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Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

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RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

Chair: Christopher Mitchelmore, MHA

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Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA
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Pam Parsons, MHA
Chris Tibbs, MHA
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Appearing:

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

Hon. Bernard Davis, MHA, Minister
Jamie Chippett, Deputy Minister
Kara Connors, Executive Assistant
Debbie Marnell, Director of Communications
Carmela Murphy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism
Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller
Renee Williams, Director, Corporate Services

Also Present

Glenn Littlejohn, Researcher, Official Opposition Office
Scott Fleming, Researcher, Third Party Office

The Committee met at 9:02 a.m.

CHAIR (Mitchelmore): Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to the Estimates Committee meeting of the Resource Committee for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

I certainly welcome the Committee Members here this morning. I would like to welcome Minister Davis and his team to give you the opportunity first, for the purposes of the meeting and recording, to introduce your team.

I'll hand it over to you, Minister Davis.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, hon. Chair.

I'm going to try to keep my remarks less than an hour and a half, so we can all be happy about that.

Good morning to my colleagues. Welcome to everyone here at the Estimates. Thank you for being so accommodating on trying to put it in here today so we can all get through with this process and move on to the next phase.

I'm pleased to be joined here by some of the best people in all of government behind me that make my job that much easier. I'm going to introduce them. When they hear their name, if they can put their hand up and then you'll put a name to the face of the people that do some great work for people of our province.

Jamie Chippett, Deputy Minister for TCAR. We'll prefer to call it TCAR at this point, just because it makes it a little easier.

Carmella Murphy, Assistant Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, and pretty much everything else.

Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller.

Renee Williams, Director of Corporate Services.

Debbie Marnell, Director of Communications.

Kara Connors, right behind me here, the Executive Assistant to me. The brains behind the operation, as I always say.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister Davis.

Before we get into your opening remarks, I'll just get everybody else in the Committee to identify themselves. We would ask Mr. Tibbs to begin.

MR. TIBBS: Chris Tibbs, MHA for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: Glenn Littlejohn, Political Researcher.

MR. BROWN: Jordan Brown, MHA for Labrador West.

CHAIR: I'll go to Ms. Coffin's desk.

MR. FLEMING: Scott Fleming, Researcher, NDP Caucus.

MS. HALEY: Carol Anne Haley, MHA, Burin - Grand Bank.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA for the beautiful District of Placentia - St. Mary's.

MR. TRIMPER: Perry Trimper for Lake Melville.

MR. DAVIS: It's a beautiful district as well.

CHAIR: Thank you for that.

Before we begin, if any participants will be moving about the Chamber, due to the COVID protocols, we ask that everybody wear a mask. We will take a break halfway through this meeting at 10:30, if anybody needs to use a washroom or make a telephone call. But if anybody has to get up in between, remember to wear your mask.

I'm going to hand things over to Minister Davis to bring some opening remarks. After, I'll ask the Clerk to call the subheads.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is a newly formed department, as we know, driven by the commitments to contribute to the economic growth and well-being of a vibrant, creative and active province. This department is

essential to ensuring a vibrant tourism and arts sector, preserving our culture and advancing opportunities in the sports and recreation sector.

The mandate of the department is as follows: To market Newfoundland and Labrador as a tourism destination as well as support the development of the entire industry; to support and foster development of the arts; to further contribute to the capacity of the cultural entities; to promote, protect and preserve the province's heritage; to support and nurture the province's provincial park system; and to promote the importance of sport and recreation plays in healthy well-being for each and every resident of our province.

The department is the province's largest operator of tourism, culture and heritage facilities including the Arts and Culture Centres, the Provincial Historic Sites, Provincial Parks and Visitor Information Centres. TCAR encompasses three branches: tourism and parks, arts and culture and sports and recreation.

These branches are supported by two corporate divisions: Communications and Corporate Services. TCAR has an extensive regional reach with departmental staff located throughout the province at Visitor Information Centres, Historic Sites, parks, Arts and Culture Centres and various recreation and pool facilities throughout our province.

I commend the staff, as I've done earlier, and will continue to do, especially during the COVID pandemic, for their collaborative effort and continued commitment to fostering a culture of innovation, productivity and creativity in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The initial days of COVID provided me with the insight on the strength and versatility of the department. Faced with an unprecedented situation, staff were well organized and functioned at a very, very high level. In the weeks following the March shutdown, officials worked hard to getting critical funding out the door to organizations and operations that needed it most to help with the continuation of those activities; funding which was pivotal for the communities and the residents of the province.

Through regular communication with stakeholders and industry groups, there were daily discussions with our federal counterparts across the country. Those daily discussions led to the development of programs to meet targets and fill gaps to ensure the residents could pay bills, put food on the table and support their families.

Considerable focus was given on how to alleviate the stress and burden that the pandemic has put on all of us. Once again, I cannot thank the staff in the department enough for their continued effort and dedication as we navigate through living with COVID, while we are all striving to provide quality programs and services to the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

At this time, if the Chair is willing, we can move on to take some questions on the line by line in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

I'd like to highlight the fact that this is the first time I've actually had the opportunity to say Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, which is an important thing that the government decided to put into the title here, which shows how important the arts and culture in our province is.

So, Mr. Chair ...

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister Davis, for your opening remarks.

I just remind the Committee if there are any officials that are asked to answer questions, to state their name. If your light doesn't come on, wave your hand to be recognized. With that, I'll ask the Clerk to call the first subhead.

CLERK (Russell): 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 inclusive carry?

Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: First of all, I'd like to thank everybody for being here. It's definitely a new department and it's a very important department to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I know the minister is a very hard worker and I'm sure he'll do well with the department.

I'd like to also compliment the Chair, who had this department at one time. I think he did a great job with it at one time as well.

Moving along, I just have some general questions, if that's okay, Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, absolutely.

MR. TIBBS: First of all, can we obtain a copy of the minister's briefing binder?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, we'll have that for all of our colleagues on the other side, for sure.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Thank you very much, Sir.

My second question: Is the attrition plan still being followed? If so, what are the changes for the last year and this year?

MR. DAVIS: The answer to the question very quickly: Yes, it is. It's different for each division within the department. If you want to go through line by line it's addressed in the Salaries component, if you go through. So just when we do get to the salary questions on that, I do want to say that most of the change that would be an increase in the Salaries would be reflective of the 27th pay period, which I guess has come up in every Estimates so far.

The attrition plan is being managed. If you want more details on where that is from a division-by-division standpoint, we can ask the staff to provide that to you, but we are meeting our targets.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Thank you, Minister.

Can you give us an overview of the staffing levels in your department? There are a couple of little subsections here. How many people are employed in the department?

MR. DAVIS: In all sections of the department: 282, when you factor in the Arts and Heritage section with the Arts and Culture Centres, I think, as well.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. How many retirements have occurred in the past year?

MR. DAVIS: Jamie, do you want ...?

MR. CHIPPETT: Four retirements in the last year.

MR. TIBBS: I wish them well.

How many vacancies are not filled in the department right now?

MR. DAVIS: How many vacancies?

MR. TIBBS: Yes, Sir.

MR. DAVIS: I don't know if there's ...

MR. CHIPPETT: Nineteen.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Chippett.

Have any positions been eliminated and what would they be?

MR. DAVIS: There have been some movements, obviously, when we changed departments. There haven't been any positions eliminated, but there are going to be some changes to what you see in the Estimates book as those heads. In particular, a couple of ADMs moved over to a new department.

MR. TIBBS: Okay and we can get a breakdown of that?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, no problem.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, thank you.

How many layoffs have occurred in the department in the last year?

MR. DAVIS: None, to my knowledge.

MR. CHIPPETT: The only layoffs would be regular ones associated with seasonal operations and so on.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

How many new hires took place in the last year, Minister?

MR. DAVIS: Fourteen.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

How many contractual and short-term employees are in the department?

MR. DAVIS: That's an interesting question because we have, obviously, seasonal employees with our park system for sure, so that would be short term, but many of them are long-term employees. I've met many of them over the summer. Some have 40 years-plus in the system, which is great.

From contractual standpoints, I think we have seven 13-weekers in the department and six of them are all in the park system. There would be a few contractual ones. I think there is one in the department itself and then in the entities, I think there are three.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

Did your department receive any funds from the COVID fund? If so, what were they for?

MR. DAVIS: The department never directly received funds within the department I don't think. We have a fund created for the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program of \$25 million that came from the COVID relief fund.

We also have some investments that we made recently in announcements with respect to the opening of the Aquarena. That would have come from that fund. The sport and rec had some money come in from that as well.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

How has COVID impacted service delivery? Can you please speak about any backlogs which are occurring and the plan to resume to normal service levels?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely.

I don't know of any backlogs at all. Our staff has been fantastic.

As soon as COVID hit I would say our department was one of the fastest to get up and running on full implementation of what we were doing from home. We've put program funding out the door very, very quickly because we

understood that was very important for the community groups that we serve, keeping them whole and keeping their employment levels up so they could put off the activities that they do.

Even though COVID is completely a different time for everybody, I was very pleased with how our staff developed and really elevated their game to provide that service to the people that they were providing great service to before.

It's a testament to how hard they work and how passionate they are about what they do. There were no backlogs I was happy to say. We approved getting the money out the door as quick as we possibly could to support that.

MR. TIBBS: It's good to see so many avail of that as well.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, absolutely.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, did your department receive any funds from the contingency fund? If so, what was it for?

MR. DAVIS: I think we received contingency funds – Marble Mountain would have been from the contingency fund. I think that's it for the contingency fund. I'm looking to Jamie but I think that's it.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

Minister, \$13 million is budgeted for Marble in 2020.

MR. DAVIS: Can we get to Marble?

MR. TIBBS: Sure.

MR. DAVIS: There's an actual tab for Marble later on, if we want to do that.

MR. TIBBS: We can wait until then.

MR. DAVIS: Perfect.

CHAIR: Mr. Tibbs and Mr. Brown, I think for the flow of the meeting, any general questions that you may have for the overall department is appropriate for this section, but to go line by line. Then, as you have questions specific to

tourism or any other, it would be best handled by those sections.

MR. TIBBS: Sure.

CHAIR: It will just help with the flow of the meeting.

MR. TIBBS: Okay.

Minister, 1.1.01, Minister's Office, Transportation and Communications: In 2019-2020 about one-third of the T and C budget was spent, yet this year the full amount is budgeted. Could you please tell me why you've budgeted the full amount this year instead of reducing the budget?

MR. DAVIS: Pretty simple, I don't control when you sit in this chair. If you're going to be in this chair for long term – I hope to be, but the Premier can move that. In order to do that – you spoke about the previous minister who was from the Great Northern Peninsula. I'm from the Avalon portion of the province, so obviously travel would be significantly less for me to do my job, as it would be for someone else to do theirs. That's the rationale about why we keep the travel at that same level.

Any savings that would be saved at that point would be recognized in the Estimates next year when we do the same conversation that we had, similar to what's happening in the '19-'20 actuals.

MR. TIBBS: Thanks.

MR. DAVIS: I hope that answers your question.

MR. TIBBS: It did.

MR. DAVIS: Perfect, thank you.

MR. TIBBS: Line 1.2.01, Executive Support, Transportation and Communications. In 2019-2020, about one-third of the T and C budget was spent, yet this year the full amount is budgeted. Could you please tell me why you've budgeted the full amount this year instead of reducing the budget?

MR. DAVIS: That was 1.2.01? Is that what you –?

MR. TIBBS: 1.2.01, yes, Sir. It's the Executive Support.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, no problem.

Why it's the same amount. Similar thing as before: You can't control when there's support for deputies or whoever could go into those positions. We anticipate that we will be going back to more regular operations and living with COVID, whether that be travelling to conferences or FTPs or things like that. At some point, any savings that would come from that would be recognized in the following Estimates. You have to budget to make sure you have the money there, appropriation for it. That's why we did it that way.

MR. TIBBS: Okay.

Minister, 1.2.02, Corporate Services, Purchased Services: Can you explain the variance in the Purchased Services line? I'm specifically interested in hearing about the savings in the last fiscal year.

MR. DAVIS: Okay, yes.

The decrease of \$45,389 from the '19-'20 budget and the '19-'20 actuals reflects lower than anticipated storage costs for off-site files and fewer international events purchased during COVID-19.

You're going to hear COVID-19 a few times throughout these Estimates, just to let you know, because that impacted quite heavily what we were in the process of doing for the department, as well as every department, I would assume.

MR. TIBBS: Yes, it impacted all of us, I guess, hey?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, Purchased Services under the same heading line. What purchased services are contained in this line item?

MR. DAVIS: Purchased Services. Bonnie?

MS. STEELE: For Corporate Services, the Purchased Services costing includes the copier fees, storage cost fees, secured movers,

shredders and shredding costs. It also provides for the printing and equipment and room rentals for client systems, integration and training. There's also some funding in here to support certain international and national and in-province marketing activities, that's contained in the line. Expenditures encompass some of the collateral materials and logistics items for international events, such as shipping, storage, moving and setting up at trade shows.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

We're good for that line item.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Tibbs.

We'll now ask Mr. Brown to ask his questions in this section.

MR. BROWN: No, my colleague has seemed to ask all the questions for this section that I was going to ask for the line items, so thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

I'll ask the Clerk to call this section.

CLERK: 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.2.02 carried.

CHAIR: I'll ask the Clerk to call section 2 under Tourism.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.3.02 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.3.02 inclusive carry?

Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

Minister, in 2.1.01, Tourism, Purchased Services: Can you please outline what purchased services make up the \$11.9 million?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, the Purchased Services, that large number is based on the marketing campaign for the tourism product that we have in the province. It's a concerted effort to ensure that we have individuals travel to this province when able to, of course, outside of COVID times, and as well as to have our own residents be able to understand what's out there for them to go visit.

Any more details about exactly what can go in, Carmela, our assistant deputy for that area, can go through it. She's lived it.

MS. MURPHY: The tourism marketing and advertising budget pays for a comprehensive, fully-integrated marketing plan, which will include everything from our website, our online assets, our digital marketing, travel guides, maps, the provincial VICs and contact centre to answer the phones. There's money there that draws down federal money from cost-shared agreements for marketing in Atlantic Canada. We support our regional destination management organizations with that fund as well and advertising, of course, in all of our markets.

MR. TIBBS: We are number one for advertising in the world, I believe. Thank you.

Same heading for the next couple here, Minister, 2.1.01. Grants and Subsidies: What is the \$221,000 for, specifically?

MR. DAVIS: I guess we can go to Carmela, as well, for specifics on what that is.

MS. MURPHY: \$150,000 of the \$221,000 is an operating grant for Destination Labrador. The \$71,000 provides operating grants to regional visitor information centres throughout the province.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect. We all know how important Labrador is.

Revenue: Where does the provincial revenue come from and why was it not received this past year?

MR. DAVIS: That's a very good question. The decrease in \$80,000 in revenue was based on the anticipated revenue ads for the travel guide and because of COVID it wasn't received at the time of March 31. It was received in this fiscal and so you will see that next year.

MR. TIBBS: Next year, okay.

MR. DAVIS: The \$80,000 was received; it just wasn't received in time for the Estimates at that time.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, but it is received for this current year?

MR. DAVIS: Correct.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, thank you.

This past tourism season was devastated because of the public health pandemic. What plans are being made to ensure that operators and amenities are in place to service tourists in future years?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, I couldn't agree with you more that it was a devastating year for our tourism operators and hospitality sector. That's why we created the single biggest investment that the provincial government has ever made in the tourism sector, the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program, of \$25 million. With a very quick application process, in some cases turned around in less than 48 hours, to allow organizations to avail of either a \$5,000 or \$10,000 non-repayable contribution to help against their fixed costs that would have been incurred because COVID had happened and revenue would have been down significantly.

We also did our Stay Home Year 2020 campaign with very good success. Obviously some operators benefited more based on proximity to population centres than others, but I think on the overall people were pleasantly surprised at what they did receive based on our own population moving around our province. Obviously without having non-resident people coming to our province because of the restrictions, that drastically impacted the availability of operators to either operate and/or make a substantial profit or a profit at all. 2020 was about survival and providing them the key

pieces to stay in business to get through to the 2021 season.

This is only one aspect that we did. We lobbied with our federal and other departments in government to try to alleviate some of the burden on businesses, whether that be reduced loan payments or no interest payments; any fees to government we tried to eliminate and/or remove; then working with our federal colleagues almost on a daily basis. Myself and Minister Joly are on a first-name basis today because of the amount of calls that we've had based on this pandemic.

I guess some benefits that come out of a pandemic is that it brings everybody a bit closer. For our colleagues, there wasn't a day go by during the early part of the campaign that we weren't on the phone with each other, as ministers, right across the country.

There are issues, obviously. We're working through those to try to provide businesses with the best support we possibly can, given the fiscal situation we are in. We're going to continue to lobby with the federal government to extend all of the programs that they have. We've had great success with that with the wage subsidy; that's been extended now until the summer, which is a fantastic thing for operators in the tourism and hospitality sector.

I hope that answers a little bit of your question on what we've done and what we're going to continue to do. But also we worked very closely with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, the key stakeholders and the DMOs that are around the province because they're on the ground, they know what the issues are and we try to rectify those issues as they come up. I think open and transparent communication with them is how I operate and how I think they have benefited because of that.

MR. TIBBS: I have no doubt about that. A collaborative approach is definitely the best way to take a thing.

Minister, do you have any statistics on how the Atlantic travel bubble worked from a tourism perspective? How many tourists came to the province from the Atlantic Canadian provinces

versus how many residents from Newfoundland and Labrador went to other provinces?

MR. DAVIS: A bit too early to tell that right now, but we will have an assessment on that. I think our assistant deputy may be able to tell us a bit more on the time frame when we will have some of that data, just based on historical information before.

MS. MURPHY: On a normal year, we track visitation to the province through Marine Atlantic and through air travel. At this point in time, there isn't enough statistic that we're getting from the airports so we're waiting until usually the end of October now, but we know air travel is down, in general, 90 per cent. We will have to look at the sample sizes and understand how many people came from Atlantic Canada for vacation pleasure.

It will be a little more complicated and it will probably be another month or two before we can provide any reasonable data that we can post on our website.

MR. TIBBS: I have no doubt it's going to be a tough stat to track, I'm sure of that, but I really thank you for that.

Minister, is there any type of industry plan to relaunch the industry following the pandemic? Any new ideas?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely.

You addressed it a little earlier in your first question, I think, about the marketing campaign that we have. As you know, we're world class in that and we win every possible award. I think it's over 357 or something, at this point, that we've won on an international level and national level. That's one of the levers we'll pull when we're able to. Obviously, we want to make sure those investments are made in marketplaces that will be open. So it's a bit precursor to do that now.

The federal government is going to be doing – as you heard in the *Throne Speech* – a recovery of the tourism sector. So we're looking for details to come to fruition on that. When that comes, you'll be one of the first people to know because

we'll be singing it from the hilltops every day we possibly can on that.

I don't know if Carmela – I know she's worked quite tirelessly with the other stakeholders in the area so we can work with them.

Carmela if you ...

MS. MURPHY: We have a tourism strategy. It's a partnership strategy between government and industry, which, interestingly, was coming to a close in 2020 and we'd already began a process for another new five-year outlook on tourism. COVID-19 has changed everything around what the future looks like.

Currently, we're engaged with our tourism industry on a plan that's much more recent focused and the action plan is really about re-emergence and recovery in the industry. We're working on that right now, because we need to be poised and ready to get back in the market and to get our non-resident visitation back to Newfoundland and Labrador as soon as travel is allowed to the province.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

MR. DAVIS: One of those key points – sorry, Mr. Chair – is we've always heard: You don't want to be the last dog to the bowl. So we want to make sure we're ready to go as soon as it's ready to go.

From my standpoint, I think the department that Carmela leads is doing a fantastic job on the marketing of our province and the beautiful aspects that we do have in this province. I look forward to seeing that campaign go. As soon as it's ready to go, we're going to be out there in the marketplace because we want to tap into whether that be Canadian travel or whether that be other bubbles that are created across international waters, who knows, what's going to happen with this. We're not in a situation where we can make that determination today but we're ready to go as soon as – press that play button.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Tibbs.

I want to also recognize the MHA for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave joining the Committee, as well, to record her attendance.

Now, Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Arts and Culture Centres, there's quite a reduction in provincial revenue. What was the reasoning for that? Under 2.2.01, sorry.

MR. DAVIS: Just one second.

2.2.01, Arts and Culture Centres, okay.

MR. BROWN: Yes, there was a reduction in provincial revenue. What was the reasoning for that?

MR. DAVIS: A decrease between the 2020-21 budget and 2019-20 actuals reflects the lower budgeted ticket sales due to COVID, based on the fact they couldn't sell because they weren't open.

MR. BROWN: Okay, so that was the reasoning.

What was the reasoning for no – we budgeted for federal revenue but we never received any.

MR. DAVIS: Receiving the federal contribution for touring presentations for program review, we didn't have as many because of COVID.

MR. BROWN: Okay, so there was just no federal revenue that way.

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

But I will be happy to say that the Arts and Culture Centres did open on September 8, with 20 to 30 per cent occupancy. There are some really good events happening there now and I encourage people to visit –

MR. BROWN: Oh, I know. There are some home now.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, it's great.

MR. BROWN: 2.2.02, Arts, Heritage and Historic Development, I've seen it says the minister is working with Indigenous people and

key departments to review existing monuments, symbols and observances to ensure that they are anti-racist. Which groups and developments have you been meeting with to discuss these?

MR. DAVIS: Very good question. If the assistant deputy minister, Carmella, would – there was a task force that was created out of, I think, Executive Council that asked us to look at that. We're working closely with Indigenous Affairs on that as well, with others. I know The Room have done some work on that as well, but I think for a little bit more detail, Carmella can ...

MS. MURPHY: We've just established a working group on monuments and observances. I sit on that along with Indigenous Affairs and The Rooms. We have to establish a work plan, but we have early priorities that have been identified. One is the renaming of the Mary March Museum. We are also looking at statues that are on the property here at Confederation Building and the process around renaming what was the Discover Day holiday.

So there is a work plan for each of those will in hand. We will also be looking at what our other priorities will be once we have put forward options for what should be or could be done. Those engagements are happening with the appropriate departments with the Indigenous community.

MR. BROWN: Okay, perfect, thank you so much.

Given the worldwide renown of our cultural products, is the minister going to put extra focus on supports for exporting different cultural products? Are we going to put more focus on exporting them to a more international market?

MR. DAVIS: Can you repeat that first part? I didn't hear the first part, sorry.

MR. BROWN: Oh, sorry. I said given the worldwide renown of our cultural products in this province, are we going to put more focus on more export into a global market for cultural products like crafts and arts and things like that?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely. The government has put, just recently in a different department of

Industry, they recently announced a \$2.7 million investment in digitization and trying to help organizations, of which heritage and crafts and art are available to apply for that, where they can put websites together to have online portals so they can sell their wares everywhere. So if there was a secondary outbreak of COVID or something happened in the future, it would give them an opportunity to avail of that international market a little safer, a little easier.

So, yes, there's always investment that we would be doing in that. We always encourage our artists, as well as our people in business in general to try to find that international marketplace that we can get to. We have a small population that we want to have buy our products, but we also want to get those beautiful products that are highest quality in the world to the rest of the world market, where we seem to do very well when people get to see it. We just want to make sure people get to see it.

MR. BROWN: Absolutely. I guess in the world of COVID, travel is a bit restrictive, but I guess giving this opportunity to crafters would be seen as an opportunity to mitigate people not walking in their shop, but looking into their shop, kind of thing.

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, I couldn't agree more.

MR. BROWN: Perfect, all right.

Under section 2.2.02, we see Purchased Services was down quite a bit compared to what was budgeted to what were actuals. What was the reason for the decline there?

MR. DAVIS: Reflects the fewer repairs and maintenance costs as well as rental fees during the 2019-20 season.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

I noticed that the budget has been reduced for next year, is that the result of zero-based budgeting?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, exactly.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Under provincial revenue, there is a bit of a decrease there. What was the reasoning for the decrease in provincial revenue?

MR. DAVIS: It was due to admission fees collected at the Provincial Historic Sites were down.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies: What are the Grants and Subsidies under this division?

MR. DAVIS: Various and sundry. There is a significant portion of them. We have a list of things. I can just give you some highlights.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, sure.

MR. DAVIS: Major festivals and attractions, Publishers Assistance Program, market access and professional development. MusicNL would be one of those.

MR. BROWN: Oh, MusicNL.

MR. DAVIS: The heritage operation supports, Intangible Cultural Heritage is a fund that's there and NL Art Bank, just to name a few. There are more. I can give you a list if you'd like.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, sure. I appreciate that.

Thank you.

Would the money under this here, would this be for finishing the Colonial Building as well?

MR. DAVIS: That's in a separate line item that wouldn't appear here. It would appear in TI.

MR. BROWN: Okay, it's in TI.

MR. DAVIS: That's well under way. We're looking good for that. I look forward to the day that opens as well.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Is there any timeline that you can provide that would say when it would be finished-esque?

MR. DAVIS: I don't want to give a specific timeline today.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: We can have an offline chat about that after. I think the final package is being released.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: COVID did slow that down a little bit because of the proximity within the building.

MR. BROWN: Oh, absolutely.

MR. DAVIS: It looks like a very big building from the outside, but when you actually get inside it's not as big as it looks from the outside. I look forward to that piece that's going to be in the historical components of our province when that does open.

I don't know if there's anything else we would like to add, Carmela, on that. I think we're good.

MS. MURPHY: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIS: Okay.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Minister.

Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, the increase of \$1 million, is that from the promise from last year's election?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, absolutely. We've committed to move that number from – I think it was \$1.9 million when we started to get it to \$5 million over a three-year period. This is year two of that three-year period. Based on the budget's success, next year, hopefully, we'll be able to do that again. I don't want to presuppose what will happen with the budget. But, absolutely, the artists and the Art Council will be very excited about that \$1 million investment.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, so this is a planned year-over-year commitment to get them up to a more adequate funding?

MR. DAVIS: Correct.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

2.2.04, The Rooms Corporation: I noticed that their grant this year is slightly less than budgeted last year but their actuals last year was a bit higher. What's the reasoning for that?

MR. DAVIS: Two-fold, one is the reduction in 2020-2021 Estimates are attrition targets that The Rooms are hitting based on what government put in place, those attrition targets. The reason why the actuals in 2019-20 are up is due to severance and retirement costs of three employees.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Is this funding just salaries for The Rooms or does this also include building maintenance and other operations of The Rooms?

MR. DAVIS: This is the actual grant to The Rooms. They manage that facility with a board of directors. It's salaries, yes, but there's also maintenance. There are also other things that are associated with that that The Rooms will manage based on that grant and subsidy we provide them.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

2.2.05, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation: I notice there was an increase in their grant, in the actuals, but you budgeted for lower. What's the reasoning behind that?

MR. DAVIS: The actuals was a one-time payout of severance to employees at the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation.

I'm glad you asked the question about the Film Development Corporation because it gives me an opportunity to actually say how important this is for the development of the province and how we've been successful. This year is the first time we've had two prime time television shows being shot simultaneously in the province at the exact same time: *Hudson & Rex* and *Surrealtor*.

MR. BROWN: Actually, where I'm staying, my wife's cousin actually works on *Hudson & Rex*.

MR. DAVIS: Oh, excellent.

I've had the pleasure of touring two of those sets and it's amazing to see the impact it has on employees. I would think that's very much close to 400 employees between those two shows that are employed based on that; well-paying jobs and showing off the province. We're getting a double-edged sword on this one. We're actually getting the employment, but you also get to show off the beautiful province that we all know, in this House, exists and we get to show it to the rest of the world.

In some of cases, it's an international audience, which is impressive in and of itself.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr. Brown. You'll have an opportunity for further questions.

Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

We'll go back to 2.1.01 for one moment, Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Just give me a second.

MR. TIBBS: Absolutely, you take all the time in the world.

MR. DAVIS: 2. what?

MR. TIBBS: 2.1.01, almost back to the start: Tourism.

MR. DAVIS: Perfect. What a beautiful thing it is.

MR. TIBBS: It certainly is.

Minister, I asked you about what's going to be done for the next tourism season. What impact will the downturn in tourism have on the provincial economy? Lost jobs, revenue, et cetera.

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, it can't be understated how important tourism is to the province. Not just our province, every province. We have a \$1.14-billion amount of money coming into the province through the tourism side, so it's

something that can't be replaced. Obviously having non-resident travel not being able to happen at this point this season is difficult for the operators and obviously there have been reductions in staff and levels. That's just the nature of the beast. If you don't open you're not going to have the ability to employ people.

One of the good things about that is that we've had the federal government create programs that really supported that industry, whether it be the restaurant business or whether it be the tourism operators that are providing services or hoteliers. They're all getting some – or I can't say all. A significant portion of them is getting federal funding as well. We try to support them in any way we can and our door is always open to hear their concerns and listen to them and see what we can do to rectify those problems. So we're right there with them, shoulder to the grindstone, as we say.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Minister, is there an inventory or stats on how many businesses will not be able to open the next tourism season due to the lack of customers and business this past year?

MR. DAVIS: Well, I guess time will tell on that. That's what the federal programs have been trying to do. That's what the THSP has been trying to accomplish to make sure that those operators that have invested their time, talent and skills in developing the product – and it's a world-class product. I know that a lot of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had the pleasure of going out and seeing the tourism operators now and it's come a long way in the last decade – a long way. That's a testament to the commitment that the tourism operators have made in their craft. It's a commitment that they've listened to and working with our department officials who sat down with them to say: Listen, this is what the exit surveys are saying; this is what the tourists want. They've listened and did the work that's required. That's why we're so focused on trying to provide support and investment and anything we can from a marketing perspective to ensure they exist well past the 2020 COVID season and into what we hope will be a much, much better 2021 season.

But, as you know, we don't know what we don't know at this point with COVID. We do know that there are spikes that are happening in other parts of the country now and we've been very lucky in this province through hard work and dedication by the people in the province to keep COVID cases at a very, very low number. I think that's going to bode well for us in a bounce back. We are seen as one of the safest places in the world to visit and come to. So when we do get to open our borders, I think that those individuals that put Newfoundland and Labrador on their bucket list are going to put it there and we're going to get those residents back into this province.

I hope that answers your question, as best as I can, given we don't know what 2021 holds yet. We're very hopeful that we put some parameters in place to help them and I know that the federal government is coming forward with a recovery plan as well. I look forward anxiously to seeing that as well.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Just to go back one second about the relaunch of the industry. Anything in there for outfitters, Minister?

MR. DAVIS: It's a very good question.

The outfitters can apply for the THSP, like we've created. They can apply for some of those federal programs, if not all. We're working closely with FFA officials because it sort of crosses over two departments here. The determination on how many animals can be collected or how many can be put out there is determined by FFA, whereas we work with the operators to help them market their product and ensure that they are successful, or help them to be successful. They've got a great world-class product as well. Obviously, we look forward to FFA doing population assessments and seeing where it lies for the 2021 season.

Hopefully we'll be able to work with the outfitters. I've met with them on a regular basis and heard their concerns and we're going to be an advocate for them with our colleagues in the other department as well. But we'll let science guide what they do because that's not my area of expertise. I can say that I've told the outfitters

that I will be there with them, pushing for what they need to be sustainable in the long term.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent, thank you.

Minister, going to 2.1.02, Marble Mountain Development Corporation. Minister, \$13 million is budgeted for Marble Mountain in 2020 –

MR. DAVIS: Sorry, 13 –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. TIBBS: Oh, that was the marketing one, my apologies. Marketing, sorry. No, that's right. We'll just move on to Marble Mountain, Grants and Subsidies.

Minister, last year Marble needed an additional \$350,000 in current funding. What was this for?

MR. DAVIS: Obviously, in the last number of years we've had some – I think if you go back to 2017-18 there were close to 30 days cancelled due to rain. The following year there were close to 30 days cancelled due to wind. Then in 2019-2020 we had COVID that impacted probably the most successful season going at Marble Mountain for the past recent memory, anyway. That \$350,000 that came in was based on the fact that ski –

MR. TIBBS: Conditions.

MR. DAVIS: Ski conditions are one, but also skiers have tailed off a little bit more over the past number of years.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Okay. Hopefully it picks up this year.

MR. DAVIS: Hopefully it does. We can hope for a lot of snow on the West Coast for Marble Mountain.

MR. TIBBS: Yeah, I hear you.

Can the minister comment on the long-term viability of Marble Mountain? Some time ago the previous minister released an RFP seeking a partner in the private sector. Is there an update on this?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, as you can tell, the RFP is still progressing through. We had hoped to have that clued up by now. It's going to sound like a broken record, and I do apologize for that, everyone, to the room. I hate saying it as much as you hate hearing it, but COVID did slow down that process. Obviously, individuals had impacts that were related to COVID.

From our end, that process is up and running again now. I hope that process will conclude in the coming period of time. It will be what it is at the end of that process. I don't want to presuppose what's going to happen, but we did start that process in 2018 with the intention of trying to get private investment into the facility and to the operations at Marble, because at the end of the day, I think that's what we need for the long-term sustainability of that product.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, what plans are in place to promote Marble Mountain for the upcoming ski season?

MR. DAVIS: Right now, I'm happy that we've announced we will be opening in January. As most years we open in January, weather depending of course. Early bird ski passes will be on sale November 2. I encourage the hon. Member to get his ski pass on November 2 so he can make sure he can go skiing.

We're going to be working with the staff at Marble who are doing the process on getting the opening plan ready to go – in the next couple of weeks that will be out – and doing the brush cutting that's required to get that hill up and operational. We're going to do the best we can, given the COVID situation, but we have to remember there's also an opportunity here, too. We're the best skiing east of the Rockies, they say.

I'm not an avid skier, although I'm going to try it this year, I think. Hopefully I can walk after I do that. From my standpoint, I think there's an opportunity with the Atlantic bubble to have Marble be a little bit more of an attraction for that. So we're going to look at those options as well.

MR. TIBBS: Hopefully your skiing is better than your snowmobiling.

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely. Thank you. I could see your eyes light up with that statement. I knew you were going to go that way.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, residents of the Atlantic bubble are a captive skiing market. Are there any plans to partner with the regional airline to bring in some skiers from the Atlantic provinces?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely. We're looking at all options on the table. I know that Provincial Airlines has mentioned to me just in passing that they think that's an opportunity for them. Hopefully there will be something that will come out of that.

I can't presuppose what's going to happen in that way, but I know we're always looking at opportunities to market the province. That's one of our key pieces in the winter tourism aspect of our province.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, it was recently announced by the minister that Marble would be open for ski season. In a recent article, Mr. Keith Cormier, an avid skier, expressed grave concerns over the overall operations and governance of the facility.

When will a new board of directors be appointed that is in line with the governance structure? Will this board contain any local representation like it has in past years?

MR. DAVIS: Thank you for the question.

One of the things we're working through, as we talked about earlier, was the RFP process. When that process concludes, be it positive or negative, then obviously the next steps will be determined on a moving-forward basis from that.

We don't want to put something in place, I don't think, during a process where the RFP is on the go. As soon as that clues up – and I'm like everyone else, I wish that process was a bit faster as well, but we can't push. It's much better to do it right than do it quick.

From my standpoint, I'm hopeful that something good will come out of it. Whether it concludes the process in a positive way or it concludes the

process and it just finishes, I think there will be some direction that will come from that.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Tibbs.

I now move to Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Back to 2.2.05, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation.

MR. DAVIS: Just one second.

MR. BROWN: The Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation.

MR. DAVIS: Perfect, yes.

MR. BROWN: We were just discussing there before – are there any talks or opportunities to increase the funding to the film corporation to broaden our scope in the world market for film and television development?

MR. DAVIS: There are always talks in opportunities that would come up. There are two aspects there. A little further on there's an investment in equity for the Film Development Corporation that goes along for \$4 million as well. I guess we can address it here or address it there, but my standpoint is we always want to take every opportunity we can to invest smartly in opportunities to create employment.

One of those investments in *Hudson & Rex* could leverage \$28 million or \$29 million for one season with a modest – I say it's a modest investment but it's challenging when you have a fiscal reality that we have in this province. I think we always try to find a way to make it work to help those business development opportunities come to fruition.

I encourage any of the operators that are out there that have, as I say, money in the bank – let's hear it. We want to hear those processes. Not us specifically, the Film Development Corporation wants to always hear those. We work very closely with Dorian and his team down there to ensure their success where they need us to be.

MR. BROWN: Okay, perfect.

2.2.06, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador: What kind of Grants and Subsidies are provided to the foundation?

MR. DAVIS: This grant is a grant in operations for the –

MR. BROWN: It's just a straight operations grant?

MR. DAVIS: It's just straight operations. It gives them an opportunity – I think Carmela can go through it a little bit more if you want to, but I think that's essentially what it is. It's just a straightforward grant for their operation themselves.

MR. BROWN: 2.2.07 again, which is the capital of the Newfoundland – so that would be our investment into the industry?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, the equity fund that's –

MR. BROWN: Equity fund.

MR. DAVIS: It's the equity fund that's there for the Film Development Corporation to help draw those shows like *Hudson & Rex* and others there. Unless Carmela would like to add to that, I think that's – yeah, perfect.

MS. MURPHY: There are two programs that support screen industries, television in Newfoundland and Labrador. We have an equity investment program – that's the \$4 million – as well as a tax credit program for labour. A production applies to the film corporation with their financial structure and then an equity investment is made. That \$4 million is an annualized fund that supports numerous development screen and film, big and small projects.

MR. BROWN: It covers it.

MS. MURPHY: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: Okay, thank you.

2.3.01, Pippy Park Commission: What was the reason for a reduction –?

MR. DAVIS: 2.3.01, are we there yet?

MR. BROWN: – in their grant this year?

MR. DAVIS: Sorry, what was that? The reduction?

MR. BROWN: Yeah, the reduction.

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, that's based on attrition targets for Pippy Park.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

2.3.02, Park Operations: We notice an increase under Supplies and there's an increase in the budget next year for Supplies. What is the reasoning for that?

MR. DAVIS: The increase in the actuals for 2019-20 was based on the higher than anticipated fuel costs for that fiscal year. The increase in Estimates from the \$290,400 to \$332,800 was based on the increase of \$4,200 based on the waterway provincial park along the Eagle River, as well as construction and maintenance costs for 32 parks that we have in the system.

MR. BROWN: You rolled right into my next question. How's the Eagle River waterway park?

MR. DAVIS: Excellent. It's progressing.

MR. BROWN: It's progressing?

MR. DAVIS: It's progressing. We're working with the –

MR. BROWN: Any timeline on its induction?

MR. DAVIS: I don't have the number. I haven't been briefed on the update on the number lately, but it is moving and will continue. I know that like many things it's slowed a little bit with COVID, but it's still moving.

As soon as we have an update for you, we'll definitely – especially knowing how interested you are in that; that was, I think, your first question to me back a year ago. I think it's an important piece of infrastructure that we're working on or park in our system. I know that

we're working very closely with our federal colleagues on that.

MR. BROWN: I noticed an increase in Purchased Services, as well, in that division. What was the reasoning for that for Estimates?

MR. DAVIS: Most of the increases that you're going to see in this would be based on the waterway provincial park along the Eagle River.

MR. BROWN: Okay, so there's going to be a lot more activity?

MR. DAVIS: Correct, based on the increases there. Most of that is directly related to that. Some of it will be recouped from a federal transfer back with revenue you'll see lower down in the Estimates. Most of the changes that would be here would be reflective of that.

MR. BROWN: Okay, so we're going to spend this money to develop this area and then the federal government is going to give us so much back – this is the revenue line – for doing this work?

MR. DAVIS: I guess some of that would be consultants that are coming through on that side. It's not as straightforward, but you're similar in what's going to happen based on we will spend the money in concert with the feds, they'll give us some money back for consultants and some work that we're doing. There will be some revenue that will come in with that as well.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: You'll see that down below.

MR. BROWN: Under Parks Operations, with everything that's going on with COVID will we see any strategic changes in the provincial parks system this year?

MR. DAVIS: We did that to implement the opening strategy for this season. I had the good fortune to go around to – I think I visited nine or 10 parks this year and talked to the staff. They've done some great work on doing the parks.

What we've had the ability also to do is that they were well utilized this year. They were well

utilized to the fact that we did a pilot project this year for the top three parks that were increased utilization and higher numbers. I think they all had better than 83 per cent occupancy rates. They were a pilot project to see how it would work if we extended the season until Thanksgiving Day weekend. I think they actually close on Monday, if I'm correct on that.

I'm hopeful that looked very well and operated well. From that standpoint, we had those six parks open. I know that everyone always wanted their favourite park to be open and, in some cases, that was there. We didn't have the ability to open all of the parks, unfortunately, but we did pick the six that we had the ability to do and they were the highest utilized parks. From that standpoint, we're happy with what we've seen in the park system.

There were changes made on comfort stations and things like that, that would have made it a little bit more challenging to operate for both the staff, as well as enhanced cleaning, but it made that experience good for the patrons that utilized the park as well. We're talking about an outdoor facility that's top notch in the province. Anyone who has the ability to go out and see what beauty lies within those parks, I encourage them to do so.

MR. BROWN: Are there any plans to probably extend seasons going forward? Did the extended season actually – did we get our bang for our buck with that?

MR. DAVIS: Well, that's what we're looking at. We're evaluating that now to see how that worked this year. We will evaluate that when it clues up on Monday. I'm hopeful that it went well. We're always looking for opportunities to improve the experience for both the staff as well as the patrons that utilize the parks.

Some of the most beautiful places in our province are there. I do mean that. If you have the opportunity to just drive through, it's well worth the time to take to do it, jump off the road and take a run in.

MR. BROWN: Are there any plans to do any more marketing surrounding our parks for the upcoming season, to increase marketing probably to a broader audience?

MR. DAVIS: One of the things we did with our Stay Home Year 2020 is we encouraged people to get out and enjoy Newfoundland and Labrador. There are lots of opportunities to do that, whether it be from a tour operator or go into a provincially funded park, or even a for-profit privatized park. They're all beautiful in their own right. We just encourage people to get out and get around.

Depending on how COVID progresses, obviously we'll look at the advertising that we do and the marketing that we do. That section of our Tourism Department is fantastic, as we know. They're going to be looking for ways we can expand usage right across the spectrum of the province, whether that be parks or operators or getting people into our province when the time is right.

We're a welcoming population and a welcoming province. A lot of individuals that travel internationally love this province when they get here, and word of mouth is huge. We want to make sure we get those people that have this on their bucket list back here. That marketing is very, very important.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, and Mr. Brown for your questions.

Now to Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, in the recent article dated – sorry, we're going to stick with 2.1.02, Marble Mountain.

MR. DAVIS: 2.1.02?

MR. TIBBS: Yes, sorry.

MR. DAVIS: Hang on now. I have to get there.

MR. TIBBS: It's the Marble Mountain Development Corporation.

MR. DAVIS: Okay.

MR. TIBBS: In a recent article dated October 2 it was reported over a million dollars was spent on maintenance and repair, yet you only

budgeted \$400,000 this year. Do you feel that's adequate?

MR. DAVIS: We have a 10-year revitalization plan that allows us to do that. Obviously, things come up. We have to maintain the facility we have and we're going to continue to do that. That's a plan that we have moving forward but, obviously, if things come up that need to be done, like what happened with lightning striking one of our chairlifts, we have to deal with that when that time comes.

It's an asset that we want to try to maintain but we're also in an RFP process to deal with that as well. We have, as I said, a 10-year revitalization plan that puts \$400,000 in a year.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

2.1.03, Minister, Marble Mountain Development Corporation, Capital, Grants and Subsidies. \$400,000 is given annually to Marble for capital expenditures. Could you outline what was purchased last year and what is planned to be purchased this year?

MR. DAVIS: I don't have that here in front of me but I can probably get that information for you, if that's okay.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

MR. DAVIS: I didn't bring that. That book would be quite significantly bigger.

MR. TIBBS: I bet. Thank you, Minister.

MR. DAVIS: Not just for Marble, just in general if I had all those.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Could you give an overview of the condition of the equipment at Marble: lifts, lodges, et cetera? Good standing order, any repairs that need to be done now?

MR. DAVIS: We work closely with our staff on the ground there. We try to work on and prioritize what needs to be done from a need to, to operate, or a like to or, obviously, things that we see as problems that we're going to have to deal with. We work closely with our staff on the

ground, whether that be from brush cutting, getting ready for the season, or whether that's making sure the lifts are operational and ready to go.

That's the kind of stuff that we work with. I hope that answers your question in that we work with them. When they identify problems we try to rectify those situations that we can, given the fiscal restraint that we do have.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, we'll move on to 2.2.01, Arts and Culture Centres.

MR. DAVIS: Perfect.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, one of the budget highlight sheets says \$3.45 million for the Cultural Economic Development Program. Could you please provide more detail on this? Where is that contained in the Estimates, what is the program or programs designed to do and how is the money spent?

MR. DAVIS: Can you say that once more? Sorry.

MR. TIBBS: One of the budget highlight sheets says \$3.45 million for the Cultural Economic Development Program. Could you please provide more detail on this? Where is this contained in the Estimates, what is the program or programs designed to do and how is the money spent?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, we can get Carmela to do that, but I think that's in 2.2.02.

CHAIR: Carmela Murphy.

MS. MURPHY: The Cultural Economic Development Program is the funding program for Arts and Heritage. It's actually, as the minister indicated, 2.2.02. That was the line item we discussed. The \$3.635 million budgeted this year is the CEDP.

MR. TIBBS: My apologies for jumping around. Thank you.

MR. DAVIS: That's okay. You're allowed to do that.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, we will stick to 2.2.01, the Arts and Culture Centres, Purchased Services. The Purchased Services budget is rather large at \$3.6 million. Where does this money go and what is it allocated for?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, that would be with respect to – Carmela will jump in here on this one.

MS. MURPHY: The Purchased Services budget is against our revenue intake. It's money that is used to pay out performances, third party. When the Arts and Culture Centre books an act and they have to make a payment to – they collect ticket revenue and we have to pay it to you if you performed. That balances out then against the revenue line item that we put in our budget.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, that makes sense. Thank you.

Minister, Revenue - Federal: \$50,000 was expected last year but not received. It looks like this revenue is deferred to this year. Could you please provide some information on this?

MR. DAVIS: It's the federal contribution to touring presentations program review, which didn't happen based on COVID for the actuals.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Revenue - Provincial: Last year revenue was decreased by \$460,951. Could you provide some commentary on this? How much revenue was lost due to Snowmageddon or COVID or anything else?

MR. DAVIS: The main difference there was due to the pandemic. I would think – I didn't have it there – Snowmageddon would have impacted a little bit there too at the Arts and Culture Centre here in St. John's for sure. That would be the difference in the revenue there.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, how much revenue is expected to be lost in 2020-2021 due to the COVID pandemic?

MR. DAVIS: That's a good question.

I don't think we can answer that adequately at this point. We've opened the Arts and Culture

Centres at reduced capacity with enhanced cleaning. Some of the bookings that we did have won't happen based on they're travelling acts that were coming in so we're going to focus a little bit more on local opportunities, obviously.

I know that there's been some success in some of the acts that are happening like, I think, later this week or next week Rum Ragged has a sold-out concert. Now, it's sold out based on the ramifications of where we're to but that's a good thing for them.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Our local talent is just as good as anywhere else, isn't it?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, if not better.

MR. TIBBS: If not better.

Minister, considering the closures due to COVID-19, should the forecasted provincial revenues be less than what was budgeted last year?

MR. DAVIS: Based on what we see with COVID, obviously, there's going to be an impact, based on what we see as revenues, but we're hopeful that the last part of this fiscal will be a little bit better for the Arts and Culture Centres than it was for the end of this past fiscal.

MR. TIBBS: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: We anticipate that, but I don't think anybody would know exactly what's going to happen. We have to have a budget of what we think we're going to be able to increase in revenue based on the bookings we have and where we're to, but depending on what happens with COVID and the pandemic, I'm not 100 per cent sure that anyone is going to be 100 per cent accurate on revenues, what you're going to take in or not.

MR. TIBBS: That's true, yeah.

That kind of leads to the next question. It's sort of the same but I'll ask it anyway. If the pandemic continues and the Centres cannot operate at capacity for another 12 months over

the next year, how does this impact their operations?

MR. DAVIS: Oh, significantly, obviously. Not just the operations of the Arts and Culture Centres, it's the people that utilize those spaces to create revenue for themselves as business owners whether that's TaDa! entertainment or whether it's, as I talk about, Rum Ragged. I mean, those are venues for the people of the province, operated by the people of the province, I guess, the government.

So from my standpoint it's a challenge anytime there are restrictions, but we have to ensure public health and safety of, not only just the patrons, which are our primary focus but also our staff and the people that are renting the facility.

Yes, you're correct that it's a challenge but we're up to the challenge to try to find solutions. We've got great staff over there and great management that are working very, very hard to be successful at the Arts and Culture Centres, because they want their clients to be successful.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Any job losses because of COVID at the Arts and Culture Centres or any predicted over the next year?

MR. DAVIS: There would have been layoffs at the start of – obviously because shows where there. More of the people that are called in, the call-in list wouldn't be called in if there are no events on the go. We're hopeful that we'll be able to keep staff busy with the events that will be coming up at the Arts and Culture Centres across the province. We're hopeful that will be able to be maintained.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. We all hope so.

Minister, 2.2.02, Arts, Heritage and Historic Development: The Member for the NPD asked for a list of Grants and Subsidies in section 10, can we get the same list?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, anything that we provide we will provide to everybody that's here.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, perfect, thank you.

Minister, Professional Services: Can you please give an overview of the Professional Services line? I'm wondering which services have been purchased and which projects they support.

MR. DAVIS: Professional Services in Arts, Heritage and Historic Development?

MR. TIBBS: Yes, Sir.

MR. DAVIS: Okay.

Jamie.

MR. CHIPPETT: Professional Services reflect work by archeologists, in particular. Some of that work is done by staff in the department, but at other times there's a contractual arrangement with professors or other professionals in that field. In terms of the projects, it could vary in any given year. Sometimes it's driven by research that the province had started and other times it's in response to development applications and so on.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: I think I have all of my questions for that section (inaudible). I'll just double-check. Yeah, I'm good for this section.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

With that, I assume Mr. Tibbs would have a few more questions. I'll permit you to go for another 10 minutes. Without an intervening speaker, we wouldn't be able to continue questioning in this section unless an additional Committee Member came to ask a question as per the proceedings without leave.

I'll hand things over to Mr. Tibbs, unless Mr. Brown has further questions.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The minister can speak fast I guess.

Minister, 2.2.02, same thing, Arts, Heritage and Historic Development, Grants and Subsidies: Could you please outline who received grants in

2019-2020? I also noted there was \$120,000 in grant funding not given out last year. Could you explain why?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, so there were fewer grants applied for, because it's application-driven. So there were fewer applications put in – likely due, I don't want to say definitely COVID, but likely due to COVID. Some things I know are COVID. I'm not sure if that's the case, but it could be.

If you want a list of the grants, as I said before to MHA Brown, we'll definitely get that list for you, rather than have to read through an exhaustive list today, I can get you that.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, revenue for the province, could you please outline where this funding comes from, Revenue - Provincial?

MR. DAVIS: Yeah, so that would be revenue from admissions for our Provincial Historic Sites. So that was down by \$8,500 based on last year's actuals versus what we've budgeted. So that was based on less people visiting our Provincial Historic Sites.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, in this province we're fortunate to have a number of historic sites. Is there an inventory of these historic sites which includes where they are located, along with their current condition and any upgrades, repairs or maintenance which is required? If we don't take care of them, of course, we are at risk of losing them (inaudible).

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely, and we do have a list of our Provincial Historic Sites, all of them, they're on our website. The maintenance focus on that is something that we've always tried to maintain. Obviously, working with the financial constrictions that we do have, we have to prioritize, but they are always top notch. The ones I've visited, I think I've visited five this year, I think, they've all been top notch.

I encourage people to get out and see them, because sometimes you walk by – Commissariat House I've walked by in St. John's it must be for a decade, and never, ever went in. I went in most

recently and it was fantastic. I encourage people to get out and enjoy those sites. They're great family oriented, in most cases. The staff are absolutely so passionate about what they do, it's a pleasure to go in and just see the smiles come on their face. Even with their masks, I can see their smiling eyes. So it's just an impressive thing to see.

Thank you for the question. I encourage people to get out and see their Provincial Historic Sites. They are the people of the province's sites and we want to make sure they get out there.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

Minister, were any funds given to acts, heritage and historic development groups to help them deal with the pandemic? If so, could we please receive a breakdown of who received the funds?

MR. DAVIS: So acts and festivals and things like that, from our CEDP funding, that was part of what we talked about initially when we did the overarching comments on one of the things that we focused on with our staff is to ensure that that money got out the door to those productions as quick as we possibly could to ensure their continuation. Not only because the events may or may not have happened, it's because those volunteers that are working on those board and agencies really give tirelessly of their time and their talents.

We want to make sure we keep them active so that when 2021 comes, whether they operated in 2020 or didn't – we wanted to make sure they had the ability to get going for the 2021 season, if and when we start to see a lot more people demanding those services. To answer your question: an unequivocal, yes, money got out the door to those individuals.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Hopefully 2021 is better, hey?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, we're going to switch to 2.2.03, Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council.

MR. DAVIS: Perfect.

MR. TIBBS: Is the minister committed to increasing their funding again in 2021-2022?

MR. DAVIS: We have a commitment. The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador made that commitment in the election campaign.

What I can say to you is I'm committed to working for our artists and our Arts Council. We've shown that we've made that commitment to increase that funding to \$5 million over a three-year period. We've done that two-thirds of the time already. I look forward to next year's budget and hopefully being able to do the same thing.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, does the government have a list of who ArtsNL gives their funding to for their various programs? If so, could we get a copy?

MR. DAVIS: I think, yes, we can get that. It's on their website.

MR. TIBBS: Okay.

MR. DAVIS: I think we can get that copy for you, no problem, but it's on their website.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

Minister, 2.2.04, The Rooms Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. DAVIS: Yes.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, last year The Rooms required an extra \$165,000. Why is this?

MR. DAVIS: The \$165,000 would have been for severance and retirement of multiple employees.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. We wish them the best of luck.

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, what sorts of things are The Rooms doing to bring more people into the venue and, thus, more revenue?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely fantastic you asked that question.

It's a jewel in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a new world-class CEO that applied and came through a national competition that's going to be looking at the structure on how we do things and trying to bring that even further along.

We have a great product at The Rooms. We're marketing through digital. They've done great work on their gift shop trying to digitize some of that just to, in the unlikelihood or the hopeful fact that we don't have a second outbreak, they get to stay open. If they don't get to stay open – if you haven't been in the gift shop yet there are a lot of cool things – they'll be able to market those things around the world.

My thoughts are that they're doing a lot of different exhibits, a lot of different timely exposés on things that are happening in this province and have happened in the history of our province. I look forward to how they market that a little bit more too. They have a great online presence and a great following through their social media feeds.

I'm looking forward to what comes next with The Rooms. I'd just like to take this opportunity to say publicly congratulations to Anne Chafe for being the CEO. I've had such a great working relationship with her and I know she works very, very well with the staff at The Rooms.

I just look forward to what's coming next for The Rooms. It's an exciting time.

MR. TIBBS: It is. Thank you, Minister.

Minister how has COVID-19 impacted The Rooms?

MR. DAVIS: Like every other aspect in our lives it's impacted it. There's enhanced cleaning, there's a reduced number of people that can go into the venue. The good thing about The Rooms is that it is very cavernous, so it is very big. They have reduced the number of available patrons to come in at a time with enhanced sanitization.

Just like any other operation, we worked closely with them and Public Health to ensure that they're able to operate in the most efficient and effective way, keeping in mind the safety of the patrons and the staff that work there each and every day. It has impacted them, no doubt, just like any other business and any other organization, but they've handled it very, very well. It's kudos to the staff that we have down there and the top-rate services they provide to the people of the province.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Any reduction in staff at The Rooms due to COVID-19?

MR. DAVIS: Let me just check.

MR. TIBBS: Or forecasted?

MR. DAVIS: There are 50 positions there right now. There are some vacancies that are there as well, but there are no reductions as of right now.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

MR. DAVIS: I don't foresee any at this point.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Minister, how has the provincial archives been impacted by COVID-19? Are researchers still able to visit and conduct research?

MR. DAVIS: There's a protocol in place for how they can go about doing that. I don't have it right here in front of me but there is protocol; I can get that for you. There are opportunities for them to continue their research. I know that I don't have the specific list of how the requirements are but I can get that for you, absolutely no problem.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, move on to 2.2.05, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Corporation.

MR. DAVIS: One of my favourite topics.

MR. TIBBS: Good.

Minister, last year the Film Development Corporation required an extra \$67,000. Could you please outline why?

MR. DAVIS: That reflected the government's policy for paying out severance.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

MR. DAVIS: A couple of the employees at the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation received their severance.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Minister, government puts in about \$4.6 million annually to the corporation, what is the economic spinoff of this investment?

MR. DAVIS: Quite significant. I don't have the details. I think some were to the tune of \$57 million, or something, per year in economic spinoff.

If you see them, one of the shows or one of the documentaries that are shooting, you don't need to look very far to see how much of a, I guess, after burn they carry with them. The number of employees that are impacted by the modest investment that we do make in ensuring these shows happen, whether it be through a tax credit or in an equity fund, it's quite an impressive feat to see.

The economic spinoff can only get better from here and we're going to continue to push. We're a very untapped resource in relation to some of the other places in the country and we're a very safe resource as well. If you want to move sets in shooting two different locations in a day here in Newfoundland and Labrador, in St. John's, or in Corner Brook, or in Gander or Grand Falls, it's a lot easier to do that here than it would be in the Greater Toronto Area.

From our standpoint, we've got the most picturesque landscape, so I think there's an opportunity here and we're going to look at ways we can try to expand that. We've got some really good people out there that are doing some great things. I look forward to what opportunities they're going to bring forward to us as well.

MR. TIBBS: Grand Falls-Windsor.

MR. DAVIS: Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

MR. TIBBS: Can't forget the Windsor.

MR. DAVIS: That's right.

MR. TIBBS: Mr. Chippett knows.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Tibbs and Minister.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

CHAIR: As I said earlier, we'll take our scheduled break for 10 minutes. It's approaching 10:30. When we come back at 10:40, I'll give Mr. Brown an opportunity to ask questions or, if not, we will have Mr. Tibbs have an opportunity to finish your questions in this section.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, thank you.

MR. DAVIS: Do you have one question?

MR. TIBBS: I do have just one question.

MR. DAVIS: So why don't we just try to – if that's okay with the Chair?

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. TIBBS: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Sure.

MR. DAVIS: Then we can vote on it and then we can take a break.

CHAIR: Mr. Tibbs, continue with your questions and then we can call the heading.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you.

2.2.06, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, is the department contemplating any increases to the Heritage Foundation in future years, specifically for any groups that wish to restore and maintain heritage buildings?

MR. DAVIS: That's a very good question. Obviously, given the financial situation we're in, we can't presuppose what future budgets will hold, but I know that we're always in contact with the Heritage Foundation. We work closely with them and anything that we can do to try to support them we will always try to do, given the situations we're in.

That's probably the best answer I can give you, based on presupposing money for future budgets or whatnot. We're always evaluating things and looking at opportunities we can expand the reach of what the Heritage Foundation does. They do some great work with the people they have.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: I'll ask the Clerk then, hearing no further questions from the Committee, to call the subheads.

CLERK (Jerrett): 2.1.01 to 2.3.02 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.3.02 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.02 through 2.3.02 carried.

CHAIR: Okay. As I said, we'll take a 10-minute break now. We'll come back at 10:40 to finish the Estimates under 3.1.01.

Thank you.

Recess

CHAIR: Welcome back to the Committee, Members, and we're about to move into our next section, so I would ask the Clerk to call the section under Recreation and Sport.

CLERK: 3.1.01 to 3.1.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: 3.1.01 to 3.1.03 inclusive.

Shall it carry?

I'll go to Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, 3.1.01, Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation, Grants and Subsidies: Could you please indicate which programs are included in this grant line?

MR. DAVIS: We have a list there that we can probably give you of the grants and stuff, but I can give you: the Canada Games program; Active Schools; ParticipACTION; Community Healthy Living Fund; Athletic Excellence Fund; Sport Championship Hosting Program; Aboriginal sport development; funding for sport development; Eat Great and Participate; Healthy School Planner; Healthy Students, Healthy Schools; School Food Guidelines – it's just as well for me to read them all now, I'm almost there.

MR. TIBBS: Sure.

MR. DAVIS: Healthy Built Environment, Nutritious Food Basket grant to RHAs, healthy living and youth wellness, Lung Association Newfoundland and Labrador Smokers' Helpline, funding for six regional wellness coalitions, and application-based health and wellness for Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

MR. DAVIS: There are a couple there that are hinged upon the budget passing: NL Games Host Committee, youth wellness program and youth vaping and tobacco control initiatives. That's all baked in the budget. When the budget passes, they will come over as groups that we have to deal with. So you have them all now.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

We can grab that list off you, though, hey?

MR. DAVIS: Perfect.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Sir.

Minister, additionally, last year there was over \$570,000 in grants not given out. Is there a reason why?

MR. DAVIS: The provincial contribution for the Carrot Rewards program didn't happen because the Carrot Rewards program went defunct. Not our program, some third party. It was a great program, actually. I was surprised that it went – I was utilizing it an awful lot. Grant payouts due to closures of reduced activities associated with COVID. So that's the rationale for why that was lower than expected.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, this year the budget is being cut to \$6.9 million. Could you outline why, please?

MR. DAVIS: The \$335,000 difference between budget 2020 and 2021 to '19 and '20 reflects the ending of one-time, limited initiatives that are finished, as well as some additional grant funding as per *Budget 2020* decision. There are some one-time things that ended and we're making additions of some more programs, as I highlighted earlier to you.

MR. TIBBS: Okay. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, under Revenue - Federal, last year it was estimated that \$472,000 in federal revenue would be received, but only \$133,744 was received. Could you please explain why?

MR. DAVIS: Due to COVID. It's received now, I think. It's already been received, if I'm correct on that, or will be received very shortly.

MR. TIBBS: Okay, that's good.

MR. DAVIS: It was just deferred based on COVID.

MR. TIBBS: But we are going to get it?

MR. DAVIS: We are going to get it.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, Revenue - Provincial: Can you please outline where this provincial revenue comes from?

MR. DAVIS: One word: pools. That's where the revenue comes from with respect to that line there.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

MR. TIBBS: Minister, under 3.1.02, Community Sports Facilities, government is supporting the City of St. John's bid to host the 2025 Summer Games. On the highlight sheet it says the bid is supported by a minimum investment of \$12 million over five years. Included in that is \$5.1 million for infrastructure. Generally with Summer Games there's a legacy project. For example, the Aquarena was a legacy for the '77 Canada Games.

Will there be a legacy project for these games? If so, what will it be and how much will it cost?

MR. DAVIS: Good question. The bid process is still ongoing with the City of St. John's. So the answer to the question is stay tuned. But the bid process, yes, fingers crossed everything will happen. The process is going through. The next month or two that process should be cluing up, in which case then we'll know what gaps exist in the current facilities we're looking at – or the City of St. John's is looking at utilizing, and then what would need to be potentially replaced and/or renovated.

You're right; the '77 games brought us great legacy pieces like the Aquarena, like St. Pat's ballpark and others. There's no doubt that the Canada Games provides an awful lot of opportunity for not only the participants right across the country to participate there, but also the future legacy pieces that are left behind for our athletes and the general public to utilize on a go-forward basis.

I don't know if there's anything to add there, Jamie, from that perspective?

MR. CHIPPETT: Only to say that the budget on the highlight sheet, the majority of that funding starts in the next fiscal year. The bid process decision is not until February, I believe. So the reason you don't see those numbers in

some of these activities is because most of it will start next year.

MR. TIBBS: So we won't really talk about a legacy piece until the process is through?

MR. DAVIS: Well, the legacy pieces there, like the Aquarena and the same like that, they will continue on. But when the bid is finalized – and Jamie is right – and awarded in February sometime, then you will look at what pieces they actually need to invest in, whether it's build a new track and field complex or whether it's build something else. We don't know what we don't know until that process is finished, because they may have changed the sports that will be participating. There are main sports, but there are other sports that can be added or deleted from time to time.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

MR. DAVIS: We'll know a lot more come February when that's processed and the secretariat that has been established here with MHA Parsons involved in that, that's going to play a role linking between the City of St. John's and the government.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

MR. DAVIS: So we're looking forward to it. I can't wait for the 2025 games, because of not just the legacy pieces but also just the excitement and the hype for athletes that work so hard to achieve that crowning pinnacle. Not everyone gets to play in the Canada Summer Games and many of the athletes that go on professionally to play got their start at the Canada Summer Games or Canada Winter Games. It's going to be an exciting time.

MR. TIBBS: Great. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, the recent \$600,000 for the reopening for the Aquarena contained \$400,000 from government. Did this come from your department? Where would we find these in the Estimates?

MR. DAVIS: COVID contingency fund, the fund that was voted on in this House of Assembly for that \$200 million, that's where that fund came from and it's quite fitting

because that was the direct reflection of why that happened at the Aquarena.

MR. TIBBS: So this doesn't impact any other programs in your department?

MR. DAVIS: No.

MR. TIBBS: Excellent.

Minister, 3.1.02, Community Sports Facilities: Does this subhead include the Gander pool, the Labrador Training Centre and the Corner Brook pool? If not, where are they contained?

MR. DAVIS: That's a good question. I'm going to say yes, subsidies to those areas are in this area. I can get that information directly for you and provide that to you.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, the same heading, Happy Valley-Goose Bay is getting a new YMCA; this will result in the closure of the Labrador Training Centre. Will the staff who currently work in the Training Centre have positions in the new YMCA?

MR. DAVIS: That's a question that will be better directed, I guess, when we get to that point, when the YMCA opens up. I can't speak to staffing relations at this point, but obviously they're going to need staffing complements to manage that area.

MR. TIBBS: It would make sense.

MR. DAVIS: It would make insurmountable sense, but I don't want to say that at this point because I don't know how many they're going to need and how many more – because I'm sure there's going to be a need for more staffing than what's at the complex there currently.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, can you give an update on the roof repair which was required for the Labrador Training Centre?

MR. DAVIS: Very good question. That's with TI right now, doing an assessment on what the structural issues are and how we can best move

forward based on what that report details, and we'll see how that goes. But, I mean, there is a gym that's attached to that as well and we're working to try to find ways to best utilize that resource.

We have to make sure that health and safety are paramount, so that's why Transportation and Infrastructure are up there looking at that as we speak. I look forward to receiving that report so we can make decisions based on what we see in that report.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, Corner Brook is getting a new aquatics facility; will the staff be transferred from the existing pool?

MR. DAVIS: That's a good question.

MR. TIBBS: Same question (inaudible).

MR. DAVIS: Similar question to the last one, I'll get that information for you.

MR. TIBBS: Perfect.

Minister, under 3.1.03, Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre Inc., how was the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre impacted by COVID-19 and how has the pandemic impacted their financials?

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely the same way that every other facility has been impacted, not just in our suite of facilities but facilities right across the province. They would've had to come up with their opening strategy and opening plan with reduced occupancy. I have not heard from their executive director or CEO that they're running into problems based on that right now, other than the regular run of the mill things that they would normally do. Obviously, COVID impacted everybody, every facet.

I know they're up and running now and I look forward to getting over – I think we're going over to see them in the next week or so and that'll give a good indication of where we're to from that standpoint. So we'll ask some of those questions. Very good question.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In your mandate letter, Minister, you were encouraged to increase physical activity throughout the province in individuals and stuff. I know in many cases there are a lot of low-income people in this province who would like to participate in sports, single parents and such.

Are there any programs or talks of programming to help low-income families or lower-income families be able to enrol their children in the sports of their choice?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, I know some communities have those type programs. We have grants and support boards of directors and provincial sports organizations with funding and they make those decisions on how best to serve. I know that every organization has slightly different processes on how they deal with that.

I'll use the City of St. John's as an example. They have the REAL Program. Canadian Tire has a program that allows kids or youth to avail of sporting activities. We support those, the holistic value of what health and wellness and participating in sports.

I know I've participated in sports my whole life and gotten great benefit from that. I know that I didn't have a lot of money to participate in hockey or anything like that. If I didn't have organizations such as minor baseball and things that gave me an opportunity, I know that there are organizations out there that do that for youth now. We always look for opportunities to support that. I can't express to you how important that question is to the people of the province, for sure.

MR. BROWN: Absolutely.

Do you say your department could encourage, in conjunction with the Department of Education, to probably increase use of school sports in school, a place where it doesn't really – school is school, it doesn't cost children to participate?

Would you encourage, with your department and this program, to probably increase school sport? Maybe that's another way to help low-income families' children participate in sports.

MR. DAVIS: Absolutely.

We've had meeting with School Sports NL, which does some great work. We help fund their operation. We've been working with my colleague in the Department of Education as well, as well as the English School District and the francophone district to open up, when it is safe to do so, for after-school programs because I know that many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and young people, that's where they get their first taste of a sport they may want to be more competitive in, but it's all about activity and giving them the opportunity to participate.

I know we've done some great work with outdoor sports, right now starting off school. I think the starting of the school year was so important to get it right from an educational standpoint that I think the English School District made a good decision in doing a stepped approach. We're working very closely with them and lobbying with School Sports NL to ensure that we open up as many of those after-school sports or school sports, as much as we can, as quick as we can, bearing in mind the health and safety of the students are paramount.

MR. BROWN: Absolutely.

Thank you, Minister.

The Grants and Subsidies for the Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation: Can I also get a copy of a list of those that you read out there.

MR. DAVIS: Any information we provide to one, we'll provide to two. We have no problem with doing that.

MR. BROWN: Perfect, thank you, Sir.

That's the end of my questioning, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Mr. Chair, my questions have been concluded. I just have some closing remarks, if I may.

CHAIR: Maybe it would be best if we vote on the headings and the total and then I will allow everybody to have closing remarks before we, then, dispose with the rest of the business.

I ask the Clerk to call the subhead.

CLERK (Russell): 3.1.01 to 3.1.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 to 3.1.03 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: I thank everybody for participating this morning in the Committee of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

Shall I report the Estimates for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation carried without amendment.

CHAIR: It's certainly a pleasure, Minister, to have you and your officials here this morning to answer questions on behalf of Committee Members. Very good and pertinent questions asked by Members of the Third Party and the Official Opposition on the Estimates here today. I want to appreciate each and every one of you for all the hard work that goes in to preparing Estimates and having timely answers and responses. My first time chairing this Committee and certainly a pleasure to do so.

I'll hand it over to the minister if he would like to give some concluding remarks.

MR. DAVIS: Did you want to go to our colleagues on the other side first, if that's okay?

CHAIR: I can do that.

Mr. Tibbs.

MR. TIBBS: Absolutely.

I just want to thank everybody. This is my second Estimates. Quite a success. I can see that the whole department is working very, very hard for you. You said earlier that you're just the brains, but you're just the handsome face in front. I notice the department is doing great work behind the scenes and we are looking forward to working with yourself, Minister, in the future as the critic for – what do we call it – TCAR.

MR. DAVIS: TCAR.

MR. TIBBS: Yeah, TCAR. I look forward to working with you and the department moving forward to get the best for Newfoundland and Labrador for years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and the Table staff.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Tibbs, for your comments.

Mr. Brown, did you have any closing remarks?

MR. BROWN: I want to thank everyone for being here today. I know it's nice and early in the morning and to come down here and answer some questions from us here, I really appreciate that. I want to thank the minister for being so gracious in his answering and that, and giving us all the information that we have asked for. It's great. I know I do get a good response from your department. You've always been very kind and accepting of any meeting or any call or anything I make, so I want to thank you all for that. It's always a pleasure with you guys.

I want to thank my colleagues here for sitting up here and waiting it out with us. I hope you all have a great afternoon.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Minister Davis.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, I would just like to say a couple of thank-yous as well.

Thank you to the Committee. I know we've been through a bunch of Estimates and I know how time consuming and hard that is to listen to line by line. Thank you to the Committee and thank you to the people in our Opposition parties for asking solid questions. But they don't have to stop here at Estimates. When you do have a question, please feel free to reach out to me and I'll try to get the answer as quick as I can and as forthright as I can for you at any given time.

I think the biggest thanks, from my perspective, has to go to my staff behind me and the many hundreds of people out in the department that do the work for the people of the province. I'm the lucky one because I've got a fantastic staff that work really well together, but also with me. They deserve a medal some days for having to do that. From my standpoint, I'm the lucky one that gets the opportunity to be Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. I'm excited by that each and every day. I know the passion and commitment exudes from my staff that are here. We work with each other. They don't work for me; they work with me. I just want to say a big thank you to them for being here today and for the great work they do each and every day.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Earlier this morning, a Clerk would have circulated the minutes from the last meeting of the Resource Committee. The Resource Committee met on October 6 for the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. Certainly a robust discussion and dialogue. The Committee started at 6 p.m. and ended at 10:46.

I will note that I had made commentary at that time that the next Estimates would have been Monday, October 19, 2020, at 6 o'clock, or if there would have been changes, they would have been notified. That is a change to the minutes, that we had convened this meeting because there was an opportunity for all of us to schedule here today. With that, I'm going to make sure that note is put forward in the minutes, I would suggest, that we would have circulated in time for today's Committee to actually happen.

With that, I would like to ask, with that small change, that we have a mover for accepting the minutes.

MS. P. PARSONS: So moved.

CHAIR: Moved by the Member for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave.

Thank you.

With that, I would ask all those in favour of the minutes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Great, thank you.

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: I would also like to highlight that the next meeting would be – it's the last Committee meeting for the Resource Estimates – the Immigration, Skills and Labour. That will be held, currently as scheduled, on Monday, October 19, unless there is a scheduling change and there would be a notice put forward.

With that, I would ask for a motion for adjourn.

MR. BROWN: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: The MHA for Labrador West, Mr. Brown.

I note that the time is 11:05 for the Clerk and the Committee is adjourned.

Thank you.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.