

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak
(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok
(Quttiktuq)

*Minister of Environment; Minister of Economic
Development and Transportation; Minister of
Energy*

Joelie Kaernerck
(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee
(Uqqummiut)

Karen Nutarak
(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

*Premier; Minister of Executive and
Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible
for Immigration; Minister responsible for the
Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for the
Utility Rates Review Council*

Hon. Lorne Kusugak
(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Finance, Chair of the
Financial Management Board; Minister
responsible for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation*

Hon. Joanna Quassa
(Aggu)

*Minister of Culture and Heritage;
Minister of Languages; Minister
responsible for Seniors*

Bobby Anavilok
(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross
(Cambridge Bay)

*Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister
responsible for Nunavut Arctic College*

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

*Minister of Health; Minister responsible
for Suicide Prevention*

Inagayuk Quqqiaq
(Netsilik)

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(Arviat South)

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Whole*

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(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

George Hikes
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of
the Whole*

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(Pangnirtung)

*Minister of Family Services; Minister
responsible for Homelessness; Minister of
Human Resources;*

Hon. Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

*Minister of Justice; Minister
responsible for Labour; Minister
responsible for the Qulliq Energy
Corporation*

Hon. David Joanasic
(South Baffin)

*Government House Leader; Minister of
Community and Government Services*

*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women; Minister responsible for the
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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joelle Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 13:29*

>>*Applause*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Before we proceed, Mr. Anavilok, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): My fellow MLAs, welcome. We will be having another constructive day.

(interpretation ends) Ministers' Statements. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 160 – 6(2): Arctic Inspiration Prize

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My fellow MLAs and Nunavummiut, (interpretation ends) before I start, I just want to say how inspiring that was with the opening here, which I think is very inspirational for folks like my daughter to see that opening those doors. (interpretation) I feel a lot of pride in observing that and being in attendance.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it is always my pleasure to promote and congratulate Nunavummiut who demonstrate excellence, innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity. It is my great honour today to congratulate Nunavut's finalists and winners of the prestigious Arctic Inspiration Prize.

Mr. Speaker, the Arctic Inspiration Prize provides much-needed attention and funding to projects that help improve our communities and the lives of our people, expand our knowledge, and inspire change in the fields of education, health, culture, environmental stewardship, and the economy.

I attended this year's award ceremony February 8 at the Northern Lights Conference in Ottawa, where three finalists from Nunavut were eligible for prizes, including the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, Iitaqsiniq, as well as the Nunavut Youth Creative Collective.

Mr. Speaker, of these three groups, two received funding.

It was my honour to present a cheque in the amount of \$100,000 to the Nunavut Youth Creative Collective, which is a social enterprise to increase Inuit representation in advertising, media and other digital forms by hiring creative talent among Nunavut youth.

Later in the evening, the top prize of \$1 million was awarded to a Nunavut project, Iitaqsiniq's Pilimmaksaijuliriniq Project. This project is an Inuit-designed and led response to the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, the Innusivut Anninaqtuq Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Alianait Inuit Mental Wellness Action Plan. The project aims to build mental health competencies, resilience, and Inuit wellness traditional teachings into programs across Inuit Nunangat.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut is proud to be an ambassador and partner of the Arctic Inspiration Prize, and we are pleased to see Nunavut projects recognized and supported.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage all Nunavummiut hoping to inspire change in their communities to apply for seed-funding from the Arctic Inspiration Prize for their initiatives and projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 161 – 6(2): 2022 Injury Trends

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, my colleagues. I also say "good afternoon" to those who are viewing our proceedings.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, Nunavummiut should expect to return home uninjured and healthy at the end of each workday. Awareness of workplace hazards and safety trends in Nunavut can help ensure this. In support of our vision to eliminate workplace diseases and injuries, I would like to highlight steps the commission is taking to achieve that outcome.

In 2022 the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission received 1,667 reports of injury from Nunavut workers. The most injured body parts last year included the back and fingers, representing about 16 percent of all injuries. Sprains, strains, and tears

continue to be frequently reported injury types, and being struck by an object is one of the more frequent types of accident.

To raise awareness on these health and safety trends, the commission produced four campaigns. The first campaign focused on lifting safely, which highlighted ways to protect yourself from awkward body movements. There was a hand injury prevention campaign, which described how this type of injury can have a temporary or sometimes permanent impact on our lives. There was a sprains and strains campaign, and a struck by an object campaign, which provided examples of what this term means, and examples of ways these types of injuries can happen.

All campaigns are accessible on the commission's website. We continue to monitor Nunavut and Northwest Territories workplace safety trends to better determine where resources and support are needed to help workers return home. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 162 – 6(2): Nutrition Month

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, March is Nutrition Month. Healthy eating is important to good health. Eating well keeps our bodies strong, helps us fight disease, and gives us the energy to work and play. Together, healthy eating and being active can help to prevent chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, there are many ways Nunavummiut practise healthy eating:

- Harvesting and preparing food together, spending time with family and teaching food skills.
- Serving a variety of country foods to children at a young age is a healthy way to support good nutrition.
- Eating together with family and friends, which supports community health and well-being.
- Also, by giving babies vitamin D supplements, to support healthy bones and teeth, and infant health and development.
- For children and adults, by avoiding sugary beverages and choose water as your favourite drink.

The Department of Health supports good nutrition in all Nunavut communities through community-led wellness plans. There are programs that focus on healthy eating for pregnant women and infants, country food preparation, culinary knowledge sharing, meal programs in schools, and youth food skills building.

Great information on healthy eating can be found in the *Nunavut Food Guide* at livehealthy.ca. Nunavummiut can also call their health centres to arrange to meet with a registered dietician for support on healthy eating and managing any related health issues. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Minister's Statement 163 – 6(2): 2022 Qilaut Contest Winners

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to Nunavummiut and the people of Igloolik.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the recent winners of the 2022 Qilaut song writing contest. The winners are Jocelyn Ukutak Malla, Rosalie Pissuk, Shawna Seeteenak, Abraham Eetak, Eva Okatsiak, Jocelyn Arreak, Joanasie Aglak, and Eli Qaqqasiq-Taqtu.

Mr. Speaker, these winners were chosen by a panel of judges Leena Evic, Mary Poisey, and Jo Ellen Pameolik. The 2022 Qilaut theme was “Kajjaarijara” and over 30 entries were submitted. Songs were rated based on originality, creativity, melody, and lyrics. I would like to express my gratitude to all the individuals who submitted songs and to the judges for their time and expertise.

Mr. Speaker, Qilaut is the Department of Culture and Heritage's annual Inuktitut song writing contest. The purpose of the contest is to celebrate our vibrant Inuktitut music scene and inspire the creation of more original music in Inuktitut.

Mr. Speaker, my department is finalizing plans for the Qilaut Concert to be held in April in Iqaluit. The winning artists will have an opportunity to perform their songs live and have their songs professionally recorded.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage Nunavummiut to continue to promote and celebrate Inuktitut every day and ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Qilaut winners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 164 – 6(2): National Social Work Month

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. Mr. Speaker, every March, individuals and organizations across Canada observe National Social Work Month in recognition of the meaningful contributions social workers make to the health, safety, and well-being of their communities. This year's theme is "Social Work Breaks Barriers."

Frontline social workers are trained to support individuals in addressing systemic barriers to optimal living. They are employed to affect positive change with individuals, families, and communities. Social workers touch lives each day, and it is likely a social worker at some time will assist you, a family member, or a friend.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, during Social Work Month, I encourage Nunavummiut to take the time to learn more about the many positive contributions of the profession. It is important to promote the role our social workers play in Nunavut and highlight the important contributions they make in our territory.

You can see *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* throughout our work with families, through voluntary service agreements, plans of care, or other types of agreements. These agreements help families who need some sort of support. They are collaborative in nature and help families before more intrusive measures are needed. We also involve extended families and community members where possible in supporting children, youth, and families. This is reflective of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*.

Today I would like to express gratitude for the hard work and dedication of our social workers, and I encourage others, especially our youth, to consider enrolling in Nunavut Arctic College's social work programs to pursue careers in this important field.

Mr. Speaker, National Social Work Month gives us the opportunity to recognize, celebrate, and uplift our social workers for everything they do. On behalf of my department, I would like to extend a huge thank you to our community social service workers. (interpretation) Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Gross.

Minister's Statement 165 – 6(2): Social Worker Programs

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good day, Nunavummiut and colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, following the announcement from Minister Nakashuk recognizing National Social Worker Month, I would like to highlight Nunavut Arctic College's efforts in supporting training in this important field.

In September 2021 the college, with its university partner, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador, launched a Bachelor of Social Work program. Students from this first Nunavut-specific cohort were past graduates from Nunavut Arctic College's Social Service Worker and Human Service Worker programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to share that five graduates successfully met the requirements for graduation and will be receiving their degrees in a ceremony in Cambridge Bay on March 24. Please join me in recognizing the graduating class from this program. They are: Larrie Soberano, Vanessa Totalik, Linda Uvilluk, Anna Wolki, and Charles Zikalala.

Mr. Speaker, with the positive momentum of the first cohort, the college will host a second delivery of the Bachelor of Social Work program that will be launched in August 2023 in Cambridge Bay. Graduates from the college's Social Service Worker Program or Human Services Worker Program are encouraged to apply.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Arctic College has offered the Social Service Worker program since 2004. This two-year diploma engages students in theory and practical experience in the social work field, with the added dimension of situating this knowledge within a northern context. The college continues to produce quality graduates in the social work field.

Mr. Speaker, *quanaqpiacquhi* to our alumni who are now working in the social worker field. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Congratulations to the graduates. Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 207 – 6(2): Addressing Cyberbullying

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my concerns about a very disturbing trend in our schools and in our society.

Mr. Speaker, cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. As more and more of our youth are interacting through such means as texting or other forms of electronic communication, behaviours such as bullying and harassment are also taking place in those contexts.

Mr. Speaker, bullying is never acceptable. It is harmful and damaging. When it occurs in person, there is the possibility that another individual may witness the act and intervene

or offer support and protection. When it occurs online, however, it is less visible to anyone outside of the interaction. Bullies feel that they can get away with it. Sadly, they often do.

Mr. Speaker, access to modern technology, electronic communication and even social media can be positive and empowering. We have seen that services, such as many in health and education, can be supported and even enhanced through a virtual delivery medium. Unfortunately, that same power can be used to hurt and disempower individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen first-hand the impact of cyberbullying on our youth. In some cases, a person being bullied in this way suffers a loss of self-esteem, then turns to self-harm and even suicide.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon our government, and especially the Department of Education, to focus on the issue of cyberbullying. Our youth need the tools to resist taking part in this behavior, to learn to withstand these types of assaults, and to take steps to prevent it from happening to themselves, to their friends and to their peers.

We all need to take a stand against cyberbullying. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Member's Statement 208 – 6(2): New School Needed in Sanirajak

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for acknowledging me, although I was trying to prepare my papers. (interpretation ends) (interpretation ends) I would like to touch base on the much needed school in the community of Sanirajak, Mr. Speaker.

As I rise today to call upon our government to introduce a new school project for the community of Sanirajak in the government's upcoming capital process.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that education is the foundation, let me mention again, the foundation for our future path in life. Any student dreaming of entering a trade, going to Nunavut Sivuniksavut, starting a course at Nunavut Arctic College or entering university, must have a solid educational foundation.

Now, the population of Sanirajak has been growing steadily. Statistics published on the Nunavut government website show that the population of young children entering elementary school doubled between 2001 and 2020.

So, Mr. Speaker, the size of the school accommodating our elementary students has not changed over those past 20 years. The school is handling twice the number of students

than it was 20 years ago. There is severe overcrowding. In saying that, they are even using the kitchen as a classroom for cultural programs. That is one of the overcrowding issues that we are experiencing due to the shortage of classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, our teachers work very hard, and I would like to acknowledge the teachers that are handling our students in our schools, I would like to acknowledge that they are doing a great job, and when it comes to Bill 25 that was passed in the previous government, once full-day kindergarten starts, our teachers will experience more burnout and be more stressed out due to overcrowding in the school of Sanirajak.

I would like to ask to extend my member's statement, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please continue, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, colleagues.

Once the new Bill 25 is passed on the *Education Act*, it will provide that Nunavut must meet specific student-educator ratio. I'm sure the government is using that ratio when it comes to these community capital projects. It takes time to fill the required positions. As teachers burn out from delivering education to larger and larger classes of students, we rely more and more on substitute teachers and the quality of education goes down. It's a fact of life that we experience it in our smaller communities that these teachers burnout and it becomes we have to hire substitute teachers.

Now, our government needs to address this situation as soon as possible. The community of Sanirajak desperately needs a new larger school. Our children need a stronger educational foundation to follow their dreams and sometimes we plan big dreams at times, Mr. Speaker. So I look forward to seeing a new school project for the community of Sanirajak on the next capital planning pages, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Member's Statement 209 – 6(2): Stay Home If You Are Sick

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to let everybody know, members of the public may have noticed that I have not been asking questions or intervening during this sitting so far this week, and I just want to assure everybody that I am no shrinking violet, that I was not in the House. I was not present because unfortunately I caught the "gastro flu" that has been going around.

I would just like to remind everybody to wash their hands frequently. If you don't have access to water, use hand sanitizer, and if you do become ill; stay home. I think it's really important for the health of our community for us all to do our part to make sure that we stay home when we are ill so that we don't pass on illness. I would also like to encourage people that if you are feeling ill, to do a COVID test just in case and to stay home. I

stayed home for an extra day after my symptoms went away just to be sure that I didn't bring that "gastro" into the House.

So I'm wishing everybody health and wellness this week and I will reassure the member next to me that I'm feeling okay.

>> *Laughter*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Nestilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Member's Statement 210 – 6(2): Appreciation for the Atii Angutiit Program

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my appreciation to the Atii Angutiit program for their recent tour throughout the Kitikmeot region.

Mr. Speaker, the program is a collaborative effort by the Department of Health's Inuusivut team and the Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre. Mr. Speaker, the program is dedicated to men's mental health, wellness and suicide prevention by way of group activities, discussions and music performances from Nunavut artists. These workshops provided community members with a safe space to address and share hardships experienced by participants and by the communities as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the team also toured through some communities in the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq region. They were able to visit Kugaaruk on January 31 and February 1.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Taloyoak event was postponed due to weather. I know my constituents in Taloyoak are looking forward to the Atii Angutiit team visiting in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, workshops like Atii Angutiit help empower men in our communities to heal and show compassion to themselves on their healing journey.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support initiatives that promote mental health and wellness at the community level. I would like to thank the Department of Health, the Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre, the program facilitators and the participants of these important events.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to meet Aggaqtuq Iitaq, but on my way here I was walking to the Leg. He added me to social media and it's something that well I'm finally going to connect with Abraham Iitaq, which he is part of the group, and as well, I know Sikati Kusugak. I know him and also Sam Tuttanuaq, and I forget the other individual's name,

but his last name is Uqatsiak, and yes, Mr. Speaker, these are great individuals and I would like to see them in Taloyoak soon in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Member's Statement 211 – 6(2): Appreciation of Local Housing Organizations

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate and voice my appreciation to the board members of our local housing authorities in the communities of Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River who deal with very important issues, their maintenance staff and administration of their communities.

Mr. Speaker, there is generally a daily routine where they conduct their work, repairs and other maintenance during business working hours, along with emergency repairs that crop up, and these can occur at any time, even at night. Whenever a housing client faces issues, has faulty equipment or if repairs are required, these workers deal with them.

They usually have a heavy workload and their work is immensely important so I voice my pride in your abilities and thank you for your ongoing work for our constituents. I want to state my gratitude and to remind you that you are not forgotten and I make that statement to every worker out there.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as a member of Legislative Assembly for Uqqummiut, I understand and respect the authority of local housing organizations associations. Today, I have questions to minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation, and they concern the subject of local housing organizations. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Member's Statement 212 – 6(2): Kugluktuk Participants at Prince Edward Island

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish a good day to the residents of Kugluktuk, and throughout Nunavut as it is a beautiful day today, and as well to my colleagues.

I want to speak about our local athletes from Kugluktuk who are travelling to participate in the Canada Games at P.E.I. and they have chaperones, assistants and coaches with them for this trip. The coaches are: Atilla and Maria Csaba who provided a lot of assistance locally to our youth and this program is now in its 16th year.

(interpretation ends) They are table tennis athletes: Layla Demara, Jim Kamingoak, Caleb Bolt and Alex Anablak. I congratulate you guys for going down and representing Kugluktuk and Nunavut. *Koanaqutin*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 213 – 6(2): High Arctic Visit with Nunavut MP Lori Idlout

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just recently in January 22 to the 24, I was very glad to conduct a constituency tour with our MP Lorie Idlout, as she wanted to go to the High Arctic, so I was able to accompany her as we went first to Grise Fiord.

Although it was a short visit, we were able to attend a feast with the community and listened to concerns of the local residents, and I really enjoyed that opportunity to discuss issues. Further, when we arrived into Arctic Bay, we met with the HTO, the Hamlet, the DEA, the local Housing authority, and we also took the time to visit the qammaq of the local elder Qaapik Attagusiaq, and also met with students from the local school.

When we arrived in Pond Inlet, we also met the local bodies such as the HTO, the Hamlet and others, and we also were presented with an outline of the activities locally, and we also had the opportunity to speak to the students in both schools, about their futures and it was an enjoyable experience to visit these three communities.

In the tour of the three communities, there was one commonly held concern specifically regarding Bill C-21, the firearms control legislation amendments that would impact many hunters, and they all expressed the exact same concerns and shortly after this trip, our MP was able to return to Ottawa.

Shortly thereafter, there was news about the proposal being withdrawn and my ministerial colleague spoke to this matter along with the grave concerns held by hunters which was alleviated when the amendment was struck down. That was extremely gratifying to hear that potentially problematic issue being struck down.

It is only by working closely with our different levels of government that we are able to voice our concerns to our MP, and I hope to continue to work closely with her and she is trying to visit every community in Nunavut, and she had already visited Resolute Bay prior to my catching her, but she is currently touring the Kivalliq region, and I believe she is visiting three or four communities.

Please ensure she is welcomed to your communities, and I urge residents to express their concerns to our MP, and it is very satisfying to be visited by elected officials, and particularly since she is our sole representative in that huge House of Commons and she represents us in Parliament. With that being the case, I wanted to share my gratitude by expressing it personally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Member's Statement 214 – 6(2): Baker Lake Junior Rangers

Hon. Craig Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues and to the community of Baker Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I have a good news item to speak to today that occurred just last week, when local Rangers established their own local youth training group, and this is the group that is entitled in English as (interpretation ends) Junior Rangers (interpretation) and they are accepting youth starting from 12 years old up to 18 years of age.

These youth were adjoined to the local Rangers and we ended up getting 95 youth enrolled in this program, 95 youth! I believe this may constitute the largest group in Nunavut, and perhaps even in Canada's north.

The Baker Lake local Ranger Kirk Aningaak initiated this process, and he had assistants from Baker Lake to accomplish this: Dodi Qijuk, Kalinga Tularialik, Chris Snow, David Applebaum and Charlie Tautuarjuk.

This group will be commencing their activities shortly, and they are deliberating on the list of activities and training to conduct with the youth, but from what I learned, they will start off by shooting at wooden slabs, or in English (interpretation) targets (interpretation) along with sewing outer clothing. They will be conducting these activities over the next few months and I am quite proud and happy for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Member's Statement 215 – 6(2): Appreciation of Igloolik Recreation Workers

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and recognize, as well as to voice my gratitude to the Igloolik recreation committee members. This committee recently introduced a soup program or *Qajuqturvik*.

This soup kitchen program is open during lunch hour, and approximately 200 to 300 residents take advantage of this program to get nutritious food. This has resulted in requiring more support, as they offer this soup program so I want to thank the recreation committee for their initiative and hope they will continue successfully to offer this very beneficial program for Igloolimmiut.

I want to share my appreciation with our colleagues and ask that you share in appreciating the hard work of the recreation committee in Igloolik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

Member's Statement 216 – 6(2): Constituents Visit with the Governor General

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I say “good day” to the people of South Baffin, Nunavummiut, and my colleagues. Good day.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my gratitude and pride in the students who attend Kinngait's Peter Pitseolak, actually a student who is enrolled there. This student's name is Aseena Saila, and I wanted to publicly state my pride as she travelled to Ottawa to meet with the representative of the King, and this trip ran from November 29 up to December 2, 2022 for this meeting in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, Aseena was included in (interpretation ends) Experiential Learning (interpretation) specifically for nutrition and food processing. This allowed the students to benefit from this program, and she was selected due to her dedication and abilities, and her ability to represent her colleagues and Nunavummiut although she is just a student.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, Ms. Saila has been a good advocate of the people of Kinngait, and is a strong representative as a youth. In her very own words, I would like to share a quote from her of the experience, “that it was a very fun experience, and the kitchen we were working at were huge, and the people I was working with were all very nice. When I met Mary, she was so nice and it was an honour to meet her.”

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, the opportunities given to our youth, when they are represented at the highest level, like the Governor General, is very important. This is something that will have an impact in their lives. Again, I would like to thank Kylie Burke, Paul Finkelstein, and Chef Louis Charest, and the community of Kinngait who were able to support Aseena and her family. I know they think of her and are really proud of her. Let us express our appreciation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Member's Statement 217 – 6(2): Arviat Singers with Atii Angutiit

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Arviat, and Whale Cove residents. I stand up to recognize two singers in the community of Arviat who participated while the men's group met in the Kitikmeot in support of mental health.

Abraham Ijtaq Aggaaqtuq and Jacob Oqatsiak, who participated, and it must have been very exciting meeting during the trip. I know Aggaaqtuq, many people know the individual. He has travelled to many places, and people enjoy his songs. You often listen to them over the radio or through other means.

With Jacob Oqatsiak, he is also a new singer who often sings hip-hop, rap, and is also good with instruments. Jacob is very talented, and is often coined as being the “Drake of Nunavut”. He is being looked at as a very good artist. As we express our support for youth and mental health and knowing that it needs to be discussed more, we must include our youth more.

We express our gratitude and must not be ashamed of who we are as residents of Nunavut. When we go through difficulties and so forth, there is nothing to be ashamed of because life is very important and we have to be diligent about it, and be open and able to share our thoughts. Jacob Oqatsiak, I thank them both and I would like to express our appreciation with you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. I recognize the Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 278 – 6(2): Housing for Frontline Staff

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to supplement an answer I provided to the Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, on February 24, 2023, concerning community social services workers employed by the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, of the total 47 social worker positions, 28 are currently filled by indeterminate employees. The remaining 19 are filled by casual staff. Only two are vacant, and those are the positions in Naujaat and Sanikiluaq. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 314 – 6(2): Addressing Bullying

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education. I was very pleased to hear the minister’s statement last week on the work that is being done to tackle the issue of bullying.

The minister stated that her department has partnered with the Red Cross to deliver bullying prevention training programs in schools. Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate when the Red Cross team will be visiting which schools to deliver this training? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to the member for the question on bullying in our schools and the training that is happening.

Mr. Speaker, we have partnered with the Canadian Red Cross and we are also using technology to deliver this training. So how we are going about that is using the Connected North platform which is in all 45 of our schools and each school has access to the wide array of different types of training. The Connected North platform is used to deliver the bullying prevention training and I do know that there is bullying training that is scheduled frequently and there should be one, I believe, on March 10. If anyone is interested in our school community to take that training. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I picked up a copy of the *Bullying Prevention Pocket Book* provided by the minister's department and this seems to be a good step in the right direction. There is even a section on cyberbullying which I fear is becoming more common among our youth.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister describe what other resources are being made available to help school staff, students and parents address bullying, and specifically, cyberbullying, and how to prevent it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. I would like to just make a correction. I meant to say "bullying prevention training" in my last response.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education does have a number of supportive resources for bullying prevention and some of the resources that we have are a student virtual library, which include this red handbook that he was talking about; the *Bullying Prevention Pocketbook Guide*. As I stated last week, we support the Pink Shirt Day in schools, and we also have a resource guide for that special day, and it includes activities to support student engagement and build awareness in bullying and also has activities and resources that help students and school staff build positive relationships, to speak up, stand together, and stop bullying.

We have the *Crisis Response Guidelines for Nunavut Schools*, which is a school staff manual with guidelines for school emergency preparedness and crisis. The guide contains information for schools to help prevent and address bullying and resulting in incidents. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are very good resource tools for our Nunavut schools.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education has recently set up a database to monitor incidents of violence in Nunavut schools. While the definition of bullying is not always as clear cut as we would like, I think we can all agree that it is a form of aggression that can cause physical and social harm and distress. Will the minister commit to working with her departmental officials to include a means of reporting and tracking incidents of bullying when they are identified as occurring in Nunavut schools? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to the member for the question. We do have a new violence reporting tracking system which our schools are utilizing, and it is proven to be a top priority for us to ensure that we have a mechanism for our schools to report incidents that may be occurring in our schools so that we can track them and respond to them and be aware of the situations on a digital platform.

So for us, to have that new platform is hopefully going to be much more helpful for our schools and the territory as we roll into this new way of tracking. It will help us implement better practices and improve the practice of what might be happening. We hope that we can improve any situations that are happening in our schools by using this new mechanism. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 315 – 6(2): Impact of Iqaluit Water Situation on Government of Nunavut Operations

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources and they concern the impact of the current water infrastructure situation Iqaluit is having on Government of Nunavut operations.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks I've lost count of the number of emergency building shut-down notices that the GN has issued as a result of pipe freeze-ups, sewage back-ups, and loss of potable water. As the member of Iqaluit-Tasiluk mentioned yesterday, the volume seems to be unprecedented. Can the minister indicate if her department has been able to estimate the impact that these repeated shut-downs have had in terms of direct costs to engage contractors and indirect costs including lost productivity from employees being repeatedly sent home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): I apologize. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank you for asking that question. With regard to the shut-down of

workplaces due to a lack of water or other incidents, we have had many situations and there are some individuals, government employees, that have had to stay in the office though there is no water. I can't tell you the numbers right now, and if we're going to give out the numbers, we still don't know where we're at right now because the occurrences are ongoing at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important for us to have that information and I hope that the minister can provide that information in the future. The government is on record as indicating that the Department of Human Resources is working to develop a new remote work policy. I'm sure there will be some detailed discussion of this issue when the minister appears before the Committee of the Whole later in our sitting to consider her department's proposed main estimates and business plan.

Can the minister indicate if her department has been attempting to track the number of GN employees who have been able to productively work from home during the current situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. We do currently know how many employees are affected yet as this is unprecedented and it continues. However, the number of office closures is tracked by the Department of Community and Government Services. We are currently working on the policy that is not completed yet. There has to be a review of it first, but at this time with the water shutdowns, I can't tell you how many employees are affected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I imagine that it can be difficult for employees to work from home if their home is also frozen up, so I look forward to hearing that information.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that I'm not the only Iqaluit MLA who has been hearing horror stories from constituents in certain apartment buildings who have been going without water for days and sometimes weeks.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that a significant number of impacted residents are living in units that are leased by the GN under its staff housing program.

I think that it's fair to say that we have some leverage as a government to push the corporations that own the buildings to make better efforts to communicate clearly with their tenants and to treat them fairly in difficult situations.

The Department of Human Resources is responsible for the GN Staff Housing Policy.

Can the minister indicate what actions the government is taking in respect to communicating with the relevant landlords? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that very excellent question. Up to this point, as the government, we all hold different portfolios and responsibilities, particularly in discussing the issues causing problems here in Iqaluit.

The government employees, as you mentioned truthfully, will be impacted and there are a fair number here in Iqaluit facing that challenge, as they rent the staff housing units and to date, we have tried to keep atop of the workers in that situation. We have assigned staff to keep in communications with them to determine where in this process they are, and if we must transfer them either into another unit, or perhaps a position with available housing.

Some employees have had to relocate to other units when they are placed in a very uncomfortable position, and we are not just aware of this problem, we are searching to tangible solutions to date, and further, we will pay close attention to this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickee.

Question 316 – 6(2): Management Plan for Iqaluit Port Facility

Mr. Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Four months ago today, I had asked the Minister responsible for Economic Development and Transportation some questions regarding the Iqaluit port facility here in Iqaluit.

Back on November 1 I had asked the minister if the department had a work schedule in place to come up with a plan where stakeholders are involved in the discussions of the operations of the port, such as sealift carriers, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, local Iqaluit hauling contractors, and other stakeholders. I had asked if any of those had been consulted with the department establishing its operations plan.

Mr. Speaker, I know for a fact and I can read it right from the *Hansard* that the minister has given strong direction to his staff to get this done and to get a timeline, and they needed to get it done to be operational by this summer of 2023. At this time, I would like to ask the minister for an update on the plan for the Iqaluit port facility. Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of today, we have hired a consultant to help develop that plan and that work is being done right now. One of the instructions that we have is that they go to all the stakeholders and the stakeholders, from what I understand, are being approached and having discussions and when new information comes, we also direct them to have discussions with those that are interested in working with the port. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to further work on that project.

Mr. Speaker, I know it seems a little bit early to be talking about sealift, but it is coming sooner than we realize sometimes. When we look at the government planning and you look at the costs associated with shipping materials to the Arctic, there are operating costs. Mr. Speaker, there is potential for docking fees, security, no matter what management plan that the port is going to be operated on, and those services will need to be provided to shippers and local contractors picking up the goods. When we look at anticipated costs, when a business establishes its rates, such as a sealift shipping company, or a local contractor in picking up goods, they don't know where to base their numbers on, Mr. Speaker.

I will ask again; no matter what the management plan is, there are going to be some fixed costs associated with the facility. Can the minister describe what work has been done, to date, on establishing costs, and if any that are completed, what they are? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now, that work is being done. That discussion with the stakeholders, especially with sealift operators who are a key component to this, because the member is right; they need to know what fixed costs, or whatever cost is going to happen within that port. They need to know now because they are already planning for the sealift. So I am confident that those discussions are in place. When that is going to be, I just do not have that firm timeline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to seeing some completed work on this project. I have been asking about it for about a year now and this project has been in the books since 2015.

Mr. Speaker, one other issue related to the port facility that has been brought to my attention by constituents is the granular material that has been used on the causeway and boat launch, and it seems to be a short-term solution. My Curious George factor kicked in. When we look at the people, or residents that are launching boats out of that ramp, they are continuously turning up the granular material, and making it more and more

difficult as each day goes along for boat launch and boat recovery. What is the long-term plan for the causeway boat launch? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the long-term, one of the critical equipment that we need to identify for the causeway is possibly having the big rollers going there. The key, I think, to resolving that, is that we need to make sure that we keep compacting what's there. That's one of the long-term plans that we currently have for the causeway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 317 – 6(2): Status of Nunavut 3000 Housing Plan

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my constituents in Coral Harbour and Naujaat.

My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the people of both Naujaat and Coral Harbour, and I am committed to advocating for their needs.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased that the government's new Nunavut 3000 Housing Plan indicates that up to 150 new public housing units, affordable housing units and market housing units are planned for Naujaat and Coral Harbour over the next few years. Approximately two-thirds of the new units will be for public housing.

Can the Minister clarify how these allocations were determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our team at the Nunavut Housing Corporation has a list of people in the communities across Nunavut that are on the wait-lists and with use of the number of people on the wait-list and how quickly they turn over housing units and other factors were put in, and it was to be distributed as fairly as possible, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, the Nunavut Housing Corporation recently issued a request for proposals for the design and build of residential multiplexes in a number of communities, including Coral Harbour.

The plan for Coral Harbour is a 12-unit residential multiplex. Can the minister clarify how this type of unit was selected? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The wait-list is heavily weighed on in each community. In the wait-list it also identifies what size of residence the people on the wait-lists are waiting for. Using the wait-list in consultation with the local housing associations or local housing authority in this case for Coral Harbour, those consultations happen before tenders are put out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) During yesterday's sitting of the House, my colleague representing Netsilik asked about the role and responsibilities of the new "Inuit Housing Entity" that has been created by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Can the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation indicate what discussions he has had with NTI's leadership concerning the role and responsibilities of the new "Inuit Housing Entity"? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could assure my colleague that there have been far more discussions between the senior managers of the housing corporation with our president and the senior staff of Nunavut Tunngavik, but I personally have met with the previous vice-president of Nunavut Tunngavik, Mr. Eetoolook, along with the Northern Affairs minister, myself, and our senior staff to discuss our Nunavut 3000 plan and the plans of Nunavut Tunngavik. We've had one meeting in that sector, but dialogue continues between the office of the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the office of Nunavut Tunngavik that pertains to housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Question 318 – 6(2): Boarding Home Complaints

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to the people of Pond Inlet as well as my family in Pond Inlet.

I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I recently held a radio show in Pond Inlet and a number of my constituents had complaints about the boarding home in Iqaluit. Many medical travellers from my community find the atmosphere at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home very unwelcoming.

One example, this is just an example, one elder was very excited to see an old friend when he stepped into the building. He was very excited, laughing and joyful. The staff member, who could not speak Inuktitut and did not understand his excitement, immediately assumed he was intoxicated and told him he could not stay there and called the RCMP. Luckily an Inuk RCMP officer went to the boarding home and intervened and the elder got his room back.

Can the minister describe what level of cultural orientation is provided to the staff at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleague for asking the question about this. (interpretation ends) First of all, I am unable to speak to the individual circumstances that were used as an example. You know obviously it is a concerning type of situation. So in terms of the Tammaativvik Boarding Home, the contract is held by the Nova Group, and so the Department of Health is continually working with Nova Group, as with all of our other boarding home contractors, to manage the service.

So I can say that working along with the contractor, they have made improvements recently where they have, right across the board, where we have identified the issues of staffing, the food services, transportation, accommodations, security, as well as environmental safety. They do have new training programs in place for their staff. However, I am unable to say whether, to what degree the cultural orientation is part of that training. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have complained that the Tammaativvik Boarding Home drivers refuse to take them to their appointments or to deliver meals who stay in hotels when the boarding home is full.

Can the minister describe what types of transportation should be available to medical travel clients while they are staying at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the transportation that is available to clients, I am unable to speak to that level of detail. I know that there's transportation provided from the airport to the facility and from the facility to the airport, as well as to appointments as required. In terms of the other transportation pieces, I do not have that information in front of me, Mr. Speaker, but I can mention that the move to the new boarding home facility should alleviate a lot of the

overflow related issues where from a health perspective, we recognize that having medical travellers split between the boarding home and the hotel is not good. It is not optimal. Ideally, all the medical travellers being located in one boarding home will streamline things in terms of helping with missed appointments, and helping with other logistical type issues that the contractor is trying to manage currently. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. We will be expecting the improvements when the new Tammaativvik is opened. (interpretation ends) I appreciate that services are provided at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home under a contract and not by staff from the Department of Health.

I recognize that this makes it difficult for the minister to address complaints and concerns directly. He has to go through the contractor to get them addressed.

Will the minister commit to talking with the contractor of the Tammaativvik Boarding Home to see if a board or oversight body could be set up for clients or other concerned individuals to bring their complaints to and have them resolved more promptly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can commit to raising that issue through my staff, through their regular working relationship to the contractor. I wouldn't necessarily be the one to bring that concept to the contractor. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that would be appropriate, but I can commit to raising the concept of a board.

However, I should mention as it is a related note, when it comes to the medical travel program funded through Non-Insured Health Benefits, we are currently having quite a difficult time with our partners at Indigenous Services Canada in terms of making sure that Indigenous Services Canada pays the full cost of the program. Mr. Speaker, it's not a new scenario for the government, but unfortunately we're finding ourselves in a spot where we're being asked to supplement the budgetary allocations under the program. It's something that's a top concern for my department and this is the file that we're talking about, so I thought I should share that with the member. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 319 – 6(2): Arviat Fuel Storage Capacity

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say "good day" to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the Minister of Community and Government Services today.

Mr. Speaker, I have questioned the minister a few times and it's not about lotteries.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, the Arviat tank farm, we've had exchanges here in the House, we've had exchanges in the minister's office, and the minister agrees with me that Arviat should have had a new operating tank farm yesterday as the storage capacity is not enough. Last year there were 400,000 litres of diesel that had to be airlifted into Arviat because Arviat was running out of diesel.

I'll ask my first question to the minister. Can the minister give us an update on the Arviat bulk tank fuel project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. Mr. Speaker, the design for the Arviat tank farm capacity increase is at approximately 75 percent complete and we are aware that the hamlet council has been dealing with some issues around zoning, but we are trying to move forward despite these challenges. Mr. Speaker, project completion is still scheduled for the 2026-27 fiscal year and we are trying to proceed as quickly as possible to avoid flying fuel to Arviat into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister should be aware, there were recently rezoning meetings and public meetings held in Arviat where one of the departmental officials was at the meeting and due to personal commitments, I could not attend the meeting, but I was given an update on some of the discussion and events that happened at the meeting.

In the rezoning hearing that was going on for one of the locations that the hamlet council had picked to put the new tank farm, one of the government officials from the minister's department stated that if this project were down south in this kind of location, this project would not go ahead. I just want to get confirmation if that's the minister's position. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wasn't at that meeting *per se*, but as per our *Hamlets Act* and in accordance with the processes that we follow, I as minister would review the zoning bylaw once it has been approved by hamlet council. We're

proceeding on that path and I can't comment on a specific instance where I wasn't at that meeting *per se*, but I thank the member for raising it anyway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At no time did I insinuate that the minister was at the meeting. What I said was that the official stated a fact and it's very important when government officials tell the general public at a public meeting what the position of that person representing the department says. It matters. It matters what a government official says. What a government official says generally is the government's position until otherwise.

On the same topic, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the minister has received a recommendation yet from the same official because the same official told in public and I will show what the official told the people of the public. This official that represents the Department of Community and Government Services said that he's the one that's going to make the recommendation of whether this project goes in this location right now. He is the one that's going to be here, here, or here and right now he's here.

I would just like to get a confirmation from the minister whether this individual has given the thumbs up or the thumbs down to the minister on this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about an individual staff member that, of course, we need to be mindful around not encroaching on an employee's rights or their opinions. We need to respect and be mindful around how they conduct themselves, of course, but at the same time, as I stated, we are proceeding our due diligence on this matter.

We have agreed from our department standpoint in working with the hamlet. I received correspondence from the mayor and we are proceeding with providing as much information as they need on selecting an appropriate site. The tank farm definitely needs an increase and we want to see that happen. That's the main goal.

Right now we're also committed to working with and making improvements on identifying and clarifying roles around departmental staff and/or contractors. Sometimes we have to engage with contractors and how we're going about, in consultation with the communities, so clarifying those roles and processes when we're planning a major capital project of this nature.

I think we're going to be getting to what we need for Arviat and it's just a matter of time when that happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 320 – 6(2): Fuel Tanks and Fuel Spills

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, a major fuel spill occurred last year in the community of Taloyoak's health centre which is requiring major remediation efforts.

Mr. Speaker, there have been other major fuel spill incidents involving schools in other Nunavut communities, including Rankin Inlet and Igloolik, and recently Taloyoak.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to annual inspections of fuel tanks in Government of Nunavut buildings, can the minister confirm which department has the lead responsibility for undertaking the inspections? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. At my department we are committed to *avatittini kamattiarniq* in respecting our environment, and when there are fuel spills that occur on government property, my department is responsible and works with either contractors or other parties to respond immediately.

There have been quite a number of spills that we have had to deal with, but in terms of... We always have assessments as well as mitigation measures completed and reports have to be filed, so this is a normal standard procedure through my department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister confirm if the inspections scheduled for fuel tanks located at the Government of Nunavut buildings in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk is up to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the specifics for his constituency, I would have to get back to the member on that, but I'll state that we do continue to investigate measures on reducing risk on our fuel system failures and to avoid any further spills around fuel and our storage tanks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, minister, for your response. It is my understanding that private homeowners in Nunavut are generally advised to replace their home heating fuel tanks every 10 years in order to ensure that they are fully covered

by insurance. When it comes to the large-scale fuel tanks that are located at schools and health centres and other public buildings, can the minister how frequently they are supposed to be replaced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For government owned assets and their fuel tank replacement, those are addressed typically through the department's ongoing lifecycle budgets, for example. I'll use Education as example; they set aside funds for generators or their schools' mechanical features to be replaced when they need them. This is ongoing. We do track that information and look at when those need to be replaced before they become at risk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerk.

Question 321 – 6(2): Intercommunity Roads

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the residents of Amittuq and Nunavut.

I had already voiced my concerns about education, specifically our local school, however, I want to direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation about the construction of roads within Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is well aware that just last year, on March 1, 2022 he released an RFP for studying the feasibility of constructing a highway in the Kivalliq region and whether this connection project would proceed.

Now the communities he mentioned last year are: Arviat, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet and Baker Lake. Now, can the minister clarify if the Government of Nunavut, and in particular, the Department of Economic Development and Transportation, as I imagine, are fully support this initiative?

Does this apply to interconnecting roads between one community to another community? Can the minister confirm if he would be willing to support other communities who propose road projects to connect communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The study we are conducting for the Kivalliq highway is almost at the point where we can start preparing our draft report through this ministerial level discussions, and he kind of moved me forward.

At this time, this is where the project is at, however, with regards to community road projects, most of these requests are accommodated through the funding programs we offer annually. There are two programs that can be applied to community road projects, and these programs are very popular as every year, communities apply for funding.

The funding requests are usually also above our allocation amounts set aside from the program funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am happy to speed up the process in getting information about this program, and sometimes that is the only way to get information. I will also make this statement on his behalf, as I believe he supports interconnecting communities.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to go to the legislative library to read over the *Handsards* from the First Legislative Assembly. Sit back and relax so I will start right from the start until I finish this; so make sure you guys can relax.

>>Laughter

Just kidding here, Mr. Speaker. Exactly 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, one of my predecessors, as one of the ministers, wanted to look into the possibilities of connecting the communities of Sanirajak and Igloolik by a road. As the minister knows, the two communities are less than 100 Kms apart. To be precise, Mr. Speaker, they are 68 Kms apart.

At the time, the minister of the day indicated that he would be willing to consider the matter. As of 2023, Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate that his department is willing to issue a similar request for proposal and study the feasibility of this idea? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These ideas and the plans that are putting in place when we are trying to connect communities; connecting two communities through a road system has always been a vision right from the start of Nunavut because the only road system that we do have is the airline, and that is the most expensive transportation mode. So, if there are communities that can connect through a road system, we will definitely look into those, and right now we are looking into the five Kivalliq road communities.

One of the immediate obstacles that I see, if we're looking at an all-weather road from Sanirajak to Igloolik, is that Igloolik is on an island and Sanirajak is on the mainland. That would probably be one of the biggest obstacles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister for identifying there is an obstacle between the two communities in the region of Amittuq. If there are any obstacles that are stopping this intercommunity connection, I would presume then that there would be an alternative way in studying more of how the community of Igloodik, being on an island... Perhaps there can be a ferry from the island to the mainland. Perhaps that can be an alternative rather than being an obstacle.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch base on the Economic Development and Transportation *Community Transportation Initiatives Program Policy* here, which provides funding for small-scale road projects. I didn't see anything in there when it comes to these two municipalities of Sanirajak and Igloodik, and this program is proposal based, which means that the municipalities have the responsibility in submitting requests for funding.

Now, in saying that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the minister indicate if this program allows the two municipalities of Igloodik and Sanirajak to submit a joint application into community road access. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know. I'll definitely look at that. That's something that's worthwhile. I'll use Kivalliq as a prime example that has been using the Community Transportation Initiatives Program for a number of years. For the community of Whale Cove and the community of Chesterfield Inlet, they have strategically made their access road heading towards Rankin Inlet. Those are community initiatives and that's something that would be ideal.

If Sanirajarmiut and Igloodimmiut want to do that separately too, they can submit their proposals in because with the transportation initiatives, there's a maximum amount that goes to each community. If they submitted separately, they would probably be more successful of having two projects being done. I just wanted to use that as an example and as an opportunity. The transportation initiatives program is a community-based one and where they want to go is where we help fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 322 – 6(2): Medical Travel Concerns

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk about the medical travel concerns in Kugluktuk. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, an issue has been brought to my attention by the residents of Kugluktuk with respect to the medical travel booking system. Medical travel bookings are often

done at the very last minute, which results in people missing their medical appointments or having to reschedule because there are no available seats on flights.

Can the minister tell us whether he is aware of this issue and why the problems continue to occur? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking that question. We are aware of the problems that need to be resolved in this area. (interpretation ends) In terms of the medical travel program and the need for operational improvements to that program, we are currently looking for opportunities. The way that we're planning for improvement is by doing a comprehensive review of our Medical Travel Policy and that includes consulting with stakeholders around this policy.

We are currently consulting with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated as per the Katujjiqatigiinniq policy and Article 32 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, and our plan is that operational improvements would come following the policy review process. The plan is that a new policy and new operations would come together and bring improvements. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) *Uqaqtii*, the booking for medical travel is currently being done out of Cambridge Bay. It is my understanding that Kugluktuk is not the only community that is struggling with the inefficiencies of the current medical travel booking system.

Can the minister indicate whether any consideration has been given to establishing a medical travel staff position in each Kitikmeot community so that appointments and travel can be booked more directly and efficiently? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of decentralizing the medical travel booking function, I can't say whether that would be part of the improvements that would come in the future, but we do understand the need along the lines of what the member mentioned, that it's important for us to provide enough advance notice to our travellers that we should be saying you have a ticket two weeks from now as opposed to you have a ticket two days from now. We understand that travelling is disruptive in terms of work and home life and so that has been identified as an area that does need further work and improvement, but currently I can't say whether decentralizing the booking function would be in the cards for the future. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The residents of Kugluktuk have expressed concerns that their health is being negatively affected by the current lack of efficiency in the medical travel booking system.

Will the minister commit to reviewing the current system and making changes to improve how appointments and travel arrangements are made? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Yes, I can commit to that. The main goal of reviewing the Medical Travel Policy is to improve and enhance the medical travel services for Nunavut clients, so the comprehensive review includes a number of areas, including communication tools and resources, the structure of the program, including other programs such as oral health, mental health and addictions, travel, including better clarifying things around escorts, and also working on the process around supporting travellers who have been banned from boarding home facilities. That has been identified as an area needing further clarification. It is a big task, but we are working with our partners. We're currently consulting and we're committed to making improvements to medical travel for Kuglukturmiut and all Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 323 – 6(2): Local Housing Organizations

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's current business plan indicates that it has "...engaged a consulting firm to produce a report on Local Housing Organization governance models to see how the public housing allocation process and organizational structure can be improved." Can the minister indicate when this work is expected to be completed? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to that consulting process, it has been completed and we are currently reviewing their documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to hear that as the work is continuing on. (interpretation ends) By saying that, I do hear concerns from constituents about some practices, including the allocation of units to housing association organization's employees. Can the minister confirm the extent to which the Nunavut Housing Corporation unit allocations are done for local housing organization's employees? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The local housing organizations in the communities have different allocation policies. The housing board of directors are the ones who make the decision as to who, when and how a tenant can move into a unit. The board makes the decision as to who will stay on the waiting list, who will enter on a unit, and how many houses are allocated for the housing staff. It is at the discretion of the local housing organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why is it in past years, when they had an acting director, or if the board of directors were not allocating the houses, the allocation process went to the Kinngait district office. That is how it was done. (interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, some local housing organizations or associations whose board members are elected by community residents. Can the minister indicate if he is currently considering changing the legislation so that all local housing organizations have the same structure as either elected associations or appointed authorities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are going to be reviewing all policies, and I have on more than one occasion stated that we should form a committee, including elders to serve on these committees to review and to make recommendations for change. The minister appoints the board members, and 19 communities elect their board of directors. There are some pros and cons on how those are set up, and we are currently looking at whether we have an adequate amount of board members sitting on those councils, or if we have a shortage.

We all know that we have problems with allocations. An individual will be told that they have been allocated a unit, and then all of a sudden somebody else enters that building. There is a need for change to be more accommodating to Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 324 – 6(2): Wastewater Testing

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate being recognized a second time today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health and they refer to wastewater testing.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody would say that the COVID-19 pandemic was a good thing to happen. However, I think we all recognize that dealing with the outbreak opened our eyes to the many possibilities and opportunities to monitor and manage health risks in our population.

Mr. Speaker, during the height of the pandemic, in the spring of 2021, the Department of Health initiated wastewater testing in the communities of Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet to detect the presence of COVID-19 in these communities.

Can the minister provide an overview of how often wastewater testing is currently being conducted in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking that question. (interpretation ends) Yes, the member makes a great point in that in raising the COVID pandemic, unfortunately it's still very much a reality across Nunavut as well as Canada. It's a real serious health issue.

However, as we transition away from previous measures around dealing with the pandemic, we look at things like the COVID hotline, which has now been deactivated, the COVID Secretariat within Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs is now scheduled to sunset as of March 31. We're shifting gears, to quote our chief public health officer, to deal with COVID much like other ongoing health issues.

Currently wastewater testing in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet is not happening and it hasn't been happening for quite some time. It was an area that we wanted to continue, but we were faced with some capacity issues, preventing us from continuing the wastewater sampling. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, wastewater testing was used in Nunavut as a means of identifying the presence of a highly infectious and potentially fatal virus. However, wastewater analysis can also be used to identify the use of nicotine, cocaine, methamphetamines, and other substances.

Given the minister's mention of those capacity issues, I'm still interested to know: can the minister describe what consideration has been given by his department to analyzing wastewater to detect and monitor the use of illicit drugs in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. That's a really interesting concept. I have to admit that I haven't really given much consideration to wastewater testing and the potential for other areas that we could be monitoring. I know that we do take the illicit drug use issue seriously to the point where we do have naloxone available at health facilities across Nunavut. Unfortunately Nunavut has had a need for those types of kits in some cases.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the biggest limitations around wastewater testing in Nunavut is that there are currently only two communities that can be sampled. If we figure out a way to take wastewater samples from communities on trucked wastewater, I think it would be something that would expand the potential territory-wide for us going forward, but we're not able to do that as of yet. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is much anecdotal evidence of the increased use of hard drugs in our northern communities, especially in Iqaluit. Without early detection, careful monitoring, and effective public health programs, the consumption of illicit drugs can easily turn into a harmful and devastating epidemic.

Will the minister of commit to exploring the feasibility of waste water testing for illicit drug use in Iqaluit and reporting back to this House on his findings? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can commit to looking into that topic. It would likely be in collaboration with other departments on this, mainly the Department of Justice, in terms of dealing with illicit drug use. In terms of the waste water avenue and what the potential there is there, I can commit to exploring that with my officials. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickee.

Question 325 – 6(2): Elder Care Strategy

Mr. Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Seniors.

Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs is leading the comprehensive Seniors Strategy Review. My question to the Minister responsible for Seniors is: how is the minister engaged with this strategy, as its being developed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Culture and Heritage is working to support the drafting of this strategy further, and with respect to the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Committee and Tuttarvik, we are consulting the various committees and the foundational organizations.

We are trying to schedule meetings to discuss these changes, and if they request further assistance, or if they wish to be involved in the development of this strategy, that is how we are engaging these different bodies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll ask the minister to keep her responsibility for Elders hat on. Will the minister be attending the consultations that have been proposed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These dates are listed and published, which we are currently reviewing to determine if we can set aside time to attend to these meetings. We are working with the organizers to listen to the recommendations and I too, wish to personally hear directly from the elders on the kinds of support systems they require as they voice their ideas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it was lost in the interpretation, but I didn't get a commitment from the minister of whether the minister was going to be attending, or not attending those community consultations.

My final question, Mr. Speaker, is: what are some of the focal points of this strategy that the minister is considering priorities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me clarify, yes, I am committing to attend some of the consultations, and I am reviewing the published dates to determine my availability. Further, with respect to the drafting of this strategy, which the elders consider critically important... (interpretation ends) Continue? (interpretation) Hmm. It is not working?

Speaker (interpretation): I apologize. (interpretation ends) We are just having a bit of technical difficulty at this time.

Am I on? Okay. *Quana*. We got cut off when Ms. Quassa was answering her question. Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try and start from the beginning, or I can continue from where I left off. However, I would like to explain that regarding the upcoming meetings, I do not think I will have too many other responsibilities at that time, and I may have time to attend the consultations with the elders. I would like to hear how the elders feel. Also, the documents are going to be recorded about better care for elders? I would like that to be included.

Also, for the elders who are sent out of the communities, how can they be better taken care of when they're sent out. We need to see how we can improve their lives, and not just be looked at, but rather, be more empowered. Those are my thoughts at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Members be aware, the time allotted for question period. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request that question period be extended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There is a nay. Written Questions, Item 7. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Replies to Budget Address. Item 11. Petitions. Item 12. Responses to Petitions. Item 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernek.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 105 – 6(2): Letter from Enoki Irgittuq Regarding Boarding Home

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table a document from my constituency, a letter about the Tammaativvik Boarding Home. I table it to the House so that the ministers and other MLAs can review it with care. It's a complaint about Tammaativvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Item 15. Notices of Motions. Item 16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17. Motions. Item 18. First Reading of Bills. Item 19. Second Reading of Bills. Item 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 12, 16, 17, 18, and 21 with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:37 and Committee resumed at 16:05*

Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Hickeys): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order, please. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 16, 17, 18, and 21. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to commence with the review of the main estimates and business plan for the Department of Community and Government Services, followed by the Department of Education. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Is the committee in agreement that we first deal with Bill 18?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 –
Community and Government Services – Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to ask Minister Joanasié: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee with you?

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your blessing, yes.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee give its blessing?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. I'll take that as an agreement. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. Minister Joanasié, if you would like to introduce your officials to the committee, please.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Deputy Minister Kyle Seeley and to my right is Director of Financial Services Mandy Hickey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just for committee members, we are on page J-6. Information Management and Information Technology. \$51,768,000. The first name I have on my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the minister and his officials.

My question is, (interpretation ends) your department's draft 2023-26 main estimates and business plan indicate that the new "Telecommunication Commercialization" is being created during the 2023-24 fiscal year. What are the division's specific priorities for the 2023-24 fiscal year? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question on the commercialization. This is in regard to the fibre project and this division would be established in advance of the fibre network being linked to Iqaluit. That would operate this infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. Once the network reaches Iqaluit, can it be used by the general public? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once the network reaches Iqaluit, all residents would be able to use it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) Your department's draft 2023-26 business plan indicates on page 215 that the budget for the Telecommunications program increased by 41.9 percent, from \$13,136,000 in the 2022-23 fiscal year to \$18,636,000 in the 2023-24 fiscal year. What accounts for these increases? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. \$1.103 million accounts for compensation and benefits, and if I break that down; \$589,000 in response to the new collective agreement salary adjustments, and the \$514,000 to support three PY's in the telecommunication commercialization. \$5.5 million for low-earth orbit bandwidth services and finally, \$409,000 on software licensing and information-communications technology. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki,

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister for explaining that. This will be my last question. (interpretation ends) Your department's 2021-24 business plan indicates that it was, I quote "Working closely with industry leaders in digitalization on the development of information management digitalization standard and potential creation of the information management act."

What is the timeline for introducing new legislation, and to what extent has your department been consulting with the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner on this initiative? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: If you could give me a moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies and thanks for your patience.

There is no specific timeline in response to the act, but we are commencing this project. There is scoping completed, we are engaging in data architects that will help and advise and create a report on the strategy for implementing new data classification systems for information management. We are still receiving feedback through the policy officials committee on the information sensitivity and handling standards, but we are also engaging the access to information privacy processes as well. This will be an ongoing process between our department and all the relevant stakeholders involved; both within the GN and outside. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't have that many questions. Under the Information Management/Information Technology branch there, for purchase services I am just curious as to why it went from \$13 million last year and its now \$19 million; when is roughly \$6 million worth of purchasing going to be happening? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: If you could give me a moment again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's in relation to the \$5.5 million low-earth orbit bandwidth purchase. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. What communities are getting this low-earth orbit service in Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Low-earth orbit would be able to offer high speed and low latency capabilities to all 25 communities, and it will enable new capabilities for healthcare, education, economic development, and overall quality of life, so we expect every community can benefit through this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was not my question, I'm glad for the information, but my question was which communities are going to be getting low orbit satellite service from CGS? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. All 25 through this, the \$5.5 million that we've identified in this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd hate to be a stickler, but it's still not answering my question. Are all communities getting Starlink? Because my question was which communities are going to be getting the Starlink service from Community and Government Services? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not just Starlink that we're working with here, and there's multiple options, including; there's OneWeb, Starlink, Amazon, and Telesat, all these offer low-Earth orbit solutions, and so testing has started in November 22, and there have been positive results, and there are commercially available options within Nunavut that we're further exploring.

For Telesat, they had initial testing done back in the Fall of 2019, and this is very new technology, and I think everyone wants to see and reap the benefits of this exciting opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, all the communities want to see excitement potential that all the communities will get it, just a simple question. Which communities will be getting low-Earth orbit signals? Has that be determined? Is there going to be all communities will get this service? Half the communities? A quarter of the communities? We're asked to approve \$6 million for low-Earth orbit satellites, and I would just like to get a second picture. How many communities are going to be receiving this service? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: All 25. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: That wasn't so hard, eh? I shouldn't have had to ask that three times. Staying on with the internet there, are all government offices in the communities hooked-up to fibre optics within the communities? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. The next question should be easy to answer too. Are they all being used? Are they connected and being used? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As far as I'm concerned, yes, they should be all online and ready for use in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are all communities hooked up to the government email system, or some still using other internet providers in the community? I'll just take for example, when I used work for the government, we had the Qiniq system to get our government email. Is there internet providers still in some of the communities, or are all communities hooked up directly to the government email system? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They're all hooked up and being used by GN operations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With this extra service that will be provided, if the budget is approved for the extra \$6 million to purchase bandwidth, will there be less of other bandwidth within the government, or the government will use more bandwidth overall in total compared to what they're using right now? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We aren't cancelling other bandwidth usage that we currently use, and this is supplementing our existing need, and this is our

every year, our government operations continue to grow on our information management and technology and bandwidth needs, and this is to support that growth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question. Since this is above and beyond what the government normally uses, as the minister stated that every year, more and more use, if this option was not available, what was the government's plan B in terms of the more data they would have needed to continue their operation in an efficient manner? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our plan is still around connecting Nunavut with fibre, and that will alleviate a huge chunk of the bandwidth here in Iqaluit, alongside that, our geo-stationary near, the GEOs, the satellites that currently rely on, that are not the LEOs, but the GEOs are still in place, and also both continue to be useful, especially as a backup once in the future, if Nunavut's relying on fibre or low-Earth orbit, there's always going to be a need for, just like a power plant, if one generator is down, the second generator would be used when there's an outage. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I think redundancy is word here the minister was looking for. The next name I have on my list, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is in regard to network of satellite communication system. Last year, if I'm not mistaken, I had asked the department to look at the request for proposal, and I haven't got a response.

Now my question is, did the department look at the request for proposal that was given to all the MLAs, and that proposal came from the Qiniq SSI Micro. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié, go ahead.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I recall correctly, that was an unsolicited proposal and that's outside of our normal processes. When the government needs a goods or service, we issue a request for proposal. That goes through that process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now question is for the other networks. Did they put in their request for proposals for the satellite communications system for the government to utilize? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. Just to get confirmation. Is the member asking for the list of proponents that submitted to the tender request? Mr. Quqqiaq, can you just confirm that?

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister just stated before, he mentioned about Amazon, he mentioned about Starlink, was there any kind of submission from the networks? Or did they submit any request for proposals? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's quite difficult to follow. (interpretation) I am sorry. (interpretation ends) I am having a hard time on this topic right now. Maybe if I may, have the deputy respond on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. Mr. Seeley, go ahead, please.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I'm understanding the questions properly, if there was an unsolicited proposal, I guess, linked to some work that the department was contemplating, in that we were looking at a wireless core network for the GN to operate within Nunavut communities, and doing a couple of pilots. That project didn't proceed. We didn't go ahead with it. It was not awarded.

The funding that's contemplated within this year's main estimates bill is to enter into new contracts, which we threw a tender out, subject to approval in this room, of the funding. As far as the actual award goes for lower orbit satellite services, that would go out pending, and awarded pending approval in the legislature.

The previous project did not proceed, in that it just simply wasn't awarded. If I'm connecting me, you had a first question with the second one. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had looked at the request for proposal, and I read it thoroughly, I had spoken to the ones that proposed it, it stated that if the government had brought in with the proposal, it would allow 25 Nunavummiut, maybe times three, that would be 755 employees if they bought into that proposal.

Not only that, Mr. Chairman, the request for proposal also stated that if the GN does bind to this proposal, and if they wanted more bandwidth, and what capacity, all the GN had to do to submit to the CRTC, which increases the bandwidth, which increase the megabyte per speed, and that would improve the services that the proposal stated in.

Sadly, that the department didn't look into the proposal. It would be great if they look into the proposal, because that would employ Nunavummiut: that's 75 jobs for Nunavummiut.

I guess this will be my final question. If the fibre project goes ahead, and if there is a fibre connected within Iqaluit now, will the Kivalliq and the Kitikmeot will be getting the fibre anytime soon? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Quqqiaq. I'm going to stray away from the unsolicited proposal information, especially some of the detailed information that the member spoke to, I think that's a discussion that would probably be best to have with the minister on the side, outside of this chamber.

When we receive information on unsolicited proposals, they are trying to lobby members to promote the government to take a certain direction.

We can take some stances, and ask questions on, but when we question the department's desire to move forward through a negotiated or through an open tender in process, it muddies the waters a little bit. I'm going to leave that one alone, but I will allow your other question at the end where you had requested if Iqaluit obtains fiber connection, what connectivity would be available in the other two regions. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once Iqaluit is connected on fibre, it will hugely benefit those that aren't on fibre. All other 24 communities would benefit and we'd see an increase in their, not just bandwidth, but internet speeds.

As for expansion to Kivalliq, we do have a proposal under the Universal Broadband Fund for that. We're still waiting on a response to our proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry to jump the gun a bit. This is the area where I wanted to help the government. To have a fibre link connected to Iqaluit, once that fibre is cut and then there's no service, I would assume that the satellite would be back up proponent for the GN to utilize.

Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman, just more of a comment. I wanted to know hopefully there's a backup system in place once that fibre is cut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Quqqiaq. The minister did mention redundancies through the low-earth orbit as well as the existing satellite bandwidth. That's the purpose of the redundancy. Any other names under page J-6?

If I may, I'd just like to get a clarification from the business plan. On page 216, when it speaks to the Telecommunication Commercialization division, and I do realize that there has been a lot of work within the fibre project, and there is a number different options that were being explored, versus privatization, versus government-owned networks. From what I see from this, starting a few person-years to start an actual telecommunications business, which works out the pricing, the commercial terms, different conditions,

marketing, sales activities... . So basically we're creating a government-run infrastructure bandwidth network business.

I would just like to get a little bit more longer-term planning on this. As we all realize, when you're dealing with telecommunications, it's a very precise field and there is a lot of technological positions that would entailed with that. When we look at the global current circumstances of staffing and capacity, I would like some assurances from the government that feel that they could move forward with a business model of this nature and not run into issues that we hear of everyday in this House of capacity issues. When we're dealing with the communications network for the entire territory, it's very concerning to me that we're taking over a business model that may not be as sustainable as maybe forecast right now. Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With this direction that we've set right now, we do know that we want to start off small. There's a lot of unknowns on how this infrastructure... . Once it's rolled out and in full operation, in full swing of things, we do anticipate that it would involve this division that is operating it. Yes, there were different options explored around whether it's a GN Crown corporation, a private entity, or through a P3, but right now the most viable and logical way, we got advice on this, is to have it within the department. Right now we're asking for three person years. We do anticipate further down the line to add additional staff to that; at least two and maybe even more beyond that. Again, that's with the mind that once it's in full swing of things... . The intention is to be the Internet service provider, the ISPs, and not the actual... . If that makes sense for you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Somewhat. I'm sure, as the project matures, we will learn more about it. Just one final, in the past year or two, there have been some objections to moving forward with this project from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and some other organizations and I'm just wondering: what is the current status of those discussions? Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a good question. We know that there have been different proponents coming up for fibre projects around the north through different routes and through the High Arctic or what have you.

Most recently Nunavut Tunngavik, of course, we know that we did sign and agreed to a non-disclosure agreement on our Government of Nunavut approved project to share information and compare it with what they might have in mind. I don't think that has proven to be as fruitful as we had hoped to, but we are re-engaging the discussions around how we can best move forward around all the options that we're prepared to look at.

There's a lot going on with the fibre project and I know that there is a lot of interest to this commercialization aspect too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your departmental work plan, there's a commitment to work to identify and develop requirements with Human Resources and Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs for new IM/IT resource tools for the Government of Nunavut employees. Can you give us an update on the work that has been done so far? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: If you will give me a moment.

Thank you and my apologies. We are adapting and growing our IM/IT. When we're recruiting and maintaining reliable future and current employees, it's all about empowering the career leadership as well as the progress, development, and creating a good work environment.

Our IM/IT division works with all GN departments to expand the service catalogue around what's available to upscale current staff to keep base with changes to new technologies so that they're aware of how to use certain functions; taking advantages of online training opportunities, as well as provide communications skills and improvement opportunities for staff if they're interested in expanding their soft skills; certification pathways are being explored for staff in their respective fields; and also to ensure effective onboarding processes for new hires and this includes security awareness training.

Those are some of the activities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I realize that this division, if not department, is loaded with acronyms and unless they're very common acronyms that everybody is familiar with, can you please refrain from using them. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. I wonder if the department has also been working with Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Education in order to ensure that the curriculum that they are using to educate our up-and-coming and potential employees is keeping up to date with new information management and technology programming that the Government of Nunavut is using. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we work with all GN departments, including Nunavut Arctic College as an agency. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going back to priorities from 2022-23 and I may have missed an update or a question on this, but a priority for 2022-23 was to

“Continue supporting the promotion of language through technology with the integration of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun into the Microsoft Machine Translator Project.” I’m wondering if you can give us an update on how that went. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This exciting translator app, we know, Culture and Heritage, we had an event for November/December. This is ongoing work that we’re doing and there are a lot of capabilities that we see and it will help bridge the language divide and enable further positive communications, I think, across the territory and I think it will help interpreter/translators and regular Nunavummiut, both internally and externally to the GN.

Our information management and technology team coordinates with Microsoft and all the departments, including agencies, businesses, and Nunavummiut. There is a communications strategy being developed to inform internal and external stakeholders. There’s a video and user guide being prepared. I know it was highlighted during and supported for language month. We’re identifying users within our government on coordinating testing on this translator app.

I’ve got to say that Culture and Heritage has been a key partner in this and we want to applaud all the interpreter/translators and various contractors involved that have made this project a reality to date. There are different phases that this project has been going through, but we’re anticipating phase 3. It is currently being planned and by the end of this month.

I know during the event that they talked about having speech-to-text and text-to-speech capabilities. That would really, in my mind, be a game changer. If an app is listening to Inuktitut and it translates it for you on the spot, I think it would be a very interesting tool for anyone to have a device like that in their hand. I think there are a lot of opportunities and potential and I see a huge benefit coming out of this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasié. It just made me think of Siri learning Inuktitut. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, I think most people can attest to how great it is to use technological translating equipment for many languages around the world. However, there is really no replacing the breadth of knowledge that interpreters and translators bring to the work that they do.

I’m curious about whether or not CGS is working with other departments to set up policies and procedures in regard to using technology such as this, especially when it comes to communicating with our public, due to the fact that one cannot always be assured that a translation that is stemming from technology will translate the nuances of the message that is being shared. I’m curious about that.

I'm also curious about how and what work is being done into working with other departments to create policies, and I may be overstepping here into another department's responsibilities; however, we know that many Inuit are waiting to be tested for Inuit language bonuses. When it comes to this technology, what are the policies around Inuit being able to use this technology in relation to receiving a bonus?

There are a couple of questions in there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Although the Directorate does have a policy division, I think they would be heavily reliant upon this division for any advice, so I will allow the question. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, with any new policies being created as a result of these technological advances, we will strive to work with our partners at Culture and Heritage and/or elsewhere, especially when we're communicating with the public. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs plays a large role in that. It's an ongoing thing that we will be keeping in mind around, so I thank you for bringing that forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I'm not sure if he answered all of Ms. Brewster's questions there, but Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you letting me slip into some of yesterday's questions.

Also following up on priorities from 2022-23, you did mention security protocols just a little bit earlier and I'm wondering if you can give us an update on the plan to "Implement improvements and design solutions to enhance mobile and remote security protocols." That's especially important in relation to recent ransomware attacks and I also appreciate your answer regarding the upcoming training that's being developed for employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. Just taking a step back to the previous intervention around you can't replace translators or interpreters, I can agree with that and the human element of communication is different between Siri and an actual person behind a service being provided. I can attest to that as well.

For the question on "improvements and design solutions to enhance mobile and remote security protocols," that priority from 2022-23, it is ongoing work we're doing. We have different interactions and engagements that have taken place throughout the year. Alongside security awareness campaigns that our information management and technology division does for Government of Nunavut staff, also for example, on mobile devices, that's another aspect to this work, but we did issue a request for proposals to

support this work. A contract was in place from June, but this contract work should be complete by the end of this month, the 2023 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on to 2023-24 priorities, I would just like a little bit more information about the priority which is “Continue the development and implementation of the data classification system for information management.” If you could talk about which governmental stakeholders you’re working with and how you’re working with each of the departments that collects and stores data and information about our citizens, I would appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member around that. That particular priority area is in relation to we want to improve our document management, archival, and access to information and privacy protection processes, and to help identify and secure sensitive government data, but we work with all government departments, including the access to information and privacy office. There is senior management approval required to supply funding and staff to implement this priority. There’s an end user buy-in that’s critical in the implementation aspect. We need simplicity when we’re trying to reach success in this, but of course we will continue to monitor and ensure there is compliance around these processes across the board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Priorities up to ’25-26 include to “Review and evaluate the effectiveness of communication tools developed for introducing new initiatives and processes shared with stakeholders, partners, and clients.” I’m wondering whether or not the department currently collects data on how effective current communication tools are, and how the department plans to implement that priority in the future, if they department doesn’t have that baseline data. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you’ll allow my deputy to respond to this. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed, Mr. Sealy.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. I’m happy to report that our Information Management and Technology branch is a very client service-oriented branch of a client-oriented service department.

The baseline data on response times and quality of service is pretty readily available to the department and to our client groups through the self-serve portal.

Response time, number of tickets, hot-spots where we're seeing a particular surge in ticket types from different client groups in particular locations is all readily available through the self-serve portal database.

In addition, with the increased dependency and use of mobile devices, that end of the shop is readily available through the 1-800 number or the self-serve portal. Our IMIT team does track the response times, and their volumes and their resource the helpdesk response team accordingly, to make sure that we are seeing the shortest return time to return GN employees to service so that they can serve Nunavummiut.

So baseline data and volumetrics is readily available through that portal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. Are there any moves, just regarding your mention of mobile devices, we know that there are a high number of Government of Nunavut employees who are assigned mobile devices, and I'm wondering whether or not there is a plan or a thought to create any mobile apps that can be used for reporting issues to CGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: If you will allow my deputy to respond again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seely.

Mr. Seely: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Not at this time. The GN core network and services are all GN users are operated as part of the Microsoft Suite part of that license, and within the Microsoft user agreement and within that system, we've got mechanisms in place as part of the services that we get through that contract. No thoughts on making a duplicate app at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one last question. When we consider remote working, when creating these strategies and design, is the fact that we are starting to build an employee base that's outside of Nunavut taken into taken account, and how are things like access to firewalls through firewalls and things like that addressed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if you will allow, I'll start a bit, but on employees outside of the territory you're talking about, we know the Remote

Work Policy is still being developed around that through HR, but in terms of information management, we do still follow the same processes that my department has established, but if you will allow my deputy to expand on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Government of Nunavut's security team works through a couple of different systems, starting with training of all employees available through the online portal on safe usage of mobile devices; particularly when working outside of the office.

The team also uses a couple of other industry standards and very advanced industry standards, including a geofence that limits logons outside of a geographic area, in addition to some fairly advanced multifactor authentication steps for anybody logging on, including things like ubikeys and some other standards that are not widely practiced within the public service.

Definitely the ongoing security of our network, of our devices, and of our records is in the forefront of the records management end of it and the administration of our core network services to the GN and to the public that we serve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Aside from those, I guess you would call them "regular GN employees," we know that the Department of Health has been utilizing telehealth programs that allow physicians and specialists to assess patients from a distance. What role does CGS play in also ensuring privacy and ensuring that nobody is jumping into those calls. I think probably all of us have experienced people or uninvited guests in Skype calls and that sort of thing? So just a question about how we are ensuring especially patient privacy in using those types of technologies to access services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow my deputy to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go ahead, Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the Government of Nunavut core network is the infrastructure that the Department of Community and Government Services, IMIT manages.

Within that core network there is a variety of different applications hosted and administered by different departments; what we refer to as client departments.

In the case of the Department of Health, they've got a fairly robust IMIT team themselves that manage a lot of the applications and the accessibility issues with it, and of course, the corresponding security.

There are multiple applications GN-wide that do carve off a significant portion of the available bandwidth, but each of those are managed with proprietary software by the software developer. Those are very carefully screened to make sure that they do meet the GN network standards.

If a network application or a piece of software does not meet our security protocols and meet those standards, we are not allowed to actually approve that for client departments to access core network services and to host it on our domain, so fairly robust standards on that. We have got a very vigilant team that takes that matter very seriously and our client departments are very keen to ensure that client and/or patient records are kept safe. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specifically regarding software or technology that our health and even social workers are using, mental health care workers are using, with that technology, is there a mechanism in place built into the technology that will aware the Government of Nunavut if somebody has somehow accessed surreptitiously to be able to view files or view, for example, a mental health session that might be going on? Are there red flags or anything methods that are built into the programs to ensure that even if a human user doesn't pick up on a potential breach of privacy that perhaps the system will report that back to the licensee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have in place protocols and algorithms that helps to ensure that our government network, whether any application or database, they are secure and safe and not being accessed in a malicious way.

So our Information Technology division... It's a 24-hour effort that, and there's safeguards in place and they track how much is trying to be accessed. So it's quantified. I think my deputy has some figures if you would like, but it's all very much taken care of at the utmost, highest level from our security team. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I will pass it over to Mr. Seeley in a moment. When the minister mentioned the 24-hour turnaround, I believe what Ms. Brewster was looking at, like any kind of real-time notification that there is a privacy breach in an ongoing comm. Mr. Sealy.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I admit to not being familiar with every application hosted on our domain, or any of the software protocols within them, but what

I can say is that within our core network, it is a 24/7 service, they're around the clock all day, every day, monitoring our network for any kind of access.

As far as the actual one application, each application, I can't comment on the security protocols for every single application or the notifications that are available within those different softwares, however, I do know that if the security is not robust and if it doesn't industry standard, it's not hosted on our network. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before we close up this page, there has been recent coverage within the federal government of banning or barring the use of the Tiktok app on government issued mobile equipment. I was just wondering, is the Government of Nunavut looking at anything similar? Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a very hot topic right now, and we are following what's going on, on this, and we haven't initiated any actions around it yet, but if we do, we'll be sure to inform MLAs and Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We're on page J-6. Information Management and Information Technology. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me the second time. In respect to the Fifth Legislative Assembly for the ransomware attack, and for this Sixth Legislative Assembly, unfortunately QEC had a ransomware attack. To prevent further ransomware attacks, now my question is for all the software applications and the devices that the GN.

Does the Community and Government Services thoroughly check the devices to see if they are up to date? When then the devices are not up to date, they are vulnerable to attacks, to ransomware attackers, to hackers. So, to prevent future ransomware attacks, my question to CGS is: does the department check all the devices to see if they are up to date? That is my only question, Mr. Chairman. I would like to hear the minister's response. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Yes, our information management technology team, does make sure our computer network is all, making sure everything is in order. Just understanding too, that sometimes updates are required on the users end. For example, I have to click and choose update on certain functions, so it is an ongoing thing and education is part of it and making sure our staff are aware as part of the efforts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Chairman: Thank you, minister. As long as they are clicking on updates and not on any unsupported links. Page J-86 Information management and information technology, \$51,768,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you, members please turn to page J-87, Infrastructure. \$133,225,000. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 220 of the business plan, one of the priorities, the second to last bullet on the page “ensure departmental advice to investigate the potential for alternative building technologies to be used and manufactured in Nunavut. Emphasis on energy efficient and climate friendly construction.” Who is the department? From what I have read, they are going to advise someone. Who is the advice going to be given to? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That’s odd. Can the minister explain why? Economic Development and Transportation is not in the business of manufacturing, to the best of my knowledge. I don’t see the connection, if the minister could just elaborate to who is on that committee. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In support of the *Katujjiluta* mandate, and identifying this. It has been identified that this particular department would be accountable on it, and we are playing a supporting role. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nunavut Housing Corporation, which builds all the public housing, staff housing units in Nunavut, they are not part of the equation? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would think that they are well aware of this in relation to what we are trying to do through *Katujjiluta*. The purpose under this priority is for my department’s expert to have the opportunity to be able to provide input on investigations or site feasibilities, and around methods of alternative building technologies. When the feasibility study outcomes and research materials that are already completed, this is to try to integrate energy efficiency and climate-friendly construction, so these different departments are also impacted based on the work that my department does and in relation to what they’re doing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the next bullet on the same page, “Support efforts to renovate or repurpose existing buildings for use in the housing continuum,” just a clarification on that too if Community and Government Services is going to be taking old warehouses or old health centres and turning them into houses, I guess. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It’s in support of our surplus policy alongside that, if there is an asset or a building that the Nunavut Housing Corporation would ideally want to use it for housing purposes, then we’re trying to maximize the opportunities around that and utilizing what are the existing facilities in place in the communities in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If there is conflicting interest of a surplus building that a department wants and the housing corporation wants, would the housing corporation take precedence and take over the building, for example, if Health is surplus a building and Family Services wants to use that building and the housing corporation wants to use that building? Because of this, would the Nunavut Housing Corporation take precedence? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We’re getting into the hypothetical here, but if there is a disagreement where they want to “arm wrestle” for a certain building, then we will work with all parties involved and I don’t think it’s going to come to that, but thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we’re seeing a huge need across the territory for housing. I think it’s one of the number one priorities of this government and we want to support that. There’s a huge ambition to build and/or repurpose existing facilities to meet the needs, so we want to get good traction on this priority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. It must be a new practice of this government. We didn’t do any “arm wrestling” at the cabinet table before, but Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Next time I’ll use the word “when,” not “if.”

Going on to a different matter, in the main estimates here under infrastructure, under utilities, I’m curious as to why there’s about a 25 percent increase in the budget for utilities, from \$43,280,000 to \$53,259,000. I know inflation is up, I know fuel prices are up, but I don’t think anything is up about 25 percent. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that. It is in relation to utilities across the territory since my department deals with such a vast amount of buildings with assets. This accounts for \$10,231,000 fuel price increases as well as electrical rate increases. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take the minister's word, but it still seems awful high because every branch and almost every budget is calculating an extra amount for the increase in fuel, the increase in wages and all that. I'll just leave that as a comment. It seems awful high, but I agree that there is a lot of infrastructure to be had. That's all I have for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, your Safety Services Division is mentioned in your 2023-24 main estimates, indicating that there are 25 positions in the Safety Services Branch. I'm wondering: as of today, which positions have been filled on an indeterminate basis and how many positions are vacant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will give me a moment.

Nine are current. As of, I think, December 31, 2022, there were nine vacancies and 16 indeterminate, two casuals, and one Inuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think some members may have noticed that our elevator is out of order here at the legislature. I'm wondering to what extent the department is currently able to undertake regular fire and electrical safety inspections of facilities in all Nunavut communities and that includes things like elevators, boilers, gas services and that sort of thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brewster. I can tell you with all sincerity that I'm a very big fan of elevators this last week. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the members would appreciate, there are inspections done on buildings and permits for occupancy and there's a breakdown in facility, like the elevator here in the leg. That's repair or maintenance work, so that's not necessarily an inspection function, but it is repair work nonetheless.

As it turns out, I had the privilege of meeting with the inspectors from across the territory just last week, early last week, and they had a couple-day meeting or close to the full week meetings and they're setting up strategic options around how, not just the division, they're handling their work but also in line with the Nunavut 3000, just the amount of work that will be coming to the territory. We're exploring opportunities around how this division can move on the demands for the services that are required not just for repair work but new builds when there's permitting that needs to be provided and inspections need to be forthcoming. We need to meet those demands, so we're mapping out a way forward.

I had some preliminary discussions and I know there have been topics around this coming from the different organizations and the Nunavut Housing Corporation in particular. We're continuing to work with all our partners around this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To what extent does the Safety Services Division work with cities and municipalities in the development of safety measures for new buildings and for buildings that wouldn't necessarily be permitted, like cabins and hunting sheds and the likes?

The reason I ask that is because members may recall that, for a period of time over the last couple of years, three or four years, we've had a number of shack fires that have injured and sometimes seriously injured and led to the death of individuals who were unable to exit from an unpermitted building because there was no egress or fire escape.

To what extent does the Safety Services Division work to help to encourage cities and municipalities to help community members create safer buildings? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that's where the member touched on when there is a building that doesn't have a permit. Under the Nunavut *Building Code Act*, no building or structure built under an issued building permit may be occupied until such time that an occupancy permit is issued. It needs to go through the proper channels, any kind of structure, but when it's not permitted, then of course there are safety issues that you just highlighted.

If you will allow my deputy to expand a bit on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. Mr. Seeley, please proceed.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the minister covered it and I will touch base on two points, though, from the member's question. The first one is that the protocols that the inspectors within the Safety Services Division, so whether it's boiler

and gas, elevators, or building officials or electrical, those are entrenched within the legislation and the regulations for each respective inspection discipline. The terms of what they're inspecting when and what standards and what codes need to be maintained and obtained by developers or building owners are built right into the legislation and it is the Canadian Building Code that we follow here in Nunavut.

As far as the outreach goes to municipalities and supports and to that line of questioning, each municipality does have the power and the responsibility to enforce and approve development permits within the community before things are built. They also have some bylaw power and authority. The inspectors are called upon when permits are put in place or other requirements within each respective piece of legislation, but as far as the outreach piece goes, the Safety Services Division, as the minister mentioned, did recently hold a strategic planning session to see how they could make those tools and resources more accessible and more usable for communities and the people who live in them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. I appreciate that response. I think a tenet of health is what did you know, when did you know, and what did you do about it, and I think that all levels of government really have a responsibility to create safer communities and to protect the safety of our community members. That's why I asked that question. I think that often, municipalities have less resources to be able to put into the creation of bylaws and permit regulations when it comes to areas of knowledge that they don't have, they wouldn't necessarily have a fire and safety expert on hand to advise them, so I would hope that CGS would provide that kind of advice through the Safety Services division.

On priorities 2022-23, there was a commitment to provide support for expanding and or renovating existing continuing care facilities in Nunavut. I'd like to have a little bit of an update the progress on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): My apologies (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, if you'll allow my deputy on this priority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Go ahead, Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. As far as progress on this priority, currently there is work underway interdepartmentally, firstly on the reassignment of the ownership of these assets, which is to say the existing long-term care centers in the communities.

The second piece of that is the reassignment of the facility management responsibility of those assets. Without getting the details and the rigor of the transfer, there does need to be an assessment on the condition of those buildings to better identify what the capital cost

would be of maintaining and improving them so that they're suitable for use. Will be that work is currently happening between NHC, Department of Health and CGS and it is advancing. As soon as those evaluations on the building and the full, future state cost of capital renovations are developed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Seeley, for that response. Just for clarification, I mentioned continuing care facilities as per that second bullet and further down the fifth bullet, it specifically mentions long-term care facilities. Is there a distinction between long-term care and continuing care facilities related to this discussion? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I'll bite my tongue. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I understand it, there is no distinction between the two. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going down to that bullet continue to work with stakeholders and manage project delivery for development of long-term care facilities, I'm assuming this is new long-term care facilities and the Nunavut Addictions and Trauma Treatment Centre.

Can you give us an update, first specifically on the Nunavut Addictions and Trauma Treatment Centre work that's taken place and then maybe elaborate a little bit more on the long-term care facilities that are currently under development. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I think I just saw a Nunavut tenders RFP for the Nunavut recovery center. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, my apologies. Design RFP was awarded December 2021, tender documents out by December 2022, construction contract award early 2023, and the building substantial completion is aimed for December 2024. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, given the amount of infrastructure, water and sewage infrastructure that the city is currently experiencing, can the minister please update us on whether there have been discussions with the City of Iqaluit, as well as those contractors who are engaged in developing that lot for the recovery centre, in terms of what the potential delays might be, as well as what the potential costs of those delays will be? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just to update the minister, the RFP went out and we can change it to go out on the 20th. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can appreciate both members having a very close eye on these important infrastructure in the community of Iqaluit. I know there is a lot of pressure on the water infrastructure here. It's a day-to-day situation.

If you'll allow my deputy to elaborate the inner workings and where things are at in relation to the addiction trauma treatment centre and water infrastructure. There are a lot of details to cover, but we can get a good snapshot of it. If you'll allow, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I do want to hear the answer to this one. I'll absolutely allow Mr. Sealy to respond. Please proceed.

Mr. Sealy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope I can meet your expectations. The Nunavut recovery centre has been tendered. The total capacity, and that capacity of the City of Iqaluit's water and waste water system is very much a factor in the planning and the design of this asset.

Bringing a new building on of this size, with this complex program and compliment as it's meant to provide, does present some real challenges in planning it and maintaining, I guess, a total volume that's within the City's current capacity. Because of the limitations on the City's water and waste infrastructure, the planning and design phases have incorporated some fairly unusual measures that likely do come at additional costs, to the GN to develop this important asset, that will allow the building to proceed on schedule. To be constructed and resume operations at the first opportunity, by using some different design mechanisms: things like vaults and other storage sites within the actual design to minimize flow rates, both into the building and out of the building at peak times, so that it's not putting additional demand, beyond what the City can actually accommodate.

Because of the location that's been selected, there is also consideration being given to the waterways, water infrastructure and development costs leading to the site, which is to say, new roads and new pipes underneath them, to have sufficient volume to manage the initial needs to the site, and considerations for future development at and beyond that site.

Most certainly, the capacity of the waterways, water system in town is a major consideration into the planning and development of that asset, and to incorporate it into the design plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Sealy. If he could just explain to me what vaults are, I'd appreciate that. As well as whether or not, you mentioned consideration into the water and sewage lines, is that to say that the Government of

Nunavut is committing to developing those water and sewage lines for the city, in order to make that project go forward? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. For the first part of the questions, vaults are, essentially just huge tanks to support the water infrastructure for the Nunavut recovery centre. For the latter part of your question, yes, it's part of the budget that would support the water mains for this should plug into the city's network. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: If I may, Ms. Brewster, just interject for just one more, we have a real-life recent example with the healing centre was recently built, where the house had to approve of supplemental appropriation to actually add a water pump to the facility that wasn't planned in the original design because the water met the threshold of the code at that time, but couldn't meet it later. So there's a real-life example of a recent major infrastructure project, so I appreciate your line of questioning, Ms. Brewster. Go ahead please.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that supplemental remark. The department is also committed to ensuring departmental advise investigate the potential for alternative building technologies to be used and manufactured in Nunavut with an emphasis on energy efficient and climate-friendly construction, and specifically related to the recovery centre, will that centre be using any kind of energy-efficient and climate-friendly construction such as, for example, reusing gray water.

A number of constituents have come to me over the last few weeks indicating that when their homes froze-up, they eventually ended up having frozen sewage lines as well because they had no way to flush their sewage system, whether it be toilets or bathtubs, and it strikes me as a gray alternative energy water saver, as well as climate friendly in a way that if the building has a sufficient amount of gray water in order to use during a water shutdown or water emergency that the building could be saved from major damage. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The building is being designed to support efficient energy, and in particular, around the fuel consumption efficiency, but I don't think we can apply the gray water that the member speaks of in this stage in the game. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that perhaps CGS does look into ways to mitigate risks like that, or new built and for renovations, not just in Iqaluit but elsewhere, just to mitigate the risk of a devastating losses of buildings. On the commitment to, and the member Savikataaq mentioned the inventory to support

sustainable use and long-term planning for office and program space, and the review that will be commenced, I'm just wondering whether or not CGS has a list of needs and wants from various departments in various communities. Again, I am really interested in knowing what has a priority. For me, from my background, health promotion and health protection and anything that impacts the social determinants of health, preventing illness and disease is really important. I would just like a little bit more information on the work that has been done in that area. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow my deputy to respond. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Seeley, go ahead.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Office and work space is fundamental to the operation of all GN programs and services, whether it be warehouse space or classrooms or health care centres or general-purpose office space that's administered through our Real Property Division. We do manage a sizeable portfolio of both GN-owned and operated assets as well as a very significant leasing portfolio.

Earlier this year a real property team under the Infrastructure Branch initiated some work to right size exactly what it is our office and workspace needs are territory-wide. It's a sizeable undertaking to actually evaluate what office spaces we actually have versus the number of staff in them, vacant versus currently vacant positions, as well as transient staff for people on term positions, in addition to contractor use and things like that.

The department has commissioned an external resource to help pull that information together. Our last study on that, I believe, was almost ten years ago, so a lot has changed. We built some new buildings, leased some new buildings, and lost some buildings during that time. That report is going to be at least a year before we get it developed and we are going to begin tracking those factors a lot more closely because it does have a real implication on our overall leasing portfolio total costs and ultimately the utilities that we're paying as a department as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. Just please confirm for me that in all of this work to support efforts to renovate or repurpose existing buildings, whether it be for use in the housing continuum or for office and programming space, just confirm for me that there will be an assurance that any repurposed building or refurbished buildings will include ensuring accessibility for those who have differing needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you. The short answer is yes. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When Mr. Savikataaq was asking questions to the minister, I didn't clearly understand whether there is an adequate number of building inspectors in Nunavut. Will all the buildings that are being constructed be inspected? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that there will be new buildings being constructed and the Safety Services Division is responsible for the inspector portion of it. Not all the positions are filled and we would like to see more building inspectors so that we can keep up to what is required of us. Since we're going to be building quite a large number of new buildings. Hopefully I was clear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the fact that these buildings cannot be inspected, I personally do not want to see any further barriers delaying the construction in our communities, whether they are future projects or allocated units ready for construction.

We already have quite a number of units requiring inspections, and how many building inspectors are in our regional offices such as the Kivalliq, Kitikmeot and Qikiqtaaluk, what is the total number of inspectors? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe there are two inspectors in the Kitikmeot area, two in the Kivalliq region, and in the Baffin region, I will have to get back to you, but we do want to see an increase in the number of positions. We also don't want to see any delays because the lack of building inspectors. If you know of any building inspectors, please come to our department and ask them if they're interested. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another question, my second question is in regard to the inspectors. Who do they report to, and who do they submit their reports to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Once the inspection is completed, they give it to the Chief Inspector. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are the reports made public or are they protected? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reports are not made public currently. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's quite a number of facilities that need to be inspected, and of course the schools, and the school in Coral Harbour especially. The community is also not informed about whether the inspection of the school has been completed and if there are any safety or health indicators that have to be looked at, I would prefer that they be kept updated on what has been done to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps to make it less muddled, I want to clarify that some of the buildings, as an example, if the facility is a school, or a newly constructed building, if it is a standing building such as a school or health centre or other public building requires scheduled inspections such as inspections on their equipment to see if they are operating smoothly, or if the electrical system is outdated or not up to code.

This also applies to building inspections prior to the facility becoming inhabited, and they require these inspection permits to allow the usage of the unit, especially the owner of the unit. I would use the housing associations as an example.

They also receive buildings, although it is like comparing two different things, nonetheless, the inspection can be undertaken by other authorities, but again, we are continuing to try to resolve these challenges, and as per my previous statement, when we are short on inspectors, we want to increase the number of various inspectors in our department, if I came across succinctly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was also a question about the cabins that are being built, do they require inspections?

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As long as you have a permit. If you have a permit, it will have to be inspected to see if its occupiable.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. I would like to focus on the Safety Services Division too, due to the fact that their budget has increased from sixty-three forty-nine to \$6,503,000.

Let me start off with as the minister had mentioned that in regards to schools, *Safety Act*, does the department consider when it comes to fire prevention such as the sprinklers in my constituency of Sanirajak, and the elementary school in Igloolik has a hazardous mould in their classroom. How does the department utilize when it comes to *Safety Act* within schools? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): My apologies, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The *Building Code Act* is to ensure safety for any occupant and so when under the national building code, which has been adopted through this Assembly, the *Building Code Act* and regulations, which we follow, our staff ensure that any building is fit for occupancy and ensure health and safety. If there's any concerns around that, I advise members or your constituents to contact their office immediately. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister has stated, correct me if I'm wrong, in the Safety Services Division there are nine vacant positions. Correct me if I'm wrong minister. The minister has requested that if we know anyone who has experienced that, I might send forward a few names. I am assuming the school is something that meets the building code and the school in Igloolik meets the standard and safety code too. Is that what I understood? Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and *mammianaq*, thank you for your patience. Just going back to the building code, that applies too. Yes, I mean some of the concerns that have been raised can fall under either public health or another different regulation or regulator.

So, I think we have to ensure which department or target that act he is referring to. I think we will have to zone in on those exact issues he's trying to get at. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernek: Well, what the line of questioning when it comes to safety, I was trying to exactly say: do those two schools meet the requirement when it comes to safety, technical standards and safety under that act?

Do they meet that requirement to have those schools operating from Monday to Friday, eight to five? Do they meet the requirements of the safety act? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize that I have been keeping you waiting. (interpretation ends) I just wanted to touch base on, I touched on the building officials in two different regions.

We have two in headquarters as well, so two in every region, there are building officials that are trying to meet the demands around our building code act, and all the work that falls within their regulations. Maybe, I'll have my deputy respond on the member's question, as I think that it's a little loaded to be honest. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to take this just back a step, that any GN assets, and in fact municipal assets are assessed on a five-year cycle, that's an industry standard. For multidiscipline building condition assessments, that's managed through CGS. These building condition assessments identify any major building systems or structural issues, depending on the engineering disciplines and the types of asset that it is.

If there are any operational issues for a particular asset or program delivery area like a school, those issues would be identified by the department responsible for operating it, and flagged to CGS to get those addressed through a work order.

If it is a larger scale project, it becomes a capital project that's identified by that department, and then we action it through an instrument of delegation on their behalf. If there are operational issues, things like fire suppression systems being offline, or environmental health issues like the members described, those issues need to be flagged so that they can be addressed.

In short answer, if the question is if those buildings are safe, they need to be. They must be. It's our job to make sure that they are, before they are operating and people are using them. So, if there are any operational issues with a GN asset, it should be reported by the client department to CGS so that we can get them addressed.

To the second part of the question, about the role of the safety services division in relation to this. There are a couple of different branches to the safety services division, but the building officials and the other regulatory officers within the safety services division, their functions are actually identified within the respected pieces of legislation

that they are responsible for when their inspection cycles are triggered, how and for what type of assets. If it's over a particular square footage or if the repair work is over a particular dollar value, those inspections would not be triggered in the case of a system that isn't working.

However, in the case of a fire suppression system or a basic daily safety implication like that, where the factor like that is identified, those are flagged and we've got a couple of different responsibilities. The urgency of the building can be operated safely by the client department using either alternative duplicate systems or putting in place a basic fire watch, which replaces the automated building system with staff supervising the site. The site must be safe in order for it to operate, that's the law. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. If I can just interject, Mr. Kaernek, just for a moment. The member was asking some questions yesterday to the Minister of Education regarding the schools in Sanirajak.

Just to follow up on the member's question, the concerns didn't come to light through the Department of Community and Government Services, has the Department of Education brought any concerns to the Department of Community and Government Services on either of the schools in Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I admit to not hearing that exchange yesterday, I would have to take a look at the blues, but what I can tell you is that we do have a series of active files for both communities within the member's riding, how the status of each of those tickets is something that we've been reviewing, tickets or work orders, or requests for maintenance coming in from the client department.

We are engaged with the Department of Education and their capital planning team to make sure that those tickets are prioritized and dealt with appropriately where the budget exists or the need exists. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for clarifying that. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing yourself to elaborate on that and further, yes and I agree with you, Mr. Seeley, yes, when it comes to the fire suppression, it's a daily operational thing in my riding, and school is a very big fact in our community, it's an elementary school and a high school, and so at the same time, I don't want to mention that it's putting these children at risk, and at the same time, yesterday, with the line of questioning with the education minister on the schools that it needs to be properly maintained when it comes to technical standard and safety.

In saying that, now that you have mentioned, Mr. Seeley, that... how are you going to work with the Department of Education when it comes to these operations and maintenance when it comes to the safety act, how will you be more collaborative when there are community maintainers in all 25 communities? How will this be tackled in the

future so that there would be more fire safety or fire prevention on that matter? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) If I am mistaken (interpretation ends) Mr. Chair, with the line of questioning around the Arnarjuaq school in Sanirajak yesterday in relation of the Minister of Education line of questioning, I do need to brush up on that.

If it isn't in relation to that, we have an action plan in place to address some of the remaining maintenance issues that have come to light, and we're intending to complete them by the end of the month. Right now, I believe 90 percent of the outstanding service requests have been complete to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. I will note that the Department of Education is up next. As a client department, they may have more detail with the tickets that have been provided to the Department of Community and Government Services? Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, minister for having 90 percent of the school done in Sanirajak. On page J-18 here on the summary of grants and contributions, on the infrastructure part, Mr. Chairman, there is a contribution of \$1,795,000 for the Fire Prevention Strategy.

Has Arnarjuaq School's DEA or their officials submitted any requests under this Fire Prevention Strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, this funding goes to the Municipal Training Organization for firefighter training and fire prevention week and those types of activities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for the clarification from the minister.

Let me move onto government assets. For those buildings that were leased from the NWT days, which are now the property of the Government of Nunavut, for those abandoned buildings, does the department ever look into those abandoned buildings for hazardous and safety conditions and how they can be demolished or repurposed so they can be utilized as a facility or something like that? There is one in Sanirajak and one in Igloodik which are safety hazards for students. The one that I'm talking about is right beside the elementary school in Igloodik. Spring is just around the corner. As the daylight gets longer, the kids will be playing out more. So how is the department looking

into these abandoned buildings when it also comes to *Safety Act*? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, for old derelict buildings, in most cases I believe we would fall within my department's surplus or disposal. When we are disposing of assets of this nature, it is still quite an undertaking in that there is a full assessment that needs to take place around the hazardous material at the site, including doing a hazmat in full gear and whatnot, and then making sure how we are extracting it from the site. Is it safe? Not just those that are working there, but for the community at large.

This is ongoing work my department continues to do and we do want to see some progress in this area, but it is still within my department. Some assets do fall within other departments technically, but my department is still in charge of surplus disposal and we work with other departments if they want to reuse an existing facility or repurpose it for other purposes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For those abandoned buildings that need to be demolished due to safety in the community; that is where I was coming from, because I had a constituent write me stating that this building needs to be demolished. Then I was told an assessment was done, but due to asbestos they have to wait for professionals to go in there and get rid of all of the asbestos. How does the department tackle this when it comes to the *Safety Act* and the Hazardous Act under Community and Government Services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I described some of the work that goes into that and that needs to be done in a safe manner and having hazmat suits on. Asbestos is a very serious compound that we don't want anyone affected. A lot goes into the disposal of an abandoned, derelict building.

Maybe if the Chair may allow, we can outline the steps that my department takes. Maybe through a letter, I think I committed to providing to the committee yesterday, we can follow up and include that information in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that commitment, minister, and we look forward to the information. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that commitment. It has to be a priority because, like I said, the spring is just around the corner and the kids are playing out more and those two buildings in my riding are usually the playgrounds for

the kids that these abandoned buildings are very... . No one is there, so no one is monitoring them, but due to safety hazards, it has to be a priority. It's just a comment there.

When it comes to long-term care, under the priorities, Igloolik is one of those communities that have a continuing care centre. When it comes to renovating those buildings, there's a priority for 2023. You can stop me anytime, Mr. Chairman. How are these prioritized when it comes to, still, the safety with the patients that are in care?

Let's say for instance, there are Gjoa Haven, Cambridge Bay, and Arviat, not to mention Igloolik. Are those buildings being properly inspected when there are nine vacant positions as of December 31? That will be my last question for today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Yes, (interpretation ends) in short form. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Short and sweet. Last name I have on my list: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the 2022-23 priorities on page 220, one of the priorities is "Continue with the strategic review and study on the impacts of the adoption of Nunavut specific modifications as it applies to:

- Existing Nunavut building codes;
- National Energy code of Canada for Buildings; and,
- Development of a permit processing tracking system."

The minister has received questioning and concerns about the issuance of building permits for buildings that it is so rigid and the definition of a building is not even from their own building code; they're using the federal government definition of a building.

Is the minister looking at maybe making it more Nunavut-friendly or "Nunavutize" the Act so that the small guys, the little people in the communities, can do small buildings? For a building permit for a school and the building code, absolutely; for the construction of a house that people live in, absolutely; for small projects, maybe case-by-case basis. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for his question. We are investigating opportunities around increasing efficiencies in how builders and community members were seeking to build, renovate, or improve homes and how this can be done within our unique situation here in Nunavut. I think this will include and we're reviewing typical builds and how they impact the process.

We are engaging with other provincial and territorial approaches to this concern and we're exploring possible options on such things as pre-approved plans for engineered systems for small-scale projects, as an example. We are exploring different options around this and hope that it will suit the needs of developers in our housing plans going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister, and I look forward to that. I've had constituents raise concerns about some of the stringent policies for some of the outbuildings on people's properties. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It sounds nice to hear that. One of the options could be for small project exemptions for the need of a building permit in terms of small projects or small budget projects; just a confirmation. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Another short answer, (interpretation) yes. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

Chairman: Keep them coming. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my last question. I'm wondering if the minister is considering this option. In the same manner as lotteries, if you don't have a lottery licence, then it's okay because it's not under the mandate, if you don't get a building permit, would it also be considered outside of the mandate of the department, unless someone complains to the RCMP? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that question, Mr. Savikataaq. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you're comparing apples to oranges here, so we will have to look at different options and thank you for that consideration, but we will take it as feedback. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Page J-7. Infrastructure. Department of Community and Government Services. \$133,225,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Now go to the next page on page J-8. It's an information item, but I will open the floor to questions. Prior to that, we will take a 10-minute break. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 18:22 and resumed at 18:37

Chairman: Thank you. I would like to call the meeting back to order. Like I mentioned before the break, we're on page J-8. Petroleum Products Division. Although it's a non-

appropriated amount, as it's funded through a revolving fund, I will open the floor to questions. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Petroleum Products Division, I would like to find out if they do inspections. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they do regular inspections, when they need to put additives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I neglected to just make a comment before I go to Mr. Malliki, again. After the last page, I did speak to minister, I just want to put this on record, that I did speak to the minister, that I asked for a list of outstanding applications to the Infrastructure Bank of Canada, under the Green Stream Funding. I just wanted to put that on record, that the minister did commit to getting back to us in correspondence, as a committee.

Mr. Malliki, please proceed on.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, also Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, the transportation mode, such as snowmobile fuel lines has to be cleaned all the time. Have you done a study to make sure what makes it that way with the snowmobile pipes?

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to my understanding, the Petroleum Products Division have never heard of this concern. If there has to be an inspection done so we'll be able to look into the Petroleum Products Division so that they can deal with the issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, also Mr. Minister. If we wanted to get these inspected, whom do we call. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Each community has contracted petroleum products workers, and they can give their complaint to the contracted petroleum services in the community so that they can do an inspection. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for explaining that. Your department's 2017-2018 annual report of petroleum products division was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 2, 2021. When will the 2018-2022 annual reports be ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have been moving forward with the annual reports, and we expect that we will be able to table them at the Legislative Assembly prior to the winter session, or perhaps the spring session. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Your department's 2022-2026 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for 2022-2023 fiscal year was to "proceed through legislative process to establish a Nunavut petroleum product commission." To what extent will the proposed legislation defer from the bill that was introduced during the Fifth Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time, we will start proceeding through with the legislative process, but the petroleum products division, we'll try and find out how many more employees they will require, and also how they will be able to make other plans. If CGS was not responsible for that, but if they were to go through petroleum products commission. Once that investigation or screening has been done, we'll be able to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. The contractors who hold the contract, some stores have contracts and some can pay at the pump. Perhaps this can be improved so that you can pay for your fuel at the pump, so that Nunavummiut can pay at the pump. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This would have to be looked into carefully, and the contractors at this moment, and when the contract ends, this can be reviewed further if we're going to renew the contract. Any changes that may be made, perhaps can be looked into. All I can say right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I would recommend this as soon as the contract is reviewed that payments may be made and those that ship fuel, because we can also be using machine anytime. All residents of Nunavut would be privileged to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you. Perhaps I could take this as a suggestion and some fuel pumps would have to change and the cost factor would be there. However, all residents in Nunavut, using cards, these things would have to be considered as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my last question. (interpretation ends) On June 28, 2022 the department issued a request for proposals 22-50 executive oversight and corporate service of the Petroleum Products Division. The request for proposals closed on August 5, 2022. Who has been awarded the contract to perform this work? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) A company called DPRA has been issued the contract. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Sorry, I couldn't hear that response.

Hon. David Joanasié: DPRA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki. (interpretation) You're done? (interpretation ends) Next name I have on my list, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm curious about the fuel shortage in Pond Inlet and lack of air service on occasion. Are the small fuel tanks a factor? Are they just too small? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They were varying factors. Many communities were affected by fuel shortages. Some communities were buying more than normal and some fuel tanks were just not big enough, for example, in Arviat. However, with different problems and to ensure this doesn't happen again in Nunavut, we added 12.5 percent of fuel purchased compared to last year, if that is understandable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, minister. The aviation fuel ship will that be sufficient for this year? If there are emergency medevacs, and if that's the only last resort to take, it becomes a problem because sometimes when we need to leave, we can't. Will the aviation fuel be sufficient for this year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jet A fuel from our plans, we do expect that. We had, before pandemic measures were taken on COVID, we think we will return to Jet A fuel usage in Pond Inlet, I think it will be enough for this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The aviation fuel that you deliver to communities when fuel shortages experienced, for example, gasoline has to be shipped to Pond Inlet and increase the cost. The question is, did that increase the cost of purchasing the gas? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Pond Inlet, 52,341 small barrels had to be shipped, \$182,813 cost, we normally buy fuel in bulk, as an example. Under Jet A fuel, \$250 million is our limit on the fuel we can purchase. That figure is a smaller amount, so it didn't really affect the cost of fuel at that time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Sorry, Ms. Nutarak, the minister's response raised a question with me. So when we've got these fuel prices that are established territory-wide other than here in Iqaluit, when extra costs are incurred with delivering fuel, such as Mr. Savikataaq's example earlier, 4,000 litres, and I believe from the numbers I recall, it was a little over \$400,000 to ship that fuel to Arviat last year, that would be charged against the revolving fund, which would have an impact across fuel prices all across the territory, if I'm correct. Minister Joanasié, can you confirm or correct me? Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are correct, so in relation to the air lifts that occurred in 2022, we had five, the one I pointed out for Pond Inlet, Arviat was 399,363 litres at a cost of \$350,000, Arctic Bay was sent 62,000 litres of diesel at a cost of \$156,050. Arctic Bay again 22,000 of gasoline at a cost of \$106,669, and lastly Clyde River, 22,000 litres of gasoline at a cost of \$153,025. This totals to \$948,557 all together. Again, yes, this goes back to the revolving fund, so every community absorbs this cost. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak, another question? Next name I have on my list, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have several questions here, but this one jumps out at me. The minister was just stating where the communities that got airlift fuel and the total amounts. Just to get clarification from the minister, didn't Rankin Inlet get an airlift, a whole whack of gasoline from Arviat too? Thank you.

Chairman: I seem to recall reading about that. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct; Rankin Inlet did receive 30 drums of avgas. I don't have the cost breakdown. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. If it's remained the same from the other example, it's over a buck a litre. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm talking about gasoline. Just before Rankin couldn't buy fuel for one day, because they were unloading, didn't they fly 40,000 litres from Arviat to Rankin of gasoline; the stuff you put in vehicles and outboard motors? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have the details around that particular airlift of gasoline to Rankin Inlet, at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's safe to say that about \$1 million was used to airlift fuels within Nunavut this past fiscal year? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, and in addition to that, we did divert two ships to support Naujaat and Kugaaruk, as the member had pointed out for Netsilik. These were additional \$370,000 cost in total: \$180,000 and \$190,000 respectively. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So can safely to say that about \$1.5 million was unbudgeted for that had to be used to move fuel around town.

The minister also stated that they're buying 12 percent more fuel so they won't be short. Is that 12 percent of fuel? Or 12 percent more of funds? Like 12 percent more dollar-wise, or 12 percent more in quantity of fuel? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 12.5 percent more in volume. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. Going on to page J8 here, can the minister explain and show us committee members on the page there is \$250 million authorized limit for 2023-2024, and then goes down to income, \$236,156,000. It appears that they've already sold their fuel for 2023? I know that can't be. So, if we could just get an explanation. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you. Yes, essentially, the three pieces of the Petroleum Products Division works in a break-even basis. We are anticipating the sales to be the same as the income. If that makes sense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you go down to the bottom number there, it appears that the PPD will be over the \$250 million by \$2.148 million that they're actually going to be going over the \$250 million. Is that correct? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, the total sales income is \$236,115, and then the total expenditures of \$238.263 million, which means that the deficit of \$2.148 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Which is within the allowable parameters of the revolving fund. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for the explanation. We have to be led page-by-page here just to make sure we understand.

Going onto a different matter, the Petroleum Products Division sells gasoline, they sell diesel, and none of the product they sell is naphtha in all of the communities, and naphtha is used, as we all know, by the hunters. More and more and more people and hunters are switching to propane. What would it take for PPD to start selling bulk propane? Not bulk in terms of filling up peoples' propane bottles because I know that entails a whole lot of training and certification, but if they were to bring in either 20-lbs or 100-lbs bottles to sell bottle and all in the communities? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would involve a lot of consideration. If you will allow my deputy to list off some of the things that it would take. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The notion of propane sales has been raised a few times at the municipal and at the territorial-level. Currently we don't have at PPD a storage or distribution plan, we don't have a pricing scheme, nor are our staff trained in the storage disposal or sale and safe handling of gas; which is to say, vapor gas. To put that in place, it is a brand-new product line that would require some training, storage, and of course, the safe disposal as well as training for safe handling and things like that.

Right now, the Petroleum Products Division is in the stage of doing a series of reviews on what their current capacity is and what their distribution network actually looks like, if that could be included. So it's not the first time it has come up, but I think it is something that is being tracked as an option within the Petroleum Products Division. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you. If I can get an explanation of "safe" disposal, as I had mentioned that they would bring in 20-lbs bottles and 100-lbs bottles, and they would be full, and they're sold full. There is not refilling station, so where does the disposal part come in? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow my deputy to elaborate again. Thank you.

Chairman: Go ahead, Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In any materials handling, disposal is one of the factors we need to consider, not unlike our Surplus Disposal Building Plan and policy for built assets. It is just something that we need to consider from both a solid waste management end of things; where all of the canisters would go if they are disposed of, or if they are not going to be reused, as well as the safe storage if there is any remaining gas in them after they are used, as well as the actual product itself as a part of the materials management plan.

So disposal is just part of life cycling that we would need to consider. I apologize if that wasn't clear. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Seeley. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the safety disposal plan for all of the naphtha cans then? Thank you.

Chairman: I'm going to bypass the minister and we will continue on with Mr. Seeley's response if that is okay with the minister. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Naphtha is prepackaged. If I understand the notion of the propane, it would be that we would have one large tank and be filling it on behalf of customers. Or at least that is the model that we have considering internally.

The disposal of the canisters as far as life cycling goes, would be quite different than prepackaged, packaged by manufacturer naphtha products, like you might buy at a retail store.

To answer the member's question regarding the current disposal plans for naphtha, we certainly hope that all of the naphtha within them is being used and that they are being disposed of in an appropriate solid waste management line site. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I clearly stated that I envisioned this as not a refill station, but to bring in 20-lbs bottles and 100-lbs bottles to sell, not to refill, to sell. I explained that clearly twice here. Now the deputy minister is talking about they envision bringing in a huge tank and having that huge tank filled and then filling up bottles that the customers bring in.

My scenario was that they sell a 20-lbs bottle like Northern does, that they sell a 100-lbs bottle like business' do in town. Some of the communities do provide this service, but I think it's time that this service is provided to all of Nunavummiut so they have an option. If you want to talk about carbon footprint, I believe propane pilot has a smaller carbon footprint too, so it's going green.

I'll ask again: I would like the Petroleum Products Division to start selling propane in the communities that request it, in 20-lbs bottles and 100-lbs bottles. There's no filling; you go in there and you pay for a bottle and you walk away with it, just like you do with naphtha. As for safe storage, it just needs a compound. We know what the businesses do. I'm pretty sure there's safe storage regulations that CGS has for storing propane, I'm pretty sure of it. If they want to make sure buildings are safe, well they want to make sure propane is safe near a building.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll definitely take a look at it and see. The member is right, there are already retail stores that provide this service and to see whether or not we can look at through PPD in the future that this can be an option for

those that don't have it. Maybe start from there, but look at what it would entail, how much more resources our division might need to support that.

As stated, our Petroleum Products Division, we are looking at a new executive oversight of the operations of this important utility and I think on that path it might be transforming to something new and I think...I'm drawing a blank here. Been a long day. I think we can look at that closely what can happen out of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad to hear that and I hope it's implemented by next year, but not just to the communities that don't have it, it should be an option for any community that wants it, to buy a twenty pounder or hundred pounder bottle from Petroleum Products Division in the community, because maybe a community provides it but maybe the prices are unreasonable. The Government of Nunavut is here to help Nunavummiut so that the cost is not so high. I'll leave that as a comment.

My one last question here: we heard of all the communities that were short on fuel, short on gasoline, short on diesel. How many of these were due to storage capacity issues? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically, it's the list I had provided were the communities that had to be airlifted, but they do consider other factors. Some communities used more than their usual allotment of fuel, but basically those lists: Pond Inlet; Arviat; Arctic Bay; Clyde River. I'm not sure if Rankin Inlet does fall within that list as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I said that was my last, but maybe I didn't make myself clear. How many of the shortfalls of fuel were due to capacity? What I mean is capacity issues, they fill fuel the tanks right full but it was not enough. How many communities were short because even if the PPD wanted to deliver more fuel to the community, they could not because the fuel tanks or the gas tanks were full? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: So Arctic Bay, Arviat, Pond Inlet due to their limited storage capacity and those three communities and for diesel and gasoline. Taloyoak for their diesel capacity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Thank you. Last name I have on my list, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was an issue of concern from my constituent communities about the naphtha, the red can being no good and the no white cans were good naphtha. A lot of hunters went out on the land, and from the no good naphtha, a lot them went back feeling not well due to the fumes. I guess my question is: did you have any issues of concern about the red can and white can naphtha? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, a couple of our colleagues have brought to my attention this concern and we have submitted those naphtha samples for testing. All the results identified have been within the manufacturers specifications. Three communities in particular have identified the concern to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for, minister, for your response. Another issue of concern was last year the community of Kugaaruk ran out of fuel. It happened at a time when hunting was great and my hope is that this won't happen again to my constituent community. My constituent communities they their hunting and they had to stop for a number of days. My hope is that the department can assure that this won't happen again. More of a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's it now.

Chairman: There was a question there. Minister Joanasié, go ahead please.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We hope it won't happen too and that's the intention of our 12.5 percent increase in the volume of fuel that we've increased our bulk fuel. For Kugaaruk in particular, in total there's 4,050,000 litres that have been purchased and of that 1,375,000 Jet A; 675,000 litres of gasoline; and 2,000,000 ultra-low sulphur diesel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a comment about your priorities for 2023-2024 and it was brought up already. One of my communities came across a problem with shortage of fuel and at that time we learned, I believe it's P50 that that community doesn't have. The community of Clyde River, which is one of my constituencies, should be place as a high priority because there has been a shortage of home heating fuel and that is of a concern, especially for homeowners.

If there are any plans to expand the tank farms, then they should place it as a priority and jump it up possibly by a year or two. That is more of a comment as it is of grave concern. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: I realize it was just comment, but Minister Joanasié, did you want to respond to the storage capacity?

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have started working on that and the Petroleum Products Division has been putting together plans for Clyde River to work on the tank and the pipes for the fuel tank. The P50 diesel that you were referring to and the Jet A1 fuel are two different types of fuel and we want to make sure that they have both available in Clyde River. This will be completed at some point, and if I'm not mistaken, the work should be completed this coming summer. They are trying to work on the fuel tanks before sealift delivery. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I would ask committee members to turn to page J-3. Community and Government Services. \$293,797,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with Community and Government Services?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister, do you want to provide any closing comments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank each and every one of my colleagues here for the questions and information exchange. I think it is a good dialogue to have around what our department does in service to your communities, our communities, and I just want to thank my staff both that are here and not here, to ensure that I have the best information available support your decisions today. So thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your guidance as well and we will bring back some correspondence that we committed to for your reference. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, minister. Yourself and your witnesses can be excused. Members, please remain in your seats. In about 30 seconds we will move onto opening comments with the Department of Education.

I think that was approximately 30 seconds. I would now like to ask Minister Gross to do her opening comments for the Department of Education. Minister Gross.

Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 – Education – Consideration in Committee

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Unnukkut.* Good evening. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to appear before you and members today to discuss the 2023-24 budget of the Department of Education. For the 2023-24 fiscal year, our department is requesting a total of \$273,547,000. This reflects an increase of \$21,267,000 from the 2022-23 main estimates.

Of the \$21,267,000 of new funding, \$9,233,000 relates to funding obligations of the newly signed Collective Agreements with the Nunavut Teachers Association and Nunavut Employees Union. The remaining \$12,034,000 relates to program enhancements. These program enhancements include the following requests:

For 2023-24, the department is requesting \$3,696,000 to continue into the final year of our three-year implementation of the revised student-educator ratio (SER). This funding will allow the department to create 27.5 net new positions in our schools in 2023-24. These new positions will be made up of Nunavut Teachers Association positions, such as principals, teachers, student support teachers, guidance counsellors, language specialists, and learning coaches.

Since the student-educator was approved in 2011, the department has identified challenges and issues with the formula, such as:

1. Resourcing not being based on school needs. The previous student-educator ratio does not take into consideration the minimum number of staff needed to operate a school and deliver a program. At times, the student-educator ratio was under-resourcing the smallest schools.
2. Fluctuations in level of resourcing. The previous student-educator ratio was based on student enrolment. As student enrolment changed, so too did the number of teaching staff in the school, which meant the department had to adjust its staffing figures annually. This created challenges related to recruitment, housing, and relocating staff to address community staffing needs.
3. Lack of consistency. The previous student-educator ratio did not account for the allocation of certain positions including language specialists, student support assistants, or Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji (school community counsellors). Because there was no clear formula for allocating these positions, staff allocations were more susceptible to inequity and inconsistencies across schools and education districts.

In 2017, the department began reviewing the student-educator ratio to find ways to improve its support to schools. The department conducted jurisdictional scans, internal and external consultations, and an extensive analysis to produce the revised formula. The revised formula was approved as part of the 2021-22 main estimate process.

In addition, as part of the 2023-24 main estimates, our department has requested \$4,983,000 to expand the school-based mental health supports for students. In 2019-20, through its school-based mental health support services pilot, the Department of Education submitted a proposal to the Child First Initiative for funding to support with the pilot. The Department of Education staff provided logistics, communication, coordination, orientation, translation and interpretation services and administrative support.

This pilot was conducted in 8 communities and saw the following services provided:

- Assessment and direct support to students who have been identified by the school team during school visits.

- Following assessment, development of counselling plans for identified students in collaboration with school staff, students and families.
- Targeted and/or individualized mental health support for students with complex needs. For example: trauma, grief/loss, substance abuse, ADHD, etcetera.
- Support for school staff around strategies in working with mental health concerns including for students who are exhibiting high-risk behaviours related to their mental health.
- Virtual and in-person follow-up support between school visits.
- Collection of data to inform the development of long-term, school-based mental health support planning.

From fiscal year 2020-21 through to 2022-23 the department continued to fund this pilot internally. With the success of the pilot project, the department now is requesting to expand the program to all 25 communities.

Mr. Chairman, there are a multitude of barriers for children and youth in Nunavut to access mental health services, including a lack of resources, limited community-based services, and stigma associated with mental health services. Schools in Nunavut are well positioned for early intervention, offering a clear pathway for children and youth to access mental health support services. Investment into this program will enable all Nunavut students to have access to increased mental health supports.

Lastly, the Department of Education is requesting \$3,355,000 to meet its legislative obligations to the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities and increase its capacity to support district education authorities.

The Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities was established in August 2006 by the district education authorities to give a unified voice to parents and district education authorities in Nunavut. The recently passed 2020 *Education Act* created several new responsibilities for the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities, including a significant increase in district education authority supports and district education authority training, increased consultation with Department of Education, involvement on hiring panels, and production of an annual report, including reporting on the state of education in Nunavut from the perspective of district education authorities.

Under section 191 of the *Education Act*, our department is responsible to provide funding to the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities for at least six staff positions, including the cost of office space, furnishing, equipment and supplies, and to support the travel and accommodations necessary for an annual meeting.

To fully support district education authorities and the new responsibilities of the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities under the *Education Act*, our

department is recommending to fund the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities for 13 positions.

This funding will allow the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities to become a stronger advocate for district education authorities, and will allow the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities to support the district education authorities so that they will be able to focus on their roles and have a greater impact in their communities. The Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities will also be playing a critical role in the consultation on the language of instruction regulations. Increasing Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities' capacity will allow the department to better understand community needs and wishes for implementation of bilingual education in schools.

Mr. Chairman, great strides are being made in our education system to expand services and supports available to our students, ensuring that the resources we do have are being used to maximum effect. I thank this committee for its continued support of the Department of Education, which enables us to carry out our mandate. With sufficient resources we will, together, provide the best education for our students.

I am happy to respond to questions, Mr. Chairman. *Qujannamiik, quana*, thank you, *merci*.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments to provide? Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the chair of the standing committee on social wellness, I am happy to make opening comments as we begin deliberations on the proposed 2023-2024 budget and business plan of the Department of Education.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education's proposed 2023-2024 operations and maintenance budget is approximately \$273.5 million, which represents an 8 percent increase over its 2022-2023 budget. The standing committee notes that just over half of this new funding will be allocated to wage increases under the collective agreement as well as the addition of new staff positions under the ongoing implementation of the department's new student educator ratio.

Mr. Chairman, the new student educator ratio formula has had an impact on the way in which staff and resources are allocated to our schools. Additional teachers, student support teachers, guidance counsellors and language specialists are very much needed to ensure the effective delivery of our education system under the *Education Act*. Members have noted that not all schools have guidance counsellors and encourage the Minister and her staff to work with district education authorities to ensure that this position is filled in as many of our schools as possible. These positions can be highly effective in assisting students with career planning not only at the high school level but also by raising awareness of career options and academic or alternative choices in earlier grades.

The standing committee strongly encourages the department to collect, analyze and report on graduation rates in greater detail than is currently included in its Annual Reports, taking into account assessment results as well as post-secondary opportunities that are being accessed by graduates. While committee members appreciate the level of detail included in the latest annual report with respect to such information as headcounts, attendance and language, the committee recommends that key performance indicators also be included to track progress in these and other areas.

The standing committee continues to encourage the Minister and her staff in their efforts to work with Nunavut Arctic College to support the Nunavut Teacher Education Program. The committee has been given to understand that over two hundred Inuit language educators still need to be hired to meet bilingual education requirements under the legislation governing our education system. The Nunavut Teacher Education Program's laddering system enables teaching students to achieve certification as language specialists within two years of study and to continue with their studies to qualify with a Bachelor of Education after an additional two or three years. Members of the Legislative Assembly encourage all potential candidates in our communities to consider applying for this career opportunity.

Committee members further recognize the important role played by student support assistants in our schools. As these employees fall under a different union than teachers, the Standing Committee encourages the department to work with such entities as the Nunavut Teachers' Association to expand the delivery of professional development opportunities to all school staff.

The committee looks forward to updates on the activities of the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities, which is established under the *Education Act*. The Coalition, with proposed funding for thirteen positions, will play an important role in training and supporting district education authorities in their roles and responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman, funding is available from a number of sources to increase the number of day care spaces as well as to support and enhance the delivery of early childhood programs in Nunavut's communities. Members have been given to understand that the department has made some progress on determining updated wage grids for early childhood workers.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education is planning to deliver full-time kindergarten in the limited number of Nunavut schools which can accommodate the expanded programming delivery at this time. The standing committee recognizes that expanding this initiative to additional schools will require considerable investment in physical renovations to classroom space as well as additional teaching staff and resources. The committee looks forward to updates on the implementation of the full-time kindergarten program.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee notes that new funding is being requested to expand mental health programming across all of Nunavut's schools and strongly supports

this initiative. School-based mental health services are greatly needed across the territory. Members have also raised a number of concerns with respect to incidents of violence and the prevalence of bullying in our schools. The committee has been given to understand that the department has initiated a tracking mechanism to record and monitor these situations and encourage the minister and her staff to carefully evaluate what kinds of programs and initiatives are most successful in keeping schools, students and staff safe.

The Department of Education manages the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students (FANS) program which supports Nunavummiut who are pursuing post-secondary studies. The standing committee appreciates that the department has begun work towards updating its current FANS database. The timeline for this process may impact such other initiatives as legislative amendments. Members continue to hear from constituents who experience difficulties in accessing financial assistance in a timely manner and the minister and her officials are encouraged to revise the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program as soon as possible.

That concludes my opening remarks. Individual Members may also have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brewster. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: I would like to report progress, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. It's not debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Ms. Gross. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 22. Third Reading of Bills. Item 23. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Ball.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Mr. Ball: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind members that the Standing Committee on Legislation will be meeting at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning in the Nanuq.

Orders of the Day for March 2, 2023:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12
 - Bill 16
 - Bill 17
 - Bill 18
 - Bill 19
 - Bill 20

- Bill 21

21. Report of the Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 2, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 19:40*

