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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on
Social Services**

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Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

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Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

Chair: Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA

Vice-Chair: Joedy Wall, MHA

Members: James Dinn, MHA
Jeff Dwyer, MHA
Paul Pike, MHA
Scott Reid, MHA
Lucy Stoyles, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Bobbi Russell

Appearing:

Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

Hon. Krista Lynn Howell, MHA, Minister
Ted Lomond, Deputy Minister
Bren Hanlon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs
Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller
Jacqueline Howard, Director of Communications
Randy Simms, Executive Assistant to Minister

Also Present

Hon. Derrick Bragg, MHA, Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Hon. John Hogan, MHA, Minister of Justice and Public Safety
Brian Warr, MHA
Lela Evans, MHA
Scott Fleming, Third Party Caucus Office
Darrell Hynes, Official Opposition Office
Ben Pollard, Government Members' Office
Jess Puddister, Third Party Caucus Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Derrick Bragg, MHA for Fogo Island - Cape Freels, substitutes for Paul Pike, MHA for Burin - Grand Bank.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Brian Warr, MHA for Baie Verte - Green Bay, substitutes for Lucy Stoyles, MHA for Mount Pearl North.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, John Hogan, MHA for Windsor Lake, substitutes for Scott Reid, MHA for St. George's - Humber.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Lela Evans, MHA for Torngat Mountains, substitutes for Jim Dinn, MHA for St. John's Centre.

The Committee met at 6 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Gambin-Walsh): Order, please!

(Inaudible) for Mount Pearl North, we have a substitute, Baie Verte - Green Bay, MHA Warr; for Burin - Grand Bank, we have Fogo Island - Cape Freels, Minister Bragg; for St. George's - Humber, we have Windsor Lake, Minister Hogan; and for St. John's Centre, we have Torngat Mountains, MHA Evans.

We will take a break at probably 7:20, if that is okay with everybody. I'll put this up here so I don't forget and keep going. Just a reminder, employees have to wear your masks unless you are speaking, and wait until your red light comes on. If it doesn't come on, just do a wave like this and the light will come on. Please introduce yourself each time before you speak.

Let's see what else we've got to remind you. The water coolers are down here in the back and up here behind me if anybody would like some water.

We're going to get everyone to go around and introduce yourselves. We will start with the Committee and then we'll go with the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. After we call these subgroups, we will allow the minister to speak if she so chooses and then we will start with the Official Opposition.

First, I just want to call the minutes from the last meeting. If I could get someone to adopt them from the Social Services Committee of April 8.

J. WALL: So moved.

CHAIR: MHA Wall; seconded by MHA Warr.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: Okay, so we'll start with introductions on this side.

J. WALL: Joedy Wall, MHA, Cape St. Francis.

D. HYNES: Darrell Hynes, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs for the Opposition Office.

L. EVANS: MHA Lela Evans, MHA for Torngat Mountains.

S. FLEMING: Scott Fleming, Researcher, Third Party Caucus Office.

J. PUDDISTER: Jess Puddister, Sessional Support, Third Party Caucus Office.

B. WARR: Brian Warr, MHA, Baie Verte - Green Bay.

J. HOGAN: John Hogan, MHA, Windsor Lake.

D. BRAGG: Derrick Bragg, MHA, Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

B. POLLARD: Ben Pollard, Political Staffer for the Government Members' Office

T. LOMOND: Ted Lomond, Deputy Minister.

K. HOWELL: Krista Howell, MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

B. HANLON: Bren Hanlon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

R. SIMMS: Randy Simms, Executive Assistant to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

J. HOWARD: Jacqueline Howard, Director of Communications, Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

B. STEELE: Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller.

CHAIR: I ask the Clerk to call the fist subheading and we will start.

CLERK (Russell): 1.1.01 to 1.2.04 inclusive, Executive and Support Services.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.04, Executive and Support Services, carry?

We'll start with the minister.

K. HOWELL: Thank you.

I'd just like to take a minute to have a few remarks off the top. Good evening, everyone. It's a different experience this time around than it was last year. I feel like I have a little bit better handle on what we're up to here this evening. I appreciate the chance to get to chat with you. Thank you for participating in Estimates for the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

I'd just like to highlight a few of the key activities that the department has undertaken this year and some of the things that we'll be focused on in the months ahead. The department is mandated to support the economic and social sustainability of municipalities, communities and regions throughout the delivery of programs, services and supports to local governments and stakeholders. This is done through legislative, financial and land-use planning services, as well as training, funding through various programs administered through the department.

The Estimates cover all of the spending and revenue for the fiscal year of '22-'23. You'll note that the Estimates are divided into subsections, various sections. We're looking at Executive and Support Services, Administrative Support, Strategic Financial Management, Policy and Strategic Planning, Regional Support, Municipal Finance, Municipal Debt Servicing, Municipal Operating Grants, Special Assistance, Community Enhancement, Provincial Gas Tax Revenue Sharing, Local Governance and Planning, as well as the Canada Community-Building Fund.

If you'll just give me a moment, I can talk to each of these and just give a little explanation of

what it is that occurs in these different sections. We're organized into several sections: Local Governance and land-use planning being one of the top. The Local Governance section supports the vision of viable, sustainable communities led by strong local governments. The land-use planning section promotes and supports the growth of these sustainable communities.

When we look into Municipal Finance, we talk about a division that provides financial assistance and guidance to municipalities on funding programs, on borrowing initiatives, debt servicing and financial compliance. It provides financial assistance and support through special assistance grants or community enhancement and administers the Canada Community-Building Fund.

The Municipal Support division provides ongoing support and advice to local government on various issues. The regional offices serve as the primary contact between the department and the local governments. So our regional directors, managers and staff are often the face of the department with local governments in the province.

The Policy and Strategic Planning Division coordinates and supports the policy agendas of the department. The Strategic Financial Management Division is a shared service, providing financial management and general operation services to the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

It is the point of contact for all agencies, boards and commissions. Their financial reporting is done through our department. It's also the main departmental contact for the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, related to financial functions, budget submissions, public accounts and budget monitoring submitted by the departments and ABCs.

This department's gross expenditure budget for 2022-23 is \$153,213,400 with a related revenue of approximately \$33,053,600 for a net expenditure of \$120,159,800. The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs has 65 positions; 54 are permanent, nine are temporary and two are contractual. Right now we have eight vacancies located over three offices throughout the province. Sixty-three per cent are

female. I think that's pretty cool. Sixty-three per cent of the staff are female, and 37 per cent are male.

The department may be considered small compared to some others, but it is mighty; this past year has been very busy and very productive, bringing forward new legislation to the House of Assembly, drafting new municipal legislation, reviewing the Joint Working Group's report and working towards a comprehensive plan for regionalization, just to name a few things.

In terms of the department's funding programs, one of the most critical to municipalities across the province is the Municipal Operating Grant program. We understand the importance of this source of funding to communities, and the importance of the funding being stable and predictable. With this in mind, we've committed to allocating not less than \$22 million a year for Municipal Operating Grants for at least the next three years. So while MOGs or Municipal Operating Grants are the fiscal framework that provides community leaders with a level of confidence that the funding will now be maintained over a multiple years.

In the budget this year, the government is providing an exemption from registration fees on vehicles for regional service boards, so this is another positive step in moving forward. The exemption will put the boards on par with municipalities, which are already receiving this exemption. It also helps reduce the costs of regional services, such as waste management, and will help the board manage the costs to residents.

Special Assistance is another funding program in the department. It is administered to eligible communities and projects. Some of these Special Assistance or financial aid are provided for emergencies related to health and/or life-safety issues, any municipalities experiencing financial difficulties or issues that may arise that have been beyond a municipal budgetary process.

Often there are special projects or initiatives involving municipalities or Local Service District committees or other entities that will come forward and we can see the value that it adds to a community so we would give those

consideration as well. We are pleased that *Budget 2022* allocates \$2 million for the Special Assistance Fund. During the past year of '21-'22, there were over 100 projects funded. A list of the projects will be provided to you.

The Community Enhancement Employment Program, or CEEP as we refer to it, is a short-term employment. Workers, in rural areas particularly, are employed by local governments or community organizations for up to 420 hours to assist them with eligibility for Employment Insurance benefits. The department provides funding towards projects that contribute to tourism development, economic development, community and municipal infrastructure and community services. The department also encourages project sponsors to develop projects that will provide skill development or opportunities for workers to gain ongoing benefits in the region. In '21-'22, there were 199 projects through 177 sponsor organizations supported through CEEP. We have a list of those projects for you as well.

The Canada Community-Building Fund is administered by the department and we're pleased to see the recent addition of fire halls and fire station infrastructure to that list of project criteria. This will contribute to the programs objective of building stronger and more resilient communities. In addition, municipalities are able to apply for funding for projects that have already been started as long as they are in the same fiscal year as the application. We can certainly see the benefits of that running through communities that have undertaken these massive projects to forward their communities.

The department works closely with municipalities to ensure that they are aware and have any support that they need in these application processes. The timelines, the deadlines, oftentimes they get tripped up in some of that and we work with them to make sure that they can take full advantage of this fund.

The commitment to multi-year funding for MOGs is certainly an advancement in the budget this year, as is the exemption for the vehicle registration fees for regional service boards. Despite a multitude of demands across many

sectors, I'm so pleased that *Budget 2022* maintains funding for municipalities, with more than \$141 million available to communities through the programs that I just referenced. This speaks to the value that we place on the municipal sector.

We understand that a sustainable, thriving municipal sector is a key to the province's overall prosperity and growth. This is one of the reasons why regionalization is a priority for our department. We know that a regional approach can help ensure communities are sustainable. Globally, the most successful and thriving municipal governance function within a collaborative regional approach.

The department is focused heavily on a review and analysis right now of the Joint Working Group's report and recommendations on regionalization. The most responsible and meaningful action our government can take for communities is to ensure that a local voice and necessary services for all residents is supported.

Regional government will provide representation for all residents, while ensuring that they receive an optimal level of service. We recognize that resources will be required to support a move to this type of regional structure. There is no funding allocated in the budget this year, but we are moving through our analysis to finalize a comprehensive plan. As we move through and recognize the needs, funding will be available to support the initiative.

I'm sure you can appreciate the massive undertaking that changing our governance model in the province will bring. There are many implications that we must carefully consider as we look at our communities and consider our residents. I want to make sure that any model we put forward makes sense and it's achievable, because we can talk theoretically and we can say how we want it to look but if it doesn't make sense for the people of this province, then we're doomed from the start. So we want it to be sensible and applicable, and that's going to take some time.

As we move forward, residents in Local Service District committees and municipalities will have many opportunities for input into exactly what regionalization will look like for them in their

particular area. We want them to have a voice in the services that are going to be offered and the ones that will be delivered. That will be the mandate of the regional government.

In addition to regionalization, the department has many other irons in the fire. We've had great success with the Municipal Come Home Year grants that were announced in the past November. To support the high level of interest in this new initiative and the number of applications received, funding was increased from \$250,000 to approximately \$355,000 and 181 projects were supported.

So it is incredible uptake and we're certainly looking forward to what communities can offer in Come Home Year 2022. We know that communities are poised to do these types of things. They have proven it time and time again and we're glad to be able to partner with them to make these things happen.

Municipal governance took a step forward this past fall with the introduction of the new *Municipal Conduct Act*. The importance of the act was reflected in the debate and ultimately the full support of the House when it received Royal Assent on November 4. The department has been providing information sessions, over 800 municipal councillors, administrators and staff have registered for these virtual events on the *Municipal Conduct Act*. This demonstrates to us the need and importance of this legislation.

Sessions were facilitated by the department and gave opportunity for municipalities to get detailed information about provisions under the act. The act will govern conflict of interest, ethical behaviour and professional conduct for municipalities and will allow them to establish their own codes of conduct to address issues like conflict of interest, bullying or harassment in the workplace.

We also talked about the dedicated staff in the department who are working diligently to finalize these regulations. We've worked on this for a number of months now and it is almost ready to bring forward. I know that communities are eager to get that in the near future.

You're looking up at the clock so I better haul to it.

We also wanted to reference that we've been having discussions with the Professional Planners Association here in our province. They provide an important contribution to the growth and the economy and the vitality of our communities. We've recently received the go-ahead to work towards drafting legislation for the planners. So we're very pleased about that.

We also made significant upgrades to our Community Relocation Policy. We've lowered the voting threshold and changed the definition of permanent residence and included statements that will offer more clarification.

We also have been working to address outstanding appeals, and I've had this conversation. There are several in the queue that we want to make sure we get them bumped up the line so that communities residents can have their appeals heard in a reasonable time frame. So we are working on addressing that as well.

I've still got a few things, but we'll leave it at that. There's much progress over the past year and moving forward into the next fiscal year we do think there are some big things on the horizon for municipalities. We look forward to working on those initiatives. And big hats-off to the crew that I'm sitting with here tonight because they've worked very hard to make these things happen.

I look forward to the inquiries and whatever it is we can get on discussion here tonight.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister.

I will go to the Committee and start the first questions.

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for your preamble. I did make some notes as you were going, I didn't get everything, so if I do ask a question, just bear with me.

First of all, some general introductory questions before we get into the line items. Can we please obtain a copy of your briefing binder?

K. HOWELL: Sure. Yes, I think we have those.

J. WALL: Thank you.

So with respect to your attrition plan, is it still being followed? If so, what changes have been in the last year?

K. HOWELL: It's been implemented in our department, but to my knowledge right now this year, we don't have anybody who'll fall in those parameters. Am I correct in saying that?

J. WALL: No? Okay.

Thank you.

You touched on it, with respect to numbers and the percentage, I know you have eight vacancies, you mentioned, but I didn't quite catch how many people are employed in the department.

K. HOWELL: There are 65 positions, 57 of which are filled and eight vacancies.

J. WALL: Okay.

Any retirements over the last year, Minister?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: How many do we have?

K. HOWELL: Three.

J. WALL: Okay.

Any positions eliminated from the department?

K. HOWELL: No.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Any layoffs? No.

New hires?

K. HOWELL: Yes, I have two.

J. WALL: Are they contractual, short term or permanent?

K. HOWELL: We have one in regional support and one in local governance and planning.

I'll turn to our controller.

B. STEELE: They're both filling permanent positions.

J. WALL: Okay.

With respect to the COVID fund, has the department received any funds over the last 12 months?

K. HOWELL: Sorry, the COVID fund?

J. WALL: COVID.

K. HOWELL: No.

J. WALL: No.

K. HOWELL: Oh, sorry, the b'ys are going to keep me from getting in trouble.

B. HANLON: Just to kind of clarify. We had year two of our COVID stimulus program last year. So that was a \$23.6 million dollar program over two years. Those projects are now completed. There are three or four still outstanding with reports but those are now completed.

There were 258 projects approved under our COVID stimulus program.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Has it impacted your department's service delivery at all, with respect to COVID? Any issues?

K. HOWELL: I think the same issues that applied across all departments. We made adjustments and accommodations and the budget will reflect the areas in which that happened.

J. WALL: Okay.

And did the department receive any funds from the Contingency Fund?

K. HOWELL: No.

J. WALL: Thank you.

You touched on the appeals, you and I discussed that a couple of times. Do you have a number of the appeals that are outstanding or –?

K. HOWELL: I do.

Within the Eastern Regional Appeal Board, there are 36 outstanding. I know I have that note here somewhere – there we go, thank you, boss. The Central Regional Appeal Board has three outstanding and they are scheduled to be heard in April. The Western Regional Appeal Board has three outstanding that are scheduled to be heard in May. The Labrador Regional Appeal Board has one outstanding.

I would like to say that often when these things are rescheduled it's the proponents who want them rescheduled. It's not often a reflection of the Appeal Board having to want them rescheduled, it's usually the participants.

J. WALL: Okay.

So you have a full complement on the Appeal Board now?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you.

K. HOWELL: I'm correct in saying the Regional Appeal Board is filled right now, yes.

J. WALL: Okay, great. Thank you.

K. HOWELL: Sorry, I just want to make sure I'm not telling anybody any lies.

J. WALL: No, no, all good.

With respect to community relocation files, how many are there before government now?

K. HOWELL: Right now, we have five that are of interest – communities that have approached our department to ask those types of questions.

J. WALL: Okay.

Something that has been quite common throughout the province with respect to boil orders. How many municipalities are currently under a boil order?

K. HOWELL: I can't tell you the exact number. I'll have to get that back to you. The Department of Environment and Climate Change will have a better reflection of that.

J. WALL: Okay.

So the municipal legislation review, can you just give us a brief update on that, and of course, the city's act as well. I know we discussed that several times, but any update on that?

K. HOWELL: It's still an ongoing process. As you can appreciate, it's a very large piece of legislation. We're working through that piece by piece, and the city's act, will be very closely linked to that. A lot of it will mirror the principles and initiatives in one and will be very much reflected in the others. We anticipate that one moving along a little quicker.

J. WALL: Okay.

K. HOWELL: Coming to the House of Assembly this fall.

J. WALL: Is it any time frame, one year, two year, before the – what are we looking at?

K. HOWELL: Well, we're hoping to get it to the floor of the House of Assembly this fall, hopefully, and then the date in which it's enacted will depend on how that goes.

J. WALL: That sounds good. Thanks.

Minister, with respect to the Greene report and the recommendations, have your department completed any analysis with respect to the Greene report and how it would affect your department going forward?

K. HOWELL: Nothing specific to our department at this time.

J. WALL: Okay.

With respect to regionalization and the feedback from it since you released the plan, any cost analysis done with respect to that report?

K. HOWELL: That's the process we're undergoing right now.

J. WALL: Still ongoing.

K. HOWELL: Yeah. Once we receive the report, we want to make sure that we have an adequate picture of what we're looking at here. That will be part of the process when we bring forward our final plan.

J. WALL: Okay.

You said the municipal code of conduct – we did have that here in the House on November 4 and it's good to see that there's a lot of interest. With respect to the training that you're going to do with municipalities, any plan for that with respect to how you're going to roll it out, the scheduling, in-house?

K. HOWELL: We've done sessions with over 800 participants already, to give the updates and to discuss the contents of what we're looking at with the code here. I'll let the ADM speak to that.

B. HANLON: We've got a committee established within the department to look at things like templates to provide to municipalities for code of conduct, training for the code of conduct, templates, as well as the mandatory training plan. We have a committee that meets every week to kind of work through that now.

We're in contact with MNL, because they can be partnering with us in training as well. We do have a committee that's established now to make sure that everything lines up when the regulations come in, so that everything can be done on time.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you.

With respect to an old topic, the NEAR Plan, is it on your agenda, Minister? Any update on that?

K. HOWELL: Yes, it is. I actually had conversations last week with MNL about how we move forward with this plan.

J. WALL: Excellent. Good to hear on that one.

I can get into the line items now.

K. HOWELL: Sure.

J. WALL: I have a few minutes.

Minister, 1.1.01, Operating Accounts, Transportation and Communications: It dropped from \$30,300 to \$45,800 and going back up to \$45,800. Do you envision normal operations returning?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

We've had a lower travel cost because of COVID in the last year. As we resume normal operations – some of the things can be done virtually, but we anticipate returning to normal operations.

J. WALL: So from what we've learned there is some opportunity for savings, no doubt.

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: 1.2.01, Executive Support, Transportation and Communications: It dropped to \$13,000 from \$18,900 and back up to \$18,900. So, again, the same type of set-up, envision a return to normal operations for that as well?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Under Purchased Services, there's a \$4,000 drop. Can you just explain that, Minister, please?

K. HOWELL: That's lower copiers, lowering shredding, lower meeting rental costs due to the Public Health measures and restrictions for COVID-19.

J. WALL: Okay.

1.2.02 Administrative Support, Salaries, there was nothing spent. There's only \$13,800 there but what was that?

K. HOWELL: Yes, that was because in the previous budget we didn't have any summer students. We didn't bring anybody into the department at that time because we were sending people home to work. We envisioned then bringing them into this year's budget.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you.

Under Transportation and Communications, again no staff, but still \$18,000 was spent and now it's up to \$29,300. Can you comment on that one please?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

This is a zero-based budget adjustment for postage based on historical costs. Funds were reprofiled to the Policy and Strategic Planning, the Grants and Subsidies section. Part of that was an increase in the cost of the Provincial-Territorial Officials Committee fees. Our department pays into that so that we are part of those conversations and we receive large benefit from that relationship. A lot of the research that's conducted on behalf of all the provinces is shared across all the provinces, so we get that benefit.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you.

Revenue - Provincial, the amount increased from \$5,000 to \$121,600.

K. HOWELL: That was the recovery of prior year's special assistance, Community Enhancement Employment Program grants and gas, water tax and waste water funds, specific projects that were recovered.

J. WALL: So we can get a list of those projects?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Okay, perfect.

T. LOMOND: The big number there is the regional water project to extend the Corner Brook water system to Mount Moriah came in under budget. So that sent back about \$117,000 into the fund. That's basically what you're seeing.

There are a few dribs and drabs, but really it's one big project that came in under budget. Because it's a regional project, we can't let the money sit with a municipality like we normally would and say we'll use it towards other projects, because it's regional. It has to come back in.

J. WALL: Understood.

All right, thank you.

Minister, 1.2.03, Strategic Financial Management, under Salaries, again there's a drop last year of \$122,600. Is this just attributed to job losses or ...?

K. HOWELL: Yes, this would be forecasted – sorry, what number did you say?

J. WALL: 1.2.03, Salaries.

K. HOWELL: 1.2.03, Salaries. The decrease was vacant positions and a recruitment process. There was a manager for a portion of the year, an Accounting Clerk II and an administration officer.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Supplies, why was this the only operating amount to increase, to \$2,500 from \$1,600?

K. HOWELL: There was a software upgrade, the purchase of software for a website development.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Minister, 1.2.04, Policy and Strategic Planning, under Salaries, the increase. Why is the increase from \$332,600 to \$373,600?

K. HOWELL: Sorry, say your number again. I am listening to you.

J. WALL: 1.2.04, under Salaries –

K. HOWELL: Okay, hang on now.

1.5 – thank you. I was gone too far ahead there, sorry.

J. WALL: No worries.

So under Salaries, why the increase from \$332,600 to \$373,600?

K. HOWELL: That would be some positions were staffed at a higher salary step than budgeted for. Our policy division was a new division in 2021-22, so the costs were estimated. This year's budget is a more accurate reflection of what the department will actually incur.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you.

Under Transportation and Communications, what was the need to increase the budget to \$6,700 if it was only \$700 last year?

K. HOWELL: There are anticipated increased travel costs that will be a part of this process.

J. WALL: Okay.

The last one for 1.2.04, Grants and Subsidies: Can we please get a list or an explanation of the \$9,900 that was spent last year?

K. HOWELL: I think that is due to the Provincial-Territorial Officials Committee. That's where that money went.

J. WALL: The one you spoke about earlier?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you, Minister.

Madam Chair, that's all I have for this portion.

Thank you.

CHAIR: MHA Evans.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

You're very thorough, I must say.

I'll just start off with some general questions. Has any decision been made as of now regarding the residents of unincorporated areas, in terms of taxation, amalgamation or in terms of their legal status?

K. HOWELL: Not at this point. We're still working through the recommendations in the report and determining, as I've mentioned, what is the best plan for communities all across the province.

L. EVANS: Okay. Thank you.

Would you be able to give an outline of the type of work that the Municipal Support team does and how many people are employed in this part of the department?

K. HOWELL: Municipal Support, would that include the regional supports, too, we're talking about? So that would be the front-facing departments that interact with the communities. We have three regional offices across the province that do the more face-to-face interactions, offering assistance and advice to communities all across the province.

L. EVANS: Okay.

The next question: The minister said in February that the *Municipal Conduct Act* will be brought into effect later this year. So what's the next step in the process?

K. HOWELL: Right now, we're developing – we pretty much got the regulations developed. We have to pass those through the departments to make sure that everybody has had their say and then we will be ready to implement those.

L. EVANS: And I do apologize if I duplicate some of the things that's been said because I was following along with what you were saying but I missed some things and, of course, with Joedy –

K. HOWELL: That's fine. I've got you. I've got good stuff to say so I don't mind saying it twice.

L. EVANS: Our heads are kind of cluttered with all of the information from today as well.

K. HOWELL: So much.

L. EVANS: What resources are being allocated by the department to review and approve the codes of conduct developed and submitted by the municipalities to comply with the municipal code of conduct act?

K. HOWELL: I think that speaks to what the ADM had said earlier. There's a committee in place right now that's looking at the code of conduct and discussing it with communities. We've done the education sessions and should the need arise we will do more. Just making sure that all of these things are captured.

L. EVANS: Right.

Just continuing on with the code of conduct training now. Will there be increases in the

Municipal Training Financial Assistance Fund so that the councillors will be able to afford to meet the statutory requirement because there's going to be a huge need for that?

K. HOWELL: That's a discussion that's still ongoing in our department.

L. EVANS: Okay.

Do you see any problems with that?

K. HOWELL: Not at this point. The sessions that we offer –

B. HANLON: So we're looking at different delivery options. We're looking at an online delivery option. We're making sure that we have sessions planned for all regions of the province – Newfoundland and Labrador. We're also developing templates to assist all municipalities with the code of conduct. So those are some of the things we are doing to make sure it runs as smoothly as possible.

L. EVANS: Yes, and that's bringing it all under a standard. I must say, there's been a lot of positive feedback in my areas about the code of conduct. I think it's been badly needed.

K. HOWELL: Yes, it is.

L. EVANS: Could you provide an update on the Provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy? What progress has been made in this past year and what's left to implement?

K. HOWELL: I will have to get that information for you. I don't have it right now. Most of that lies within the Department of Environment and Climate Change right now, after the departmental break. That's available to you from Minister Davis's shop.

L. EVANS: Okay, perfect. Thank you.

Has there been any progress made in reviewing the acts of various cities and bringing amendments before the House?

K. HOWELL: That's a piece of legislation that we're working on in our department now. We're looking at the Municipalities Act, as well as the city's acts. They are large pieces of legislation

and there's a lot of variance in some of the categories so we're trying to make it more streamlined and hoping to have it in the House for the fall. Thereafter, the city's acts will follow very closely because a lot of the information will be mirrored from one to the next.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

Has there been any movement on the Northeast Avalon Regional Plan in the past year, and would we be able to have an update?

K. HOWELL: Yes. The NEAR Plan, the Northeast Avalon Regional Plan is something that's been hanging around for a number of years. In the last year, it's been revived in our department. It's something that we've talked about in the last number of months and, actually, last week got an update from MNL that they're ready to move forward and see if we can get this across the finish line.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

In last year's municipal elections, we saw an increase of 10 per cent in the number of women elected, as well as two transgender candidates who were chosen to represent their fellow citizens.

Would we be able to have an update on the measures that the department is taking to encourage other women, transgender, non-binary leaders to step forward and run for office?

K. HOWELL: That's part of our partnership with MNL. We've worked very closely with them over the last year in funding the Make Your Mark campaign, which was largely a part of the elections and trying to get more diverse candidates to run in municipal elections. We will continue those conversations.

We've also had numerous interactions with councils all across the province. We do monthly coffee breaks that we participate in, virtual coffee breaks that we've been able to participate in as well when we're partnering with MNL and PMA on some of these initiatives.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

Just moving on now to the line items.

1.2.02, I'm not sure if this question was asked, under Operating Accounts. Spending on all items listed under Operating Accounts was under budget: Why was this?

K. HOWELL: The zero?

L. EVANS: Yes.

K. HOWELL: That was because last year we didn't have any summer students and this year we have budgeted for it.

L. EVANS: I apologize if that was already asked.

K. HOWELL: That's okay.

L. EVANS: 1.2.03, Strategic Financial Management, there was already a questions asked here about Salaries, but we were wondering how many vacancies do exist?

K. HOWELL: Right now, in Strategic Financial Management, we have five vacancies.

L. EVANS: 1.2.04, Policy and Strategic Planning, what kind of travel is expected in the upcoming year?

K. HOWELL: This department does a lot of our work with MNL and PMA so we budgeted for staff to travel to conferences.

L. EVANS: Under 2.1.01, Regional Support.

K. HOWELL: We're not up to two yet, I don't think, are we?

L. EVANS: Oh, sorry. I was just going ahead.

K. HOWELL: That's fine. No worries.

L. EVANS: Where the questions were asked before, I had a lot of marks up there.

CHAIR: Are you finished?

L. EVANS: Yes.

CHAIR: MHA Wall.

J. WALL: I do have one question on regional government – regionalization plan. I have had many calls, emails, with respect to cabins or vacant land or even back property. Are you going to be looking at that as well within the whole engagement process?

K. HOWELL: It is still part of the conversation. Like I said, we don't have our concrete model yet but they're part of province, this land and the province that we want to consider. We're still very much looking at what we need to do there to make sure that we get something that is suitable, responsible and makes sense.

J. WALL: All right. Thank you very much.

That's all, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: I ask the Clerk to recall the subheading group.

CLERK: 1.1.01 to 1.2.04, Executive and Support Services.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.04, Executive and Support Services, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.2.04 carried.

CHAIR: Okay, we'll ask the Clerk to call the next group.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.3.02 inclusive, Municipal Support.

CHAIR: 2.1.01 to 2.3.02, Municipal Support, inclusive.

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Under 2.1.01, Salaries: Minister, why was there a drop from \$941,800 to \$887,900?

K. HOWELL: That decrease was vacant positions.

J. WALL: And how many vacant positions, Minister?

K. HOWELL: In Regional Support, we have one vacancy right now.

J. WALL: Just one. Thank you.

I have nothing to note in 2.1.02.

2.2.01, Municipal Debt Servicing, under Grants and Subsidies: Why the decrease from \$49,200 to \$9,800?

K. HOWELL: Right. The lower debt servicing expenses are due to the decline in the debt balances. So these are old capital works project loans that the government had, we had agreements with the towns to pay a portion. The practice is no longer with government so we now distribute the amount for approved projects through our municipal infrastructure department.

J. WALL: Okay. Thank you.

2.2.02, Municipal Debt Servicing - Principal, under Grants and Subsidies.

K. HOWELL: The same would apply.

J. WALL: Same apply?

K. HOWELL: Yeah.

J. WALL: Thank you.

K. HOWELL: The lower debt servicing expenses are because of a declining debt balance.

J. WALL: Okay.

2.2.03, Municipal Operating Grants: I do know that you mentioned earlier about keeping the level at \$22 million, but have you given any consideration or discussed with municipalities with respect to inflation and salaries and the increase in the price of diesel and all that?

K. HOWELL: Absolutely. Those are reflections of conversations that we have, I'm sure, in every department. That's why we were pleased to say no less than. We want to ensure that support is there so that –

J. WALL: Three years, right?

K. HOWELL: Yeah, for the next three years, so that they have that stability to work with – given the ever-changing prices that you mentioned. It's no less than so there's still room to grow. But for now we know they're secured on those principles.

J. WALL: Okay.

Minister, will the proposed regionalization plan impact that dollar figure?

K. HOWELL: That's, again, part of our ongoing conversation as we look at our regionalization plan and what it is that we move forward on. That'll be part of the conversation I'm sure.

J. WALL: Okay. Thank you.

2.2.04, Special Assistance, under Grants and Subsidies: Can you please explain the additional \$268,700 and can we get a list of the disbursements for the last year, please?

K. HOWELL: Yes, a list will certainly be provided. The increase is due to the overage of the Come Home Year expenditures. That was additional funds transferred from the Department of Finance from a contingency and the community enhancement programs.

J. WALL: Okay.

2.2.05, we saw a drop of \$350,000. Can we also get a list of disbursements for that one, Minister, please?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Why the drop of \$350,000 under Community Enhancement?

K. HOWELL: It's an anticipated savings and delays in receiving the final reports from communities.

J. WALL: Thank you.

K. HOWELL: The deputy minister wanted to add something there.

T. LOMOND: I just wanted to mention that's normal. When we do these projects, it's not uncommon to get some slippage. We'll provide a certain amount of money for projects that will come in slightly under. We'll get a little bit of money back at the end of the year so you'll probably see this same sort of phenomenon again next year in Estimates.

J. WALL: Okay.

Please don't hold me to remembering it though.

Thank you for that.

2.2.06, under Provincial Gas Tax Revenue Sharing: Again, can we get a full list of disbursements for that as well?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Thank you.

2.3.01, Local Governance and Planning, under Salaries: Can you please explain the drop of \$114,200?

K. HOWELL: Sorry, where was that?

J. WALL: 2.3.01, under Salaries.

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: There's a drop of \$114,200.

K. HOWELL: That would be vacancies and a recruitment process.

J. WALL: How many vacancies are in that, for that dollar amount?

K. HOWELL: In Local Governance and Planning, we have one vacancy.

J. WALL: One. Okay.

Under Professional Services, just wondering why there was an extra \$9,000 spent last year.

K. HOWELL: That was additional costs for a Labrador Protected Roads Zoning Plan consultant, and additional costs for an appeal board case.

J. WALL: Labrador road consulting?

K. HOWELL: The Labrador Protected Road Zoning Plan.

J. WALL: Thank you.

K. HOWELL: That was a consultant that was hired for that piece of work.

J. WALL: Only?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

J. WALL: Okay.

Under Purchased Services, can we get an explanation for the additional \$11,000, please?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

That was additional advertising and meeting cost, and an appeal board consultant.

J. WALL: Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies, it dropped from \$88,500 to \$36,500, which was actually spent, but budgeted back to \$88,500 for this year. So can you just explain that, please, Minister?

K. HOWELL: The lower grants issued to support the preparation of legislatively required feasibility reports for a regional co-operation initiatives.

J. WALL: And under Revenue - Provincial, can you please explain the drop from \$29,500 to \$15,000?

K. HOWELL: That'll be a lower cost recovery on fees and expenses related to the Protected Roads Zoning amendment. So the plan is done. There won't be as many requests to look into it and so there won't be any fees recovered for those requests.

J. WALL: Okay. Understood.

Minister, 2.3.02, under the CCBF, Operating Accounts, Transportation and Communications: Can you please explain the drop from \$11,600 to \$2,000?

K. HOWELL: That was lower travel cost due to the Public Health restrictions for COVID.

J. WALL: Thank you.

And under Professional Services: Why was only \$15,000 spent of the \$32,900 for last year?

K. HOWELL: That was a lower than anticipated expenditure related to the development of the Municipal Capital Asset Management framework. So that's a project that we'd committed to working with TI on, but it got delayed. So we will still want to continue to support that program and we've been given indications that that will go forward.

J. WALL: Minister, can you repeat that, the Municipal Capital –

K. HOWELL: Municipal Capital Asset Management framework.

J. WALL: Is that something new for the department? I'm just not familiar with it so I just asked.

B. HANLON: So that's been on the go a few years. It's funded through gas tax. Of course, promoting municipalities having capital asset management plans in place, so this is for the province to develop a consistent framework to assist with that and also track capital asset management.

It has been on the go for a few years. It got delayed a bit because of COVID but TI are leading it and it is back on track again now.

J. WALL: Good to know. Thank you.

Under Grants and Subsidies, it dropped from \$110 million to \$31 million, which was actually spent, but you are budgeted back to \$110 million for this year. So can you explain that please and can we get a list of the disbursements, under Grants and Subsidies?

K. HOWELL: That's lower expenditures. There was a carry-over of funds into the fiscal for this year, some administration waste management and waste-water projects.

J. WALL: Okay.

The last one, Minister, for this section, under Revenue - Federal, it goes from \$64 million to \$33 million. So can you please explain what's going on with this line item?

K. HOWELL: That was the one-time federal COVID stimulus program, the funding that was approved for last year.

J. WALL: Thank you.

That's it for this section, Madam Chair.

Thank you.

L. EVANS: I think I started to ask this question; 2.1.01 in Regional Support, spending on Salaries was lower than expected last year. Are there any current vacancies here?

K. HOWELL: Yes, Regional Support has one vacancy.

L. EVANS: One vacancy? Thank you.

How many special inspections has the department conducted in the past year, and does the number reflect an increase or decrease over the past year?

K. HOWELL: I am going to defer to my –

B. HANLON: So there was a sort of official special inspection done in the Town of Kippens this year. Normally special inspections, it would be one or two a year maximum that go through the entire process, but there was one this year done in the Town of Kippens.

L. EVANS: Okay, and then how much was spent on the investigations? How much was spent on outside legal costs?

T. LOMOND: If it's in relation to that special investigation, we would use our internal solicitor. The outside costs may be borne by the municipality. Often when there's something like

that, the municipality will seek legal advice from their own solicitor and sometimes they might have to get an independent investigator to come in, somebody who is arm's length from the council, to sort of look at the situation. So that would be a cost that's borne by the council as opposed to the provincial government.

L. EVANS: Okay. So was there any spent?

K. HOWELL: I don't have any expenditures on special investigations this year.

L. EVANS: Okay, perfect.

K. HOWELL: Because it was an internal process.

L. EVANS: Okay.

2.1.02, Municipal Finance: Is the department currently looking into any new or alternative models for revenue generation directly by the municipalities?

T. LOMOND: I guess the new legislation that's coming in is more enabling and will allow municipalities to look at how they deliver their services. In terms of what they might undertake, in terms of economic development, what will likely come out in the definitions will be more flexibility.

So those communities with the capacity to deliver programs and provide those types of services could use that. It could generate revenue with that increased flexibility.

L. EVANS: Why are we spending on Salaries higher than anticipated last year?

K. HOWELL: That would be additional financial support was required for Municipal Finance.

L. EVANS: 2.2.06, Provincial Gas Tax Revenue Sharing: I'm not sure if this was asked but would you be able to provide us with a list of the projects funded out of this money?

K. HOWELL: Yes.

L. EVANS: I think you asked that, but I wasn't quite sure because ...

2.3.01, Local Governance and Planning: Are there any communities that have expressed an interest in relocation in the past year and has the change in the Relocation Policy in October had any impact on demand?

K. HOWELL: Right now we have five communities that have reached out to our department to explore the Relocation Policy. I can't speak to if the Relocation Policy changes have made that number go up or down. I'll let the assistant deputy ...

B. HANLON: So, as the minister said, we've had five inquiries in the past year. I've been there a couple of years and this is the most we've seen in kind of one succinct period is five. It does seem to have affected the inquiries.

L. EVANS: Yes, expressed interest.

Municipalities NL has been calling for improvements to civic addressing in rural areas now for many years. Has there been any progress made by the departments on this front?

K. HOWELL: That is certainly something that we hope to capture in our regionalization plan. It's one of the large benefits that will be realized if we have a regional government structure in place and as we chatted about earlier in the week that the delivery of fire and emergency services will largely benefit from civic addressing. So it is certainly something that is top of mind and will be a large part considered in the regional plan.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

Is the department planning on following the 2022 recommendations for the implementation of regionalization as detailed in the Joint Working Group's report released in February of this year?

K. HOWELL: Right now that report is still undergoing analysis in our department and we thank the Working Group for the amount of work that they've put into that and the recommendations have come to government for analysis. And, as I said, we want to make sure that when we're looking at it we have something that is reasonable and that makes sense for the province.

So we are certainly working through that to develop a plan and when we have something more concrete, I'll be sure to bring that forward to municipalities, Local Service Districts and all areas that it will be impacted for feedback.

L. EVANS: Right.

My next question was about the resources that would need to be allocated. I guess you would include that in your update.

K. HOWELL: Yes, that is part of the conversation as well. We recognize fully that there is going to have to be supports provided for any implementation of a new regional model. When we have a plan for that, we will provide the update.

L. EVANS: Okay, thank you.

Is the department planning on following staffing allocations for the transition team recommended by the regionalization report? That is, executive director, a financial analyst, a policy analyst, administrative support and regional facilitators.

K. HOWELL: Again, that is still part of the ongoing analysis.

L. EVANS: Okay. I guess your update would include –

K. HOWELL: Yes.

L. EVANS: Has any town or group approached the department in the past year looking for potential amalgamation or to implement a regional framework for funding and service delivery?

K. HOWELL: There are a number of examples all across the province of communities who are doing a really good job of regional service sharing and they made great progress on that. With regard to amalgamation, if that interest exists in a community then they can certainly come to us but at this point I don't think we have – we have two?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

K. HOWELL: Yeah, two communities that are looking at that progress right now.

L. EVANS: Okay, thank you.

How long does it take, on average, for a municipal plan to be reviewed and approved by the department?

K. HOWELL: I guess that would depend on how big the plan is. Some municipalities would have a much smaller plan than others and the standards would be applied the same. Is there anything that we can add to that?

B. HANLON: Yeah, it depends on the complexity of the plan. It is a lengthy process. There is a lot of consultation that has to happen. There is a lot of detail in every municipal plan. We could throw out a number like six months to a year but it is a time-consuming process. It depends on the complexity and the size of the town and whatnot.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

Just a follow-up question: Have you hired any additional planners devoted to municipal planning in the department?

K. HOWELL: If you got some, we want some. The recruitment process is ongoing for planners in the department. We hired a manager for planning in the last year.

L. EVANS: Thank you.

2.3.02, Canada Community-Building Fund: Why was spending on Salaries lower than expected last year?

K. HOWELL: There was a vacant manager position for a portion of the fiscal year.

L. EVANS: Right.

I know the question was asked under the section under Professional, but for Purchased Services, why was that under budget last year?

K. HOWELL: The decrease?

L. EVANS: Yes.

K. HOWELL: It was lower than anticipated expenditures related to the development of the Municipal Capital Asset Management

framework. So that's the joint plan that we've been working on with municipalities to take stock of their capital assets. That's been stalled over the last year in the TI department, but we have indications that we're moving forward with that plan now.

L. EVANS: And, just briefly, what accounts for the drop in anticipated federal revenue for this year?

K. HOWELL: That would be the payout of the COVID stimulus program funding. That was allocated for 2021-22 only.

L. EVANS: Okay.

Thank you.

No further questions.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just a couple of follow-up questions, Minister.

With respect to the five communities for the relocation. I'm not familiar with that process; I understand what you explained to me. What is the time frame you're looking at from start to finish with respect to – I know each case has to be different, no doubt, more complex – but what would be the time frame that people would look at? Are you looking at the same time that the regionalization plan would come out in the next three years?

K. HOWELL: With regard to the relocation policy, that's going to be very specific to the community. There are a number of different levels that will have to be considered so some of those would take longer than others. I don't have a frame of reference for that. I don't know if anybody on the panel here can give a more accurate timeline.

T. LOMOND: I'll defer to Bren on this, but if his question is can it happen within the three-year timeline of regionalization. The answer is yes. Really, it's around how quickly communities can come together and decide what

their plans are. There's a vote process that takes place and then there's obviously a process around determining who's eligible to – who's an actual resident versus a summer homeowner, that type of thing.

J. WALL: Okay.

B. HANLON: And just to add, I guess, the five inquiries we've had – that's not to say there's five relocations in process. There's been five inquiries from communities for relocation. Just to clarify, we're not in the middle of doing five relocations.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Minister, I want to go back to Municipal Capital Asset Management. I know that some municipalities are doing it on their own. I'm very proud to say my hometown and CAO Brian Peach has that underway, but is this something that the department wants to look at for all municipalities across the province to put in place with respect to having, you know, as a municipal plan? It has to be in place.

K. HOWELL: Well, certainly, the benefits of a Capital Asset Management Plan can be realized in all communities. Right now, we're not at a stage where we are mandating communities to be part of that process, but any conversation that they want to have, we're certainly open to that. I think it makes sense in most of our communities. You know, you want to make sure you know what you've got to work with.

J. WALL: Well it's going to save money in the long run.

K. HOWELL: Absolutely.

J. WALL: And is there any plan for your department to provide support or assistance to municipalities for that?

K. HOWELL: We haven't got that far on the discussion yet but ...

B. HANLON: I can just add, the federal government are promoting the Capital Asset Management Plan and this can be funded through the gas tax or Canada Community-

Building Fund for communities. So we are providing support in that way.

And, also, the project that TI is working on will provide sort of a framework and can provide assistance to communities in the benefits and how to go about doing Capital Asset Management planning.

J. WALL: Okay. Thank you.

And, Minister, the last one. It comes back to town plans. I, being a former mayor, went through the process. I know how time consuming it is and speaking with former planner Reg Garland, that's a name from the past, at that time there was many more in the department.

How many planners do you have there now? I know each plan is different, no doubt, because they are more complex with the size of the municipalities. What is the average turnaround time that your department currently has in approving town plans?

B. HANLON: Well, we have three planners and a manager of planning right now. That structure was changed a bit because we saw the benefit of having a manager in place to help prioritize things like municipal plans and to make sure the work is streamlined as much as possible.

We could get an average for you but it varies so much on the town plans. I mean, it really can go from a small town, relatively simple plans, six month-ish to a year or longer. You are probably familiar with some that have taken longer.

J. WALL: And I appreciate that. It does make a difference to the individual municipality with respect to, you know, their development and what have you.

K. HOWELL: Moving forward.

J. WALL: But that's good to hear that you have a manager plus three planners.

I think that's all the questions I have, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

MHA Evans, do you have any additional questions?

L. EVANS: Just a couple. Is the department considering how to help communities prepare and adapt to the growing effects of climate change?

K. HOWELL: Those are conversations that have been around most municipal tables. Right now, we aren't leading that conversation. Much of that would come from the Department of Environment and Climate Change. But any communities that have questions or want to have those discussions, they certainly occur with our department and our officials.

L. EVANS: And for this year's budget, have you taken into consideration some of the impacts of the, I guess we could call, climate change impact on the weather that's creating a lot of problems across Canada. Have you taken that into consideration for your budget this year?

K. HOWELL: Our budget – we do recognize fully that that impacts communities and that's why we're so pleased that we were able to maintain all the supports that we offer to communities. They'll be very much autonomous in how their communities do and deal with those types of things, specifically to them. But, again, as I mentioned, our department is there for assistance if there's anything that we can offer.

L. EVANS: I just had another general question. We had some discussion earlier on about the boil orders –

K. HOWELL: Yes.

L. EVANS: – across the province. Do you see an increase in THMs impacting the quality of water, the drinking water?

K. HOWELL: That would be a question that's better suited for the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

L. EVANS: Yeah. Okay. It's just where it's municipalities ...

K. HOWELL: Yeah.

L. EVANS: No further questions.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

MHA Wall?

Okay.

I'll ask the Clerk to recall the subheading group.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.3.02 inclusive, Municipal Support.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.3.02, Municipal Support, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.3.02 carried.

CHAIR: I ask the Clerk to call for the total.

CLERK: The total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs carried?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 13, at 5:30 p.m. to consider the Estimates of the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

Call for a motion to adjourn.

AN HON. MEMBER: So moved.

K. HOWELL: Everybody put their hand up then.

CHAIR: The meeting has been adjourned.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.