will say to the people of Skagway right now on the record — we have journalists here in the House too, and I will say, you know, to CBC that we are going to be at the table in a very respectful way, because the people in Skagway have great concern over the historic liabilities that exist in their community. They know that there is a tourism industry that is growing immensely. I mean, we have been told — and I think our tourism folks at the department would say that they are about to get as many visitors as the Port of Seattle will get when it comes to cruise ship traffic in this small community. What we have continued to discuss with the community is that it is extremely important to have a diverse economy.

It is not just about the cruise ship industry. When they experienced the impacts of COVID-19 on their community and the tourism industry, that was a great opportunity for them to look at the importance of having the mining sector. We also talked about the fact that the mining sector is extremely important to the economy of the Yukon and that individuals from Skagway come to Whitehorse and to the Yukon for services. Not only is this about mining, but that port also has inbound industrial materials that come into the Yukon — whether it be industrial materials or fuel — and at the same time, we have the ability to drive, of course, the export side of it. So, it is a very symbiotic relationship — more than, I think, a lot of individuals in Skagway are aware of. The leaders of Skagway have worked extremely hard to get the pertinent information to their community, but there is, as I understand it — I have attended public meetings — a lot anxiety about the history of what is there.

I say that, look, we have put a lot of time into this. Yes, politics are politics, but it is important that, with our language, we are not in a position where folks in Skagway start to get uncomfortable about the position of the Yukon government going into that community.

On the initial part of this question, what is our interim measure? We are going to be working to understand what the private sector wants to do while the new infrastructure is built, and in the interim, as I have just stated, the platform has to be designed and then we have to work to see what it's going to be as we go forward. Are we going to be using a conveyor system — which a lot of the industry is saying would be the simplest thing for them to use — or is it a different system? Again, we have to work with the community to understand that, because ultimately, they will be making some decisions — if not the decision — along with us.

Mr. Dixon: I know that the Premier tends toward verbosity with some of his answers, so I will be a little tighter.

Can the Premier tell us when the existing ore loader will be removed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I just think that it's important, on the record while we have media and others here, that they understand the importance of this conversation and the work that has gone into it.

I would also add that we will continue to bring to the House — and apprise the House of — some of those decisions concerning infrastructure as they are made.

Our understanding is that they take possession in the short run. Over the next few weeks, we believe, they will be taking possession — meaning that the municipality, the borough of Skagway, will take possession from White Pass Corporation, which is owned by Carrix, which is then owned by Blackstone. From my understanding and the conversations that we have had, it is this spring when they will look to do the demolition. I know that they want to get some baseline studies done. We had some discussions with the borough. We have also had discussions with members of the governor's office in Alaska and we have had discussions with representatives from AIDEA, which is the economic arm — Crown corporation — in Alaska, because there has been dialogue between the borough and those entities, but we believe that they are looking to have it removed this spring.

Mr. Dixon: So, the ore loader that is currently in place will be removed this spring. What is the timeline for the replacement of the ore loader — the new infrastructure that will be constructed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: March 19 — for the record there, Deputy Chair — is the date of possession, so just coming up. And they are even looking to push — I want to correct the record — the demolition for even as late as October. I know that they have to get baseline environmental studies done. My last conversation with the mayor was that, I think, spring and summer would give them ample amount of time for that, so I will put that back.

The timeline — let me see if I have it here. Our understanding is that the marine services platform, which we have talked about — and that is really what our initial funding would be going toward. So, Skagway is aiming for the port redevelopment project — the entire project — to be completed by the spring of 2025.

Again, the project timelines would involve construction of the marine services platform. What we are aware of is that we think that, in 2024 — I believe later into spring/summer of 2024 — is when they are looking at the marine services platform. But we can get back to the House to make sure. The information is important to note, as this flows — one will be that we see some of that work, of course, being funded in 2024, but we also are in a position where we want to make sure that we get the accurate information, as this has been an active file with the community of Skagway, and that we can provide that back to the House. So, we have been dealing with their borough manager, and we can bring back if there are any timeline changes, but that's our understanding at this point.

Mr. Dixon: Can the Premier tell us what the total capital costs for the development will be?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just to get clarification, is that the capital costs for the marine services platform?

Mr. Dixon: In the agreement that is on the borough of Skagway's website — that is the "Yukon-Skagway Terms Sheet Summary" — it includes the basic terms that: "YG will make contributions on a milestone basis to..." — the municipality of Skagway — "... not to exceed \$17.65 million USD ... that enables the inclusion of a Marine Services Platform ... in Skagway's Ore Peninsula Development Project." My question is: What is the total cost of that project? Ultimately, what I'm looking for is an understanding of how much Yukon government's contribution will represent as a part of the entire project.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I need to get clarification. Is it the capital expenditure on the entire redevelopment of the port, which is that project, as I said, that concludes in 2025? Or is he specifically asking about the marine services platform, which is one element of the total project scope? What the member opposite is referring to is the terms sheet — that would be publicly stated — would be the obligation that we have as a government as it pertains to the marine services platform. Or is he endeavouring to ask for the entire scope and what the capital expenditure is for all elements of work being undertaken by the borough? So, I just want to get clarification on that.

Mr. Dixon: What percentage of the entire project is Yukon government contributing to? So, we are contributing \$17.5 million, and my question is: As a percentage, how much of the project are we contributing to?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What I am hearing is that we have a term sheet that is for a specific piece of infrastructure, but the question is about the scope of the entire project. Again, is the member opposite asking for the entire cap ex, which is essentially the capital expenditures for the entire redevelopment that will be undertaken, or is it specific to the infrastructure? I just need to get clarity on that. I can delineate that more if there is a lack of understanding.

Mr. Dixon: I am referring specifically to the marine services platform.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are 100 percent of the marine service platform. The reason that we are 100 percent of the marine service platform is that the borough of Skagway undertook due diligence to see if there was any business case to have that piece of infrastructure in place. Upon that work, they came back and made the decision that they would not build it unless there was a proponent that would look at building it. That could be private sector or that could be government.

Our conversations at that time led to us going back to the Government of Canada. This is something that has been a live conversation for a number of years. What we have shared with Canada as a government is, number one, you are looking at a critical mineral strategy for the entire country. We need to have tidewater access for Yukon companies, Yukon operators, to the Pacific. We know how important this is. It doesn't make sense to have a critical mineral strategy for this country if you're not going to be in a position to support us as a government in that work and those conversations.

Just for the record, this is a dialogue that has happened with the Prime Minister's office through my predecessor; as well, I have flagged the importance of this work to the Deputy Prime Minister — Minister Freeland — to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs on number occasions, Minister LeBlanc, and to Minister Ng, who is in charge of export.

Minister François-Philippe Champagne flew here and had a discussion that we hosted in Whitehorse with industry, specifically current operators — Minto was there and Hecla, which just acquired Alexco and would also be looking at membership in the Yukon Chamber of Mines. There was a very positive discussion at that point with me and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who was in attendance.

We urged Canada, as well — if we were going to take on the capital expenditure for this piece of infrastructure at 100 percent, we needed Canada to be able to come to the table. They have been working alongside some of our departments to see where they could provide support for this particular project. We also had discussions with the Canada Infrastructure Bank and looked at their policies on investment. Those conversations are still ongoing. We think this is a very important commitment in the future of the Yukon; we think this is a very important commitment for the future of mining. We think this is also directly correlated to *Our Clean Future*, because we think that critical minerals are really the building blocks of what we are going to see happen globally when it comes to a pivot toward a greener future. It's all going to be driven by the ability to get these minerals.

We, as a government, think that, in Yukon, this is a jurisdiction that can handle and do this work responsibly. We think that the individuals who work in these industries are treated respectfully. We think that the work that is done contributes to our economy, but it also contributes to the social fabric of the territory, so we think this investment is a smart investment.

Again, based on the 60 percent to design the platform, estimates were at \$17.65 million. We did get a positive vote in the borough of Skagway. I think it was 5 to 1, but that gave the right to the city manager to conclude the negotiations on this particular item. I think we have now clarified our commitment on this item and the capital expenditure we are committed to put in place.

Mr. Dixon: As the Premier noted, the resolution that was passed in the borough of Skagway authorized the borough manager to execute the agreement on behalf of the borough. Has that been done? Has the agreement been signed by both parties and, if not, what is the status of it?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The discussions are ongoing, and they have not concluded yet. When those discussions have concluded, I will report back to the Assembly.

Mr. Dixon: So as of right now, there is no signed agreement between the Yukon government and the borough of Skagway?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: That is correct. At this point in time, there is a positive vote based on the work we have provided, which then leads the borough manager to be able to conclude negotiations. Just because we are talking about the term sheet

and there is some coverage today, I think that it is really important to identify one of the items that was covered by local media. After the media scrum that I had done, there was a very key point around which companies get to use the port. I want to just clarify, because there might have been a misinterpretation: We are building this with the borough of Skagway — I should say, we are financing — so that it can be built for the future of Yukon's industry when it comes to mining. We know that, in the gold industry, which I think is an important piece of our whole mining industry, especially when we have seen the cyclical trends of our economy — and we went through some of the toughest times around COVID. We were lucky that part of our industry really contributed to some positive effects and impacts. When it comes to critical minerals, we know that the way that they are mined, the way that they are milled and then transported, we don't see in the near term right now that there is going to be a lot of different types of value added from concentrate at this particular time in Yukon; that's not to say that couldn't happen in future.

When those concentrates — they need to get to tidewater — so it is imperative that we have access. Previous governments have contemplated different types of acquisitions of land there and infrastructure. I think that all governments of all political stripes have seen this coming to an end, and inevitably somebody had to move on it and make some significant decisions. That is what we are doing. When we say that there is a "preferential" or there is, in the term sheet, in the conversations around who can use it — what we're really saying is that if there are companies working in the Yukon, we have an obligation to go to the borough of Skagway and say: This company is working in the Yukon and we need them to have access to the infrastructure. And then the borough of Skagway would then be informed. We are not picking and choosing Yukon companies; that is not what was said. This is about making sure that Yukon companies that are operating here have an opportunity and access to tidewater.

As most individuals know, these conversations, when you are talking with mining companies — especially mining companies of the level that we are now seeing showing interest in Yukon — I mean, we have a new mine which is moving through on Coffee, after their acquisition of Goldcorp. That is arguably, if not today, known as the largest gold mining company in the world.

When you see a position of RioTinto into Western Copper, a small position as they do their due diligence — that is the second largest mining company in the entire world. So, what they are doing is that they are doing their due diligence. Hecla, which has done one acquisition already, and I think there is another one underway — that is the biggest silver producer in America. So, when they are having these discussions, they are thinking about many things: What is our energy source? What is our labour source? What is the access to our project? What is the access to tidewater for what we are producing? So, that dialogue happens much earlier in a process than when a project is inevitably going to be built. So, for us, it is that ability to say that this infrastructure is in Skagway and, for the future of governments in the Yukon and for the future of the industry, to

be able to sit down and say that, yes — somebody wants to invest? — you should be spending time in the community of Skagway so they can understand what your interest is in using this infrastructure; we have invested in this so that we can ensure that you have access to that tidewater. That's the dialogue that happens.

You know, we have spent a lot of time as a team — it is the team at Economic Development with support from Energy, Mines and Resources — which has done a really extraordinary job. A lot of people spent a lot of time. They have had to do it over an international line — a very unique situation compared to provinces and territories on how we have had to operate. We have sat down with the US Ambassador to Canada as well, at times, and said, "Look, we want you to be at the table with us." As the US political world plays out, in many ways, the federal government is hands-off from the activities at the state level or the municipal level, and that is what it has been at this point in time. It has really been us in Skagway at the table, and the team has done a great job. Hopefully, the folks listening today just get a better understanding of who gets access and what the process is. It is really just us supporting the local private sector to get down there when they have a project in place so they can get their product to tidewater. Again, they can flourish here in the Yukon.

Mr. Dixon: I thank the Premier for that, although my question was very simple, and it went on at great length. But I will ask the next question: When does the Premier anticipate the first funding would flow to the borough of Skagway for this?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our early indication is that we would be seeing money flow in Q1 of 2024. There is a possibility that there could be a request for — sorry, Q4 of the fiscal — but there could be a possibility of requesting Q3 of this fiscal. At that point, we would have to come back and look at the supplementary.

What we were made aware of is that the early indication was that it would be in the next fiscal year. There could be an early call for some capital. That has not yet been identified. We will see when the term sheet is concluded and those talks are underway. If that is the case, we would come back and have that discussion in the House, but at this point in time, we believe that this is the current timeline we are looking at.

In conference with the department, that is what we are understanding now of the project timeline.

Mr. Dixon: Earlier today, the Premier noted that he anticipated the project to be entirely complete in 2025. Does he anticipate the full \$17.65 million USD to flow to Skagway before then?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, that is my and our understanding as per the project timelines.

Mr. Dixon: When would we see this in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Once we have an opportunity to see what the request is for the cash flow on this particular project, we will have a better understanding. We will either be reflecting this later within a supplementary budget or, if it is pushed even later, it would be in our next year's mains. Again, we need to conclude this. I don't want to predetermine the

timeline conversations at the table. What I can say is that as soon as we have the accurate information and a clear understanding of our cash flow as it pertains to this project, we will be making sure that we take the appropriate measures as it pertains to the financial structures of the government, and we would be bringing forward that information to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Dixon: I will save the remaining questions that I have for the mains.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 7, Department of Economic Development?

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

Mr. Kent: Deputy Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Copperbelt South has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 7, Department of Economic Development, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$741,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$741,000 agreed to Department of Economic Development agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To begin with, I would like to welcome a couple of colleagues. To my left is Assistant Deputy Minister Heather Mills, who is with the Sustainable Resources division, and to my right, Deputy Minister Paul McConnell. We were just sort of talking about it, but he may not have been in here working with us in the EMR debate previously, but he is no stranger to the Assembly and to colleagues.

I am going to give a few opening remarks on the Energy, Mines and Resources supplementary budget. I will just highlight some of the changes, hopefully providing a bit of background for colleagues. There is a total net increase of just under \$1.7 million to the department's previous estimates, and it brings the budget up from \$82 million to \$83.7 million. The increase is primarily due to changes in the Sustainable Resources division. That is why we have Ms. Mills with us today.

Let me just go through a few of the points. The Energy branch's 2022-23 budget increased by \$3.7 million. This includes funding carried over from fiscal year 2021-22 of \$130,000 for the Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities fund and \$2.9 million for the Low Carbon Economy Leadership fund. The Energy branch also received an additional \$1.1 million from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada for the Kluane N'tsi wind energy project for various projects to reduce transportation emissions. There was an increase of \$82,000 for the greener homes initiative, which helps Canadians make where they live more energy efficient, and this is 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

The Forest Management branch's 2022-23 budget increased by a net of \$59,000. This was an increase in new funding from the Government of Canada to complete inventory work in the north for the national forest inventory, and it's also fully recoverable.

For the Agriculture branch, there is an increase of \$74,000 from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency for a two-year agreement for an agricultural, multi-year development plan for abattoir services in the winter — and, again, fully recoverable. Under Mineral Resources and Geosciences Services division, they had a decrease in their budget of \$2 million. This is primarily because the Assessment and Abandoned Mines branch went down by \$3.1 million, including a reduction of \$3.8 million in funding agreements for type 2 sites due to a revised work plan that Canada approved and an increase of \$700,000 to complete work at Wolverine mine, specifically around a slide at the site. The budget increased \$980,000 for quartz royalty payments to First Nations to reflect the First Nation royalty share per chapter 23 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. And, finally, the Yukon Geological Survey 2022-23 budget increased by \$120,000 for a new agreement signed with Natural Resources Canada for geophysical survey.

Just a couple comments on our capital budget — there is a net increase of a little over half a million dollars to the

department's 2022-23 capital budget to advance *Our Clean Future* projects.

The additional funding is from a Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada grant received and recognized in the 2021-22 fiscal year. The grant includes \$35,000 for designing a new agriculture building at the research farm and \$540,000 for the installation of zero-emission vehicle charging stations.

I will wrap up my opening remarks there. I'm looking forward, as always, to having conversations with colleagues about Energy, Mines and Resources.

Mr. Kent: I would like to welcome the officials here today as well and thank them for the briefing they provided us on the supplementary estimates and the main estimates this morning.

I am going to save most of the policy questions for debate on the main estimates, but there is one issue that came up during Question Period today that I would like to follow up on with the minister, and that is with respect to the mining intensity targets. During Question Period — and I don't have the benefit of having the transcripts or the Blues available, but I know that he referenced the release of a "what we heard" document. I think he mentioned during Question Period again that the timing for these targets would be coming soon. I am hoping he can take a bit of time here to elaborate on that. When will we see the "what we heard" document, and does he have any definitive dates or timelines for the release of these targets?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The "what we heard" report has been drafted and it's just sitting with me, so it will be out very shortly. The targets are overdue, so that's my responsibility. I am concerned that I don't have them out yet, but I still have a little bit more work to do in conversation with industry to line things up around putting those targets out publicly. I will have those conversations. I don't have a timeline in front of me, but I would say that the department is working with me to finalize that work and it shouldn't be long. It is a requirement for me to get this out, and we were working to have it done in the last calendar year, so I hope to have it shortly.

Mr. Kent: I want to jump in with a few questions now with respect to the supplementary estimates — the document that was provided by officials this morning, and the minister mentioned it as well — the increase in funding for the Low Carbon Economy Leadership fund of \$2.927 million, which is 100-percent recoverable from Canada, as was mentioned and is contained in these documents.

Can the minister provide us with a bit of background with respect to that fund? It was my understanding, looking at the budget document mains this morning, that there are a number of transfer agreements associated with this fund. I am looking for a little bit of detail as to where these additional expenditures are going. Then, if the minister can provide us with the total amount of the Low Carbon Economy Leadership fund for the 2022-23 fiscal year, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The Low Carbon Economy fund supports our good energy rebate program. There are two streams under the good energy program. The first one is residential; the second one is commercial/institutional.

Under the residential stream, we provide rebates to Yukon homeowners through our online system called "My Energy Expert". The specific rebates are available for various types of energy updates.

Under the commercial stream — it depends, but it can range from 25 to 75 percent for those upgrades. I can get the criteria, but businesses are eligible for 25 percent, non-profits for 40 percent, and First Nations and municipalities are up for 75 percent. Those are paid through transfer payment agreements. I am working with the department to get the total dollar amount for the member opposite.

Mr. Kent: If the minister can also then get that breakdown between the different streams that he mentioned — I think there was residential and then there was commercial/institutional and First Nation/municipal governments — I think those were the ones that he identified. We will have a chance, obviously, to talk about this in the mains as well, so if he could have that information then, that would be great.

Under the Energy branch, the next item that was referenced this morning is an increase of \$1.091 million for the Kluane First Nation wind project and various other projects to reduce transportation emissions. It looks like it is recoverable from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada funding.

Can the minister give us a breakdown of how much of that is going to the Kluane First Nation wind project and then how much is going — I don't need a detailed list of the other projects, but just what is the split between the wind project in Kluane First Nation and the other projects?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The lion's share, Deputy Chair, is going toward the wind project. It is about \$840,000 going to the wind project and then the various transportation emissions reductions are another \$250,000.

Mr. Kent: So, that \$840,000 that is going to the wind project for Kluane First Nation — can the minister give us an overall amount or overall cost or investment, I guess, that the Yukon government has made in that project, as well as a status on when he would anticipate that project being completed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will have the department look into it, but I also should note for colleagues here that we would need to talk to the First Nation about the project as well. I think I better check in with the Yukon Development Corporation as well, because I think there was some money that went to do some of the planning stages that came through one of the programs that the Yukon Development Corporation has. I will get an overall update on the project and what the timelines look like.

I will say that the project had been stalled for many years, and then there was some recent movement on it, which we were happy to see. I will try to get more information for the members opposite.

Mr. Kent: I will look forward to circling back with the minister on that when we get to the main estimates part of the debate later on in this Sitting.

Further down in the Energy branch, there is a decrease of \$520,000 from Natural Resources Canada to the zero-emission

vehicle infrastructure agreement for level 2 chargers. But then when you hop over to the capital budget, there is an increase of \$540,000 for the installation of zero-emission vehicle charging stations. It looks like there is an offset in investment — a decrease from the federal government, but then some money increased from the Yukon government for the installation of these charging stations. Can the minister confirm that this is what is happening? Can he also tell us how many charging stations this will have built and if there is a location of those charging stations?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think there is a map on our website now that lists the charging stations. Really, the member is correct. There was some money that was moved around. One was for dollars on the O&M side because it was funding in support of developing the stations, and then, on the other side, it was for ones we are installing. So, we have ones in Dawson, Mayo, Stewart Crossing, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Faro, Ross River, Whitehorse, Marsh Lake, Teslin, Watson Lake, Carcross, Mendenhall, and Haines Junction. We have ones planned for Beaver Creek and Burwash Landing and some additional ones in Whitehorse. There was one more thing that the member asked me, but I will —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I don't have the cost per station, but I am happy to try to get that information.

Mr. Kent: Moving on to the forestry branch, there is a \$59,000 increase. I did have a question this morning for officials with respect to the fuelwood subsidies. Officials said that there were no new resources required for that. They did it with existing resources, but can the minister give us the numbers for both the \$50-per-cord consumer fuelwood rebate — and then, I think, \$100 per cubic metre was the subsidy for the individuals who are harvesting firewood for sale — so if we could get the amounts and a breakdown of both of those items with respect to the firewood subsidies that the government put in place.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So far, under the two programs, we have paid out \$184,000 on the industry rebate, and it is \$100 per cubic metre. On the cords of firewood where individuals seek rebates, we have paid out for a little under 2,000 cords, so it is roughly half that amount, and it is standing at about \$93,000 for those firewood cords.

Mr. Kent: So, I had a constituent reach out to me with respect to the time lag between applying for the subsidy — this was on the consumer side — and then actually receiving the amount. For him and others, it was as long as three to four months. Are the minister's officials in the department tracking that wait time for an application for the subsidies until they are actually paid out? Is there an average number that the minister can give me?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is a new program, and I am sure there are some kinks being ironed out. I don't have numbers in front of me on the performance standard around turnaround, but there are two things I will say. The first one is that if the member opposite has constituents who are having challenges, can I convince him or his constituents to reach out to the branch — the Forest Management branch. What we have said to the

branch is to try and facilitate Yukoners through this. There are some things out there, as people move up the learning curve about what they need for receipts and stuff like that, in order to make it work.

So, I am sure that it will improve over time. I don't know the performance standard, but three to four months sounds long. All I can say at this point is that if we could help those people or that person, we would appreciate that opportunity.

Mr. Kent: I did send the minister some correspondence — I don't recall if it was a letter or an e-mail — with that specific situation, but I will follow up to see if there was a response, and then I will talk to the individual and others and get them to reach out to the forestry branch.

Can the minister tell us when these two subsidy programs — what is their expiry date? When are they no longer applicable?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So, we feel that the more effective of the two programs has been the industry incentive. Currently they are both set to expire this fiscal year, but we are reviewing them — in particular, the industry incentive. I heard the Member for Lake Laberge say that he had a constituent who expressed concern about the incentive program, but, of course, no one is required to apply for it. If they feel that it is not worth their time, that's okay, but in talking with the Wood Products Association, the initial feedback I had is that it is a good program and it is making a difference. The department is in the process of doing that review work, and currently they are set to expire at the end of this month.

Mr. Kent: Has the minister or have his department officials been tracking the effect of these rebates? Is it driving the cost of a cord of fuelwood down? Has that been what the experience is or is it remaining the same or has it been going up?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It may be difficult to tease out the exact effect of this program. First of all, I have had conversations with harvesters directly about whether they think the program is important, and I have had generally positive feedback from that response. Second of all, we talked with the industry representation, which I mentioned just a moment ago — the Yukon Wood Products Association — and that conversation was that it's making a difference.

Third — and I think I said this during my second reading of the main budget — but I explained that we now know that, in 2022, harvesters increased the number of cords that they supplied in the Yukon by over 2,000 cords as compared to 2021. That's the highest that we have seen in the past, I don't know, five to 10 years. The note I have is that it is the highest that we have seen since 2015. Those are good indicators, but I don't think we have enough information to tease out the financial effect. One of the reasons is that other costs are fluctuating all the time — for example, diesel costs are going up, and that's a significant cost driver for our harvesters.

So, it's difficult to know for sure. The information that we do have available to us is that the effect has been positive, but it would be hard for me to say that we can draw an exact dollar relationship around whether this has kept costs from rising or

what the overall impact is, given that it is fairly recent and there are a lot of variables in the system.

Mr. Kent: It doesn't sound like the department officials or the minister track the retail cost of a cord of firewood, whether there is the cost in Whitehorse versus the cost in other communities. Is that something the minister would consider doing just to get a sense for what the outcome is from these subsidies that have been put into the marketplace?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will give some answer here. I may have missed the last part of the question from the member opposite, so at the end of my answer, I will just get him to repeat if I have missed anything.

I know that there are times — and I am not sure whether it is the Bureau of Statistics or if it's the Department of Economic Development that tracks heating prices and does comparisons of them. I don't know that they continuously track them. I know that the Forest Management branch has been watching the price of firewood.

They have noted that they believe it is easier to get wood and that the price came down to \$450 a cord, whereas previously it got up as high as \$500 a cord, but I don't know that we have a study that shows this analysis and what the confidence intervals are around that, because the industry is inherently set by the harvester or the reseller. It is often done with pickup trucks and "here is a cord of wood." There isn't a simple way to track all of that. The branch has said that they believe that the anecdotal information that we have is positive, but there isn't a comprehensive study that would give us the type of thing that I could stand up and defend and say that it absolutely has made this exact difference.

Mr. Kent: I think that what I will do is look at the statistics branch information with respect to heating oil, gasoline, and other commodities, and we can revisit this conversation when we get back to EMR in the mains and have a little bit more detailed discussion at that point.

I wanted to jump down to the Assessment and Abandoned Mines decrease of just a little over \$3.1 million. There was an increase to complete some work at Wolverine but a fairly large reduction from adjustments due to a revised work plan. I am wondering if the minister can tell us: Of that \$3.811 million in the revised work plan, which sites — they are 100-percent recoverable from Canada, so I am assuming that it is for type 2 sites, but which sites have had revised work plans to them and how much money has been reduced from those sites?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So, the big difference is really with Clinton Creek, so that is where most of the change is. The existing plan that Canada had — they decided to revisit it. So, they are just now looking at it again — on how best to do that closure, given the costs of remediation. So, you know, we are following their lead and we will work with them on that, but the lion's share of the changes has to do with Clinton Creek.

Mr. Kent: My final question on the supplementary estimates for Energy, Mines and Resources is with respect to the \$9.8-million increase to quartz mining fees and leases, and then, in the document we got this morning, it has "royalties" in brackets. Can the minister give us the breakdown of that —

which are from mining fees and leases, or is it all a royalty amount — the full \$9.8 million?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I don't have a breakdown right now. I am being informed that the bulk of it is royalties, but I will ask the department to try to take a look and see what percentage is royalties and what percentage is fees. But what the department is telling me is that the bulk is royalties.

Ms. White: Can the minister walk us through the decrease of \$385,000 on the funding for elk fencing?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, the uptake wasn't as high as we had originally budgeted for. We moved the money forward into this year, but we will re-judge it, based on what the uptake is looking like. The department is indicating to me that there were some supply chain challenges in 2022 where there was an intention to build some of the fencing and we just couldn't get the materials. It was tough to get the materials.

There were half a dozen or so fencing projects that were completed. The money will be there for next year, but that's the basic reason.

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

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

Speaker: It has 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 5:25 p.m.

The following written question was tabled March 13, 2023:

Written Question No. 35

Re Emergency Medical Services coverage (Cathers)