



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT**

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No. 1 — January 21, 2020

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Mark Docherty, Chair  
Regina Coronation Park

Ms. Carla Beck  
Regina Lakeview

Hon. Jeremy Harrison  
Meadow Lake

Mr. Everett Hindley  
Swift Current

Hon. Paul Merriman  
Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland

Ms. Cathy Sproule  
Saskatoon Nutana

Mr. Randy Weekes  
Biggar-Sask Valley

[The board met at 08:35.]

**Chief Electoral Officer**

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Good morning, everyone. We'll call the meeting to order. I believe we do have quorum. First I'd like to advise committee members that Speaker Docherty is not available for a period of time this morning. And in accordance with the Act, in the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker shall act as Chair. So that's why I'm sitting here, but the Speaker will be joining us later on this morning.

I'd like to introduce the board. From the government side, we have the Hon. Jeremy Harrison; the Hon. Paul Merriman; Randy Weekes, MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]; and MLA Everett Hindley. From the opposition side, currently we have Ms. Carla Beck, member of Regina Lakeview, and I understand her colleague Cathy Sproule will be joining us this morning.

The first order of business is the approval of the agenda. If the members find the agenda appropriate, we need a mover and a seconder to approve the agenda. Mr. Merriman moves. Do we have a seconder? Mr. Hindley. Agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Carried. Approval of the minutes from the meetings of 5/19, 6/19, and 7/19. We need a mover and a seconder. Mr. Weekes. Seconder? Ms. Beck. Agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Carried. Now I guess we can move on to the tabling of documents. Item no. 1, the Legislative Assembly Service *Mid-Year Report on Progress* for the period April 1 to September 30th, 2019.

Item 2, the Information and Privacy Commissioner's third quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

Item no. 3, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists' third quarterly report for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

The Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's third quarterly report for the fiscal year 2019-20.

Item no. 5, the Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Saskatchewan third quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2019-20.

Item no. 6, the Advocate for Children and Youth third quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2019-20.

Item no. 7, the audit letter for the Board of Internal Economy from the Provincial Auditor.

Item no. 8, the letter of response to the Provincial Auditor from the Board of Internal Economy.

Those are the items that are tabled this morning. So now we'll move on to item no. 9, decision item: review the 2020-21 budget and motion to approve the statutory estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. I'd like to introduce Dr. Michael Boda, the Chief Electoral Officer, ask him to introduce his officials and make his presentation.

**Mr. Boda:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for inviting us here today to discuss our 2020-21 budget estimates with board members. And I have with me today Jennifer Colin, who's our deputy chief electoral officer for corporate services and electoral finance; and Bonnie Schenher is our director of electoral operations at Elections Saskatchewan.

So with your permission, Mr. Chair, we'd like to take about 20 minutes to offer a review of our budget estimates document and to highlight some of our plans for the coming year, a year that will see Elections Saskatchewan oversee and administer the province's 29th general election. And following that, we'll be happy to take some questions. Okay, thank you.

So on October the 26th, Elections Saskatchewan will administer the province's 29th general election. The time is approaching 9 a.m., which means in exactly 279 days thousands of election polls around the province will be opening to serve voters. And by the end of the day, hundreds of thousands of people will have exercised their franchise and cast a ballot for the candidate of their choice.

The process will involve first-time voters, both young adults who have just turned 18 and new Canadians who have recently become citizens. There will also be more experienced voters. Some quick research simply to satisfy curiosity indicated that the province's oldest residents, who are around 112 years old, could have been voting since our 1925 election, which was just the sixth general election in the history of our province.

Of course board members who've heard my budget submissions in the past will have heard me say that some of the processes we've been using haven't actually changed since that 1925 vote. But that of course is changing and is one of the reasons why this budget presentation and this election is so exciting for my team and I hope for our stakeholders, which includes you as MLAs, as candidates, and also our registered political parties.

Before moving into key organizational priorities and an explanation of the numbers, which my deputy will provide, I do want to spend a few minutes telling you why this election is different from past electoral processes and why that matters.

So I probably don't have to tell you that I am excited about this coming election. Of course it's my job to be excited about the coming election, but there's more than that. This election, the 29th in the history of the province, is significant both for Elections Saskatchewan as an institution and for Saskatchewan residents for how they will exercise their democratic right to vote. I'd like to point out four main reasons why the coming election is different than others that we've held.

Now first is that we're having to work to reinforce the integrity of our election system in a different way. I think it's fair to say that this issue is top of mind in a way that we haven't seen before. Part of this traces back to the influence of American politics and their elections, but even beyond that I would suggest that Canadians are becoming less trusting of their democratic systems. The response to that for an organization like Elections Saskatchewan, for whom trust is paramount to what we do, is to

focus strongly on what we can do to reinforce the integrity of our election system.

Now the best example I can provide to you here is the work that we're doing on cybersecurity. Cybersecurity, both in the context of elections but also in the broader society, is big news. Elections Saskatchewan has been at the forefront in Canada of trying to collaborate with our partners in this space and leverage our common problem to find solutions and opportunities.

A second reason why this election is different from past events is that over the past four years Elections Saskatchewan has really begun to live its organizational values. Now what does that mean? Well it means for example that I sit down with almost every new employee we hire at head office and talk about those values — professionalism, impartiality, innovation, accountability, and service — to find out what those values mean to each individual and to reinforce their importance.

We go through a similar process with every member of our field leadership team. Over the past several weeks and months, my team and I have been conducting interviews to fill various election-related positions. And when you find someone who's worked for an employer that understands their values and knows what they stand for, you will find someone who is engaged and passionate about their work. And then as we begin to hire more than 12,000 people required to conduct the election in the months ahead, we'll also reinforce these values during our training process.

[08:45]

Number three. The selection will be different given the work that we have done to reduce barriers for our voters. I've said on many occasions that there is a place for all of us to work together to encourage individuals to vote. But as an election administrator, I, along with my staff, are principally focused on ensuring that anyone who chooses to vote is able to do so and does not encounter any unreasonable barrier.

We're always looking at voting through this lens, and in doing so we've reviewed polling divisions from our last election in 2016 and cumulatively reduced voter travel times throughout the province by 110 000 kilometres. And as we are looking at potential locations for advance polls, we are always considering how long it takes voters to drive to their closest advance poll.

Our goal would be that most voters should drive no more than 30 minutes and we are looking towards having more advance polls in sparsely populated rural areas and on First Nation reserves to ensure we meet that goal. This is just one example of the efforts we've made over the past four years to remove barriers for our voters and ensure that anyone who chooses to vote is able to do so.

A last reason for why this election is different focuses on agreement among legislators and on our efforts to begin a process of modernizing our election system. I mentioned a few moments ago that Saskatchewan elections haven't changed all that much since 1925, in fact since 1905 when we began this process. There have of course been changes and improvements on the margins, but by and large the process remains pretty much the same.

For a lot of reasons that's a good thing. It's hard to beat the security and integrity of a paper ballot, and that's why we're retaining those parts of the process. But for other reasons it's not a good thing. And I can tell you, after reading comments and feedback from past election workers, that voters have been telling them that the election processes were becoming antiquated and out of touch. Very few voters want to wait while election officials handwrite the name of every voter in a poll book and then wait for a few more hours for results while they hand count paper ballots. The approach we've taken to modernization is a balanced one that takes a phased-in approach to change. And for this election, 28 of the province's 61 constituencies will feature modernized advance polls including electronic poll books and ballot tabulators.

So with those real differences said, Mr. Chair, I'd like to transition to providing a brief overview of our priorities for the next year.

Elections Saskatchewan's '20-21 budget submission listed seven priorities based on two themes. The first, and where I'll spend most of my time, is the delivery of Saskatchewan's next election; and the second, I'll touch on more briefly, looks towards future events.

The first priority in our budget was ensuring event readiness. We've been planning for the coming general election for years, but the scale and pace of those preparations is only increasing and will continue to increase right through to election day. Now when I say election readiness, what do I mean? It means having our field leadership team in place and training them to complete their responsibilities. It means engaging with stakeholders, from registered political parties to service providers to voters in communities across the entire province. And to provide one more example from a long list, it means ensuring the task of finalizing, ordering, sorting, and packing election materials is complete so that we can ship to our 61 returning offices in an efficient and organized manner.

The second priority is to administer the 29th general election. Now when I talk about administering an election we'll tend to talk about election day as if that's the only day that anything happens. But we all know that is no longer the case. People don't want to be told that they can vote on one day at one location between certain hours. They want choice. They want convenience. For this election, advance voting will be held for five days between October 18 and 24, from 12 to noon every day. This is a change from the last election where the hours of advance voting changed, whether it was a weekday or a weekend, and also an increase in the total hours of advance voting over five days from 35 hours to 40 hours.

Election day and advance voting are the two most visible and most popular options but there are others, and as part of the coming modernization the goal is to diversify these opportunities even further. At present there are mobile polls, which are shorter, temporary polls on election day. Most often they're used in personal care homes or similar facilities. There's absentee voting, which can be voting by mail or voting in the returning office. Homebound voting was introduced in the last election whereby an individual with a disability or a caregiver can have election officials come to their house with a ballot box and they can vote secretly and privately. There are also hospital polls, remand

centre polls, and if needed, polls for temporarily displaced individuals. The point here is to show that voting is not a one-size-fits-all proposition.

I mentioned our values earlier, and service is one of those values. We aim to serve voters in a very different way than you've seen before within what is allowed by our legislation. And we hope to continue to provide continued greater choice and greater convenience as we work to modernize the system. Which leads to another priority link to modernization, the implementation of what we call modernized advance polls. I briefly touched on the idea of modernization, and the most visible aspect of it in the election will be seen at the advance polls in 28 of 61 constituencies.

Now I actually could spend the entire meeting talking about our plans for modernization, but in brief the experience at a modernized advance poll will be quite different from the traditional poll. First there will be fewer pencils, rulers, paper voters lists, but there will be computers. Voters will walk in; they'll be greeted and directed to an election official sitting at a desk with a computer. If they brought their voter information card, it can be scanned using a bar code, and if not the official will look it up using their keyboard.

Once the voter is found in the system — or if needed, registered — they'll be provided a ballot. It will look physically different from our traditional ballot: larger, on a piece of 8.5-by-11 paper, and they'll be directed behind a voting screen to mark it. Once they mark that ballot, they will place it back into the secrecy sleeve, move over to the ballot tabulation officer who will deposit the marked ballot in the tabulator. Major efficiency here, of course, is that at the end of the day there is no hand counting of ballots, and our advance poll results will probably be among the very first to be reported on.

Fourth priority we discussed in our budget was the post-event closure work we are required to do. Everyone here knows that the work of Elections Saskatchewan doesn't end when the votes are counted, and the close-down of the election continues for at least a year after the event.

Shortly after the return of the writs of the election, all 61 offices will be vacated with material shipped back to our warehouse in Regina — and when I say materials are shipped back, I mean literally almost everything is shipped back — which means there's a fair bit of work involved in sorting, collating, what needs to be retained and what doesn't, what can be reused in future events, and so on.

Another activity that needs to take place in post-election is creating what we call the final voters list. This list of voters is produced after every voter registration form and every voter data correction form collected during the election is data-entered and processed. And it provides us with the data we need to produce the final election stats and is also of great interest to you and your colleagues at your political parties.

Another key post-election priority is the work that goes into reviewing and processing candidate and party election returns. This work ties into the public reimbursement program outlined in legislation which helps to ensure that individuals can participate in the political process regardless of financial status.

Of note is that this will be the first general election where candidates and parties are required to use our ELMS [Electoral Management System] system, which is an online expense return filing application. And I know a lot of work has gone into making that system user-friendly among our staff here, and we believe it will benefit chief official agents, business managers, and auditors as they complete their responsibilities.

Transitioning now beyond this election to look to longer term is a priority that we mentioned to you several times in the past budget submissions and budget presentations, and that's our plan to replace our election management system called ESPREE [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors] which has been around since around 2000.

For background, an election management system, or EMS, is a tool election-management bodies use to manage many aspects of the event including election results, candidate information, polling place information, and so on. Following this election, a long-established plan to retain some of our temporary staff members hired for the event will come to fruition. These temporary staff members, who have gained integral insight into the inner workings of our election system that couldn't otherwise be accessed, will assist with the development, testing, and eventual implementation of a new EMS.

Alongside the transition to a new EMS will be our work to engage a new payroll provider. We pay about 12,000 people for working the election, and the company we are using will no longer offer support to guarantee functionality after the end of the calendar year of 2021.

The last priority for the year described in our budget is to continue to look forward. Even while we plan for 2020, we're already considering 2024 and what that will look like. My recommendations for legislation reform from the last general election outlined a three-phased project. We're in the midst of phase 1, and shortly after this coming election, the proposal for phase 2 will need to be considered carefully with you as legislators before it's solidified and communicated to all our stakeholders.

So at this point I would like to ask Jennifer Colin to offer some insight on the numbers associated with these priorities. Jennifer.

**Ms. Colin:** — Thank you, Michael. Before I speak about the actual budget dollars, I wanted to take this opportunity to explain a little bit about our budget development process. This will be familiar to any returning board members, but I think it provides important context, especially as we move into the year of an election.

Consistent with how Elections Saskatchewan has developed its budget in recent years, we classify costs into two categories. The first focuses on ongoing administrative costs — rent, salary, and other operating costs associated with our head office. The second category is event-related costs, and these are the costs that are associated with preparing for and delivering scheduled electoral events.

Funding requirements for our ongoing administrative budget are developed using historical information, expenditure trends, and changes to key cost drivers such as the number of employees,

dollars per square foot for lease space, and so on. Our event-related budget, on the other hand, starts with a zero base, and the budget is developed by costing out our planned activities for the upcoming cycle. As each year of the four-year cycle for an election management body is very different, comparing one fiscal year to the next for budget purposes is not particularly meaningful.

We've also developed our budget with four key assumptions in mind. These assumptions are described in more detail starting on page 4 of your budget document, but I will mention them briefly right now. Our first assumption is that the general election will be held on October 26th, 2020. Secondly, we have made an assumption that there will not be any unscheduled or unplanned electoral events such as by-elections or referendums. Third, we have assumed that there will not be any extraordinary events such as severe weather or multiple recounts associated with the general election. And finally we have assumed that the level of reimbursement for candidates and political party election expenses will remain consistent with previous elections. The financial impact of any of these assumptions turning out to be false has not been incorporated into this budget submission.

So I'll now provide some context and details on our 2020-2021 budget request. For the coming year, our administration budget is just over 3.1 million which is an increase of about \$255,000 or 9 per cent over last year, the majority of which can be traced back to the fact that this is an election year.

The single largest item driving this increase in the administration budget is an expected increase in employee vacation liability. Due to the fact that it is an election year, our head office staff members will not be able to use their entire vacation entitlements before the end of the fiscal year. As a result, we anticipate having to increase our vacation liability by about \$135,000 which represents just over half of the \$255,000 increase in our administration budget. I should note that, while we record this vacation liability as a cost for the coming fiscal year, it will be drawn down in subsequent fiscal years as head office staff members are once again able to use their allotted vacation time.

[09:00]

Another driver in the increase in our administration budget is an increase in rent payments for our warehouse. Our warehouse has been shared with the city of Regina, but due to the closeness of the provincial and municipal election events, this is no longer feasible for the immediate future. This means that Elections Saskatchewan will assume 100 per cent of the warehouse costs for 11 of the 12 months of the next fiscal year, resulting in increased costs of about \$27,000.

There are also a large variety of day-to-day administration costs that increase in the year of an election simply because of increased activity. Examples of these costs include photocopier costs, mail services and courier charges, and increased long-distance calls.

Finally, on the administrative side we have also budgeted \$100,000 in capital expenditures which will be used to replace aging server and network infrastructure that will be beyond end-of-life by 2021.

Moving on to the event category, we have set our event budget at \$21.6 million for the '20-21 fiscal year, the year of the next general election. Almost \$14 million, or approximately 62 per cent of the 21.6 million, is allocated to costs that are required by legislation. This includes reimbursements to political parties and candidates as well as the costs associated with establishing and operating 61 returning offices and over 3,000 polls.

The rest of the budget, which is approximately \$7.5 million, is for costs associated with hiring additional temporary staff at head office, training for our field leadership team, voter registration activities, purchasing election-related supplies, and other various costs associated with the administration of the election and the post-event cleanup that occurs after election day.

The table on page 11 of our budget submission offers some insight into the costs of the 28th general election versus the upcoming 29th general election. This table shows that while constituency costs are projected to increase slightly and we have added a new cost category for advanced voting services modernization, the savings resulting from the elimination of the door-to-door enumeration since the implementation of the permanent register almost offset these increases.

Elections Saskatchewan has also continued to look for ways to increase efficiencies without negatively impacting the administration of the election. Over the past four years, we have found a number of opportunities to reduce costs while maintaining or even improving service to stakeholders. For example, we are introducing an option for voters to receive their voter information cards by text or email. This will not only reduce costs but will save paper and will provide better service to electors by getting voter information cards into their hands sooner and more reliably than paper VICs [voter information card] being sent through the mail.

Another example is the reduction or elimination of printed material that has previously been made available to various stakeholders. For example, in previous elections we produced 10 printed copies of the proclamation for every candidate, which cost Elections Saskatchewan almost \$100,000. The majority of these proclamations were never picked up by candidates, so we asked for and received a change to legislation that removed this requirement. Candidates are still able to ask for printed copies of the proclamation if they want one, but we are expecting to save almost the full \$100,000 for this cycle.

A final event cost that is not specific to the general election is \$250,000 to continue the implementation of our election management system. The EMS project will be put on hold from April to November to allow us to focus on the administration of the general election and then will pick up again in December. The focus will be on implementing functionality in a phased approach over the next two fiscal years with the goal of completing the project by October 2022, well in advance of the October 2024 general election. I'd be happy to answer questions on any of these figures that I mentioned or on appendix A following Michael's concluding remarks. Michael.

**Mr. Boda:** — Thank you. So, Mr. Chair, I would like to briefly move away from strictly looking at the FY [fiscal year] '20-21 numbers and offer an estimate of what we expect this province's 29th general election to cost in total over a four-year period. I

recognize that we are, of course, here to review only the costs of '20-21, but I believe these additional numbers provide better context than our year-over-year budgets.

As described on page 11 to 13 of the budget submission, this is our final year of the current election cycle which means that we can total our event-related spending from the past three years, our estimate for the coming year, as well as a small amount for election-related costs which are likely to sneak into the next fiscal year. We anticipate the total cost of Saskatchewan's 29th general election to be just over \$25 million. Now this is 9 per cent more than the cost of our last election held in 2016 which cost just over \$23 million. But for additional context, between 2011 and 2016 the cost of our general election rose 57 per cent as opposed to 9 per cent.

I recognize that it can be hard to absorb numbers and percentages verbally, so I'd encourage you to have a look at the graph on page 13 of our budget submission. And if you review that graph you'll see that traditionally the cost of each election has increased greatly, usually around 50 per cent. But for this election, that increase has dropped to 9 per cent. And if you include inflation and look at everything in 2020 dollars as the green line in the graph on page 13 shows, accounting for inflation, costs have nearly flatlined.

Mr. Chair, I believe this is a good news story. But I also recognize that \$25 million is a lot of money. Jennifer outlined a number of steps we have taken in recent years to try and restrain costs, and we would be happy to expand on those during the question-and-answer portion of the presentation if you wish. With all that said, I'd like to reiterate that as we have built our budgets these past several years, we have been mindful of costs and the province's overall economic circumstances, and we will continue to do so as we administer this election.

For clarity, I'm now transitioning away from the cost of the 29th general election in its entirety, back to the '20-21 fiscal year.

Elections Saskatchewan's budget request for '20-21 balances our ongoing commitment to provide the highest level of integrity alongside accessible electoral events while at the same time remaining mindful of costs and broader economic conditions. I would ask that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to government that the allocation of \$24,689,405 to Elections Saskatchewan be approved for the fiscal year '20-21.

Mr. Chair, before I conclude, I once again would like to thank the board members here for their ongoing support thus far this year and into the coming year. Of course it's a significant year for Elections Saskatchewan, but it's also a significant year for you. And please know that we are here to serve you, all of your colleagues, as well as every candidate for the election this fall.

With that, Mr. Chair, we'd be happy to transition to some questions. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Thank you very much, Mr. Boda, for your presentation. I would ask if any board members have questions. I recognize Mr. Weekes.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Boda. First I'd just like to, you know . . . Just from the previous

elections having advanced polls, the number of them, the timing of them has been an improvement, and constituents really appreciate that opportunity.

I've raised this with you informally, but having polling booths outside the constituency, have you given any thought to that? It's probably one of the things that come up most often that people . . . You know, before the boundary changes, you know, as the case in Biggar, is they can vote for years right in the town of Biggar, and then because of the boundary changes they have to drive 25, 30 minutes away. So any thought to changes there?

**Mr. Boda:** — So I'm guessing that you're talking about having polling locations outside the constituency as well that people can access outside the constituency.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Yes.

**Mr. Boda:** — So there's a balancing that's going on as we work with you as legislators to modernize this process. So of course we will follow legislation as it is currently, and that first and foremost is my concern. At the same time, we are working to modernize the system with you, and we've laid out three phases for that process. The three phases align with each of our electoral cycles.

As part of the modernization effort, and not in this particular cycle, we have talked about transitioning to a vote-anywhere model. And a vote-anywhere model will allow voters to, if they happen to be from Regina but they're working in Davidson, they could vote in Davidson and their vote would be counted in Regina. So that is one way that we would approach things in order to allow for increased access to the ballot. That of course is a longer term issue because we're trying to modernize the system, and that won't be a part of the process for this cycle.

There are other ways in which we are looking at particularly advance polls and how we can make it more effective, make them more accessible going forward. And during the last election, I had approved I believe it was three advance polls in which someone could vote outside of the . . . It was outside of the constituency, but there was a poll there because those who were in a rural area actually went to that town, which was outside the constituency, for their business. And we will be looking at that as a way of serving our voters moving forward, although I can't say exactly how many of those advance polls we will have. But that is one option that we have available to us. So that's extremely important, and I hope to be able to serve voters more effectively that way within the context of the current legislation.

Now we have spoken in the past, so I'll mention that there can often . . . I often hear a concern that voters have: they love to vote in the place that they've voted since 1925. And all I can say to that is that I understand that desire to do things consistently, to consistently be in the same place, and there's something good about that. The challenge is . . . There's a couple of things, but the principal issue is that the way the legislation is formed is that we can't necessarily vote in the same place each time. Those facilities aren't necessarily available for each electoral cycle.

So we have to look at availability, but we also have increased standards for voting locations, which are important. One of those is accessibility. Is it accessible to those who are disabled? And

this is something we are working very hard on to improve. In 2012 when I arrived as Chief Electoral Officer, Saskatchewan did not have a very good record on the accessibility front, and we've worked very hard to improve the level of accessibility right across the province.

And most of you will know that we worked through the last cycle very hard, working with our stakeholders to move forward in this regard, and we ultimately . . . We did receive an international award on that front through the Zero Project, and we were excited about receiving that award. But we are not resting on our laurels, and we're continuing to improve when it comes to accessibility this time as well. Does that answer your question, Mr. Weekes?

**Mr. Weekes:** — Yes. If I may, I've got another one or two.

**Mr. Boda:** — Absolutely.

**Mr. Weekes:** — As far as election day and throughout the election and the accusations of sign placements and all the sorts of things that come up during an election, how do you handle that? And you know, what kind of investigation is done during the election, that type of thing? And could you just elaborate on your role in that?

**Mr. Boda:** — It's a great question. Because I have to say, during the advance and election day period, that's probably one of the things we hear most about is the signs. And I'm going to let Jennifer answer that because Jennifer is the one who most often deals with the signs.

**Ms. Colin:** — Thank you. Yes, we do receive complaints about signage, about vehicle wraps being placed too closely to polling locations. Our approach first of all is to ensure that there actually has been a violation. So we do send people out with measuring tapes and measure that it is exactly less than the prescribed distance away. If it is in fact a violation, we do try to work with the individual involved, either through the campaign manager or through the candidate representative who is at the polling place. And if that's not possible, it gets escalated to the chief official agent of the party involved.

I can honestly say that any incident of that nature that has been raised with me, either during advanced voting or on election day, has been rectified almost immediately. Most often I do believe it is somebody who just hasn't taken the appropriate steps to ensure that it is the distance away. But every once in a while we do have somebody who tries to sneak something in, and then we do deal with that and it gets removed or the vehicle gets moved.

[09:15]

**Mr. Boda:** — I will also add that over the course of the entire cycle, but particularly during that advance and voting period, we are working very closely with the chief official agents of the parties. And they know that we're doing our best to regulate the process according to legislation.

We also know — all of us know — that we're essentially working with volunteers across the province, whether that's our election officials who are paid, but they are essentially like volunteers. And you of course, as political party folks, are working with volunteers. And so we're working together to produce the best

process possible. And so we do speak on a regular basis with your chief official agent. They have speed-dial to my number, to Jennifer's number, and we try to facilitate a quick and speedy result for you.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Ms. Beck.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, and thank you, Dr. Boda and to your officials for the presentation. The question I wanted to ask about was regarding cybersecurity and your level of confidence going into this election. Of course you mentioned, you spoke very eloquently about the importance of trust and integrity of the system to voters and increasing concerns and maybe scrutiny by voters of the system. And I also appreciate, you know, the level of constraint and efficiencies that you have found. Within those efficiencies, I'm just looking for a comment about your level of confidence or about our risk with regard to outside actors, cybersecurity for the upcoming election.

**Mr. Boda:** — It's a good question, and I guess I'd begin by saying that I have been concerned for some time about our state of readiness when it comes to cybersecurity. Most of you will know that before I came back to Saskatchewan, I worked internationally for a couple of decades. And fundamentally I'm keenly aware that there are actors around the world who do not agree with our way of life. They do not agree with the process that we follow. They do not believe with our democratic traditions in Canada and here in Saskatchewan. And so I am keenly aware that we need to be prepared for outside actors to try to influence the process.

Now cybersecurity involves a couple of areas. One is a very technical side, and even though we're here in the Canadian midwest, we're accessible to anyone around the world. So there's the technical side. There's the computers, etc. that are involved.

The other side has to do with how news is influenced, and it's called fake news, but misinformation. So that's the other side that we're concerned about. So to give you that context and then to turn back to what we have been considering, first of all I'm going to be a minimalist on this front in a public forum when it comes to how we are preparing in this regard. That said, I would be more than happy to give you a private briefing on our preparatory work.

Basically we have on the technical side, we have assessed our circumstances very closely, focusing on Saskatchewan alone. But most of you may not know, but we held a national round table here in Regina with our colleagues from across the country to discuss this very topic and to determine what is the most effective way to move forward in this phase. Our other colleagues have been addressing this problem as they've gone through general elections as well. So whether it's New Brunswick, whether it's Ontario, whether it's Canada, we are focused on this topic.

So we have conducted an assessment from a technical standpoint of our readiness and are looking at ways that we can improve. That's on the one issue. The other is we're working with our colleagues. And the other is that we are planning for any potential event that could arise.



And so those are sort of the three areas. But I can tell you that we are being proactive. At the same time we're keeping in mind — well we have to keep in mind — that we are a medium-sized election management body in this country. And so while Elections Canada has a very large budget on this front, we do not. And so we are trying to do what is appropriate for a medium-sized election management body while gaining from the experience of other elections managers across the country who have gone through this.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you for that and for that assurance. The other question that I had was around voter turnout and you mentioned this being an ongoing process of evaluating some of the measures that you had taken to ensure accessibility. That said, I know in the last election there were some polls that had very, very low voter turnout. And I'm just wondering, some of the conversations or the investigation that you might have had into why that was the case, and some of the measures that we'll be seeing in this election to ensure or encourage increased voter turnout in some of those polls where we saw, you know, I can't remember the number off the top of my head, but some extremely low voter turnout polls.

**Mr. Boda:** — I believe the ghost of Mr. Forbes is in the room. Mr. Forbes has asked that question on a number of occasions. And I think stepping back to the approach that I've taken on voter turnout over the years, it has been that I believe that I'm responsible for voter turnout with all of you, that this is not just a Chief Electoral Officer issue in terms of the turnout. It is working together with our political parties, with the media, with civil society. And I've written a fair amount on that topic and believe strongly that we have to work together. And I have been trying to do my part as well.

That said, my focus is very much on the reduction of barriers across the province. And you've got that if you've read the submission. You've heard my comments this morning, so you know that barriers are an extremely important issue. So in that regard what we are trying to do is basically improve accessibility — now when I say that, I don't say that in the traditional sense — accessibility for all voters within a constituency. And we're looking at the big picture to say, how can people access the polling location? Number one. And then number two, once they get there, is it an accessible location? And so we're trying to make this consistent across our constituencies.

In this regard I think what you're going to find is that in some polling locations there's going to be a very low turnout. And I'm thinking particularly as we try to improve in the rural areas where polling locations will be available and there may not be that many people located in that region. In that area of the constituency there may be a lower turnout at that point. Now in the longer run, what we're trying to do is expand advance polling so that we can also . . . We'll have another look in the next cycle at election-day polls, because we have many, many election-day polls but we have fewer advance polls. And what's happening is there's an evening-out going on. More and more people are voting during the advance period.

But we're also trying to provide a diversity of opportunities to vote. So I went through a lot of those that are available, and I think we would look at other ways that we can allow people to vote, such as postal balloting and all these sorts of things. So in

that regard you may find that some of these polling locations are less used during this cycle, but there is greater accessibility to the ballots in that regard.

Now specifically with respect to Mr. Forbes's question — I guess it's your question now — is that we had worked through . . . we had determined that there wasn't any malfeasance in that regard and that we did not find any as we looked at it. We tried to understand it more meaningfully. And again I'm more than happy off-line to go through that process again with either yourself or Mr. Forbes.

**Ms. Beck:** — I certainly appreciate the comments that this is a larger issue than . . . I mean accessibility is one aspect. Larger political culture and encouraging people to come out to the polls is another part of that.

I appreciate the answer, thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — For the record, I'd just like to indicate that Ms. Sproule has joined us. Welcome.

Are there any other questions for Mr. Boda? Seeing none, I'd like to thank you and your staff for making your presentation and I think for now the board will discuss your budget ask later on this day, and we will move on to item no. 10, I believe. So thank you very much.

#### **Ombudsman Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner**

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — The review of the '20-21 budget for the Office of the Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. I'd ask Mary McFadyen, the Ombudsman, to come forward, which I see she has, and ask her to introduce any officials that she has with her and make her presentation. Welcome.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Thank you very much. Good morning, Mr. Chair, members of the board. I have Andrea Smandych with me today. She's our manager of administration. While I felt I had a pretty busy year this year, it was nothing compared to Andrea's year. And I cannot thank her enough for all of her work and her assistance over the past year.

So we're both pleased to be here today to discuss the '20-21 budget submission for the Office of the Provincial Ombudsman and the Office of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. As we try to do every year, we've been very thoughtful in preparing our submission. And while we operate outside of the executive government, we guide ourselves by the same direction that it has received, recognizing the government's goal to have a balanced budget in '20-21.

As Ombudsman our role is to assist the Legislative Assembly to ensure that the executive government entities such as ministries, agencies, local governments are carrying out their duties that are given to them under legislation as was intended by the lawmakers and in a way that is fair and reasonable and according to law.

We receive complaints from the public who feel they've been treated unfairly by an administrative process, action, decision, omission of a provincial government organization or a municipal

entity, or that a municipal council member contravened the code of ethics or had a conflict of interest in a matter before council and did not take steps to deal with it.

We try to refer or resolve those complaints as a first step, if that is possible. If we decide to formally investigate a complaint, we make recommendations to the public body aimed at improving its decision-making processes and improving public service program delivery.

As Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, we are mandated under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* to give advice and to receive and investigate disclosures of wrongdoing and complaints of reprisal from provincial public servants. The goal of this legislation is to protect public servants if they come forward with information of a wrongdoing occurring in the workplace. As an officer of the Legislative Assembly we operate independently and at arm's length from the provincial and municipal government entities that fall under our mandate.

We provided details in our submission of our past year's accomplishments and statistics under both mandates. Our complaints on the ombudsman's side remained steady in 2019. On the public interest disclosure side, we saw an increase in our numbers compared to 2018.

Besides dealing with complaints under both our mandates, we also did quite a bit of outreach to the public and to provincial authorities, to municipalities, and to public servants. We feel it's important for the public to know about our office and that they can come to us free of charge if they feel they've not been treated fairly when dealing with a provincial government entity or a local government.

In 2019 we travelled again to La Loche, also to Ile-a-la-Crosse and Buffalo Narrows. We had information sessions for the public and set up temporary offices to meet directly with citizens who wished to talk to someone from our office about any difficulties they were having when receiving government services.

[09:30]

We also continued to focus on municipalities. We travelled throughout Saskatchewan meeting with municipal councils and administrators. We talked about our role, about council members' obligations under provincial legislation to act in the best interests of their communities, and how to take steps to ensure that they are following the conflict-of-interest rules.

In particular this year, we focused on helping municipalities deal with complaints they receive about council member conduct. As they are required to do under legislation, they are to have a process in place to handle these complaints themselves. Our goal is to help them address these complaints in a way that is procedurally fair for the complainant, but also procedurally fair for the council member complained about. In my opinion, since we received jurisdiction over municipalities in late 2015, we've done a lot of work to help them improve how they carry out their role, and this has increased accountability and transparency within the municipal sector and helped them to serve the public better.

Our big accomplishment this year was relocating our Regina

office to new space. It is much better for serving the public than our old location where we had been for 25 years, and I truly thank Andrea for all her work in overseeing that project. All of our activities and progress, and our investigations and recommendations made in 2019, will be reported out in our annual reports which will be tabled with the Legislative Assembly in April.

So as I mentioned earlier, in 2019 we did have an increase in the number of complaints we received under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act* mandate. We do expect this figure will probably increase even more in 2020. On December the 12th of last year, the regulations were amended to add the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to the list of bodies that fall under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*. This means that the 40,000-plus employees of those two bodies now have the right to seek advice and to make disclosures of wrongdoing or a complaint of reprisal to our office.

We are getting prepared for these inquiries and complaints, and at this time we're not requesting any additional funding to deal with this increase and we will attempt to handle any growth in our workload within our appropriation. And we expect that we can do so if our appropriation is consistent with last fiscal year. We are only requesting an increase in our funding for '20-21 to cover our increased wage costs going forward as of April the 1st.

Therefore, for the upcoming '20-21 fiscal year, we're requesting the amount as set out in our submission starting at page 15. We feel it will support our existing operations under both mandates and any anticipated growth we may have this year as a result of the addition of the Health Authority and the Cancer Agency to our PID [public interest disclosure] mandate.

Before I close, on a personal note I just want to say that I was pleased to assist the board and the legislature by acting in the position of Advocate for Children and Youth for a brief time period in 2019. It was a pleasure for me to get to know the advocate's staff a little better and to help them work on their cases, and I hope I helped them even a little bit to move forward. With that, I am done. I am happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Thank you, Ms. McFadyen. Questions? Mr. Merriman.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. First off I want to say thank you very much for taking a dual role for the majority of last year. Very much appreciated, and I know the board appreciated it as well as the Assembly. As well as you had a move, and it seems like you've had an extremely busy year. And, Andrea, I want to thank you for your role as well, being able to make sure that both offices were functioning in a very efficient way.

My only question that I have is on the salary increments. There's two salary increments. One is an economic of 2 per cent, I believe, and then there's, within the CBA [collective bargaining agreement], a 4 per cent. Now I'm going to ask the question of the other ones as well because some of them have built this in and some of the officers have this as an extra. I assume this is an extra on your last page of submission because you're up about \$100,000 on salaries on the classification by type. And also on

the salaries you're up by, I think, about \$6,000. So I'm just wondering if you could explain, is it consistent? Have you done this in the past with asking extra for the increases of 4 per cent and 2 per cent?

**Ms. McFadyen:** — I would say some years we have. We've tried to be consistent with what other officers are doing. What we followed is what has come out of the collective bargaining process and so these are the figures that they've agreed on. So that's what we've tried to follow. We feel we can absorb all the increases that are going to be retroactive so we're asking for the amount going forward.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Are there any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your presentation.

### **Conflict of Interest Commissioner Registrar of Lobbyists**

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — We'll move on to item no. 11, the budget for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and office of the lobbyists registrar. I'd like to ask the officials for that office to come forward. We have Sandra Arberry, deputy conflict of interest commissioner, sitting in for the commissioner, Ron Barclay, who is unavailable. So I'd ask you to make your presentation. And I see you have no officials with you so the floor is yours.

**Ms. Arberry:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and members of the Board of Internal Economy. Before I get into the substance of our '20-21 budget, Mr. Barclay had asked me to share a personal message with the board in his absence. So:

I regret not being able to attend the meeting of the Board of Internal Economy to approve my '20-21 budget. My wife and I are holidaying in Palm Springs, and due to Byrna's mobility problems, I did not want to leave her alone while I returned for this meeting.

However, here I am. I'll present on his behalf. Thank you.

Before the budget is introduced, I wish to acknowledge the major assistance I receive from Cindy Hingley and her staff at the Legislative Assembly Service for the contributions and assistance in all financial matters. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance I have received from Darcy Hislop and his staff. They have been invaluable.

It is an honour and a privilege to submit my final budget as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists for the province of Saskatchewan. It has been a distinct pleasure to serve the members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I thoroughly enjoyed my relationship with the members, and I found my experience as Conflict of Interest Commissioner challenging and rewarding.

The public has always had the expectation that those in public service will act ethically and with integrity. In my experience, the members who attain high office do so for the right and honourable reasons. They are men and women of

integrity and conscience, and all are committed to serving their constituents. I wish to acknowledge that throughout my term the members on both sides of the House on all occasions were supportive of my independence, and it is deeply appreciated.

So that was from Mr. Barclay, and now we'll move to the budget. Thank you.

So off the top we are not requesting funds for any new or expanded services at this time. Indeed with the exception of salary dollars, our operating expenses have actually decreased. So you'll see a lot of what I'm about to say through the substance of our proposal. I'm going to reiterate some of it.

The salary piece. This section has the most impact on our '20-21 budget. There is an increase of approximately 9.8 per cent over last year due to the hiring of a new commissioner, an in-range progression, as well as a COLA [cost of living adjustment] increase for the deputy registrar. However, even this increase may not come to fruition if the new commissioner only works 90 per cent of the time.

We have created two budgets. The one you have in front of you is using figures which we guesstimate that the new commissioner will work 100 per cent of the time. The budget increase would be for that scenario. If it's not, then we have another scenario we can talk about if you prefer.

Contractual services. There was a slight decrease of 2,480 due to a reduction in our use of general contractors. If you add in the savings of 9,683 found in supplies and services, the actual decrease attributable to this column is 11,000.

Communications. We also have a decrease of \$10,000, and this is because last year we hosted Mr. Barclay's conflict-of-interest colleagues at the annual conference. We had a subsequent increase in our budget last year to cover the expenses which we do not have this year.

Travel and business. This is the only column that you'll see an increase aside from the salary dollars. And it's due to the attendance at an additional conference, which is the public sector ethics being held in Toronto, which Mr. Barclay thinks would be useful for the new commissioner to attend as part of professional development and to get an initial understanding of some of the issues he or she may be dealing with. Additional fees in this column are a result of travel to this year's conflict-of-interest conference in Yellowknife which we did not have to do last year.

Equipment and assets. There is a small increase in the event that the new commissioner would like to upgrade personal computers or furniture.

In terms of actuals, the final budget request for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists, as you will see, is \$581,856. Again I'd just like to reiterate that if the new commissioner works at 90 per cent, like Mr. Barclay currently does, the overall budget would actually be decreased to \$551,742, which is compared to 556,930 that we asked for last year. So a slight overall savings of 5,188.

So we've made every attempt to reduce our administrative and

operating costs in order to cover, as much as possible, the fairly significant increase in salaries due the hiring of the new commissioner. However, as I mentioned, the salaries are a guesstimate and are based on a number of factors.

First, the start date for the new commissioner. Mr. Barclay's term ends April 30th. In this budget we have planned for the commissioner to start May 1st. If there is a one-month overlay between Mr. Barclay and his successor, then of course that budget number will be slightly higher, but we have prepared the budget that the new commissioner would start after Mr. Barclay's term is over. Second, again what percentage of time the new commissioner might work and at what rate. So the rate we worked with was the one provided to us by financial services, which is what all independent officers start at.

Therefore, even though the personal expenses have risen by 9.8 per cent overall, our budget for this year has only increased by 4.5 per cent because we have found those savings in other areas to cover some of those costs. So those offset the costs attributable to the hiring of the new commissioner and the in-range salary progression.

So I therefore respectfully request that the board of management approve our budget. If you have any questions I'd be happy to entertain those on behalf of Mr. Barclay.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Thank you for that presentation. Questions? Ms. Sproule.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Just one question. This may be reported elsewhere, but I'm just wondering are there any numbers in terms of the Registrar of Lobbyists in terms of how many people are registering and how the workload is impacted by that?

**Ms. Arberry:** — In the past we have provided those numbers. This year we did not. I can tell you that they're fairly consistent though. Our number of registered lobbyists, as of Friday, are about 642 registered lobbyists. The majority of those are actually in-house lobbyists as compared to consultant lobbyists.

Those, however, will be impacted this year with the change in the legislation that we've asked for and that we understand has been tabled. I cannot tell you what that impact will be. Likely we will see a fairly large impact simply because, as I mentioned earlier, the number of in-house lobbyists exceeds the number of consultant lobbyists. And with this change in legislation, we are going to be seeing a reduction in the number of free lobbying hours. So our guess is that we'll see an increase in in-house lobbyists registered.

**Ms. Sproule:** — And how will that affect your workload, I guess?

**Ms. Arberry:** — It won't. We'll be able to manage that internally, no problem.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your presentation.

We're moving right along. We don't have to go to a break just yet.

## Information and Privacy Commissioner

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — On to item no. 12, the budget for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I'd ask the commissioner and his staff to come forward and make their presentation. I'd like to call upon Commissioner Ron Kruzeniski. He comes from the great community of Ituna which happens to be located in Last Mountain-Touchwood, and I just thought I'd like to recognize that. And I'll ask him to introduce his officials and make his presentation.

[09:45]

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning to you and to members of the board. With me today is Diane Aldridge who is director of compliance and responsible for reviews and investigations. Also with me is Pam Scott, the director of operations and responsible for preparing the budget estimates that you have in front of you today.

My office is requesting a budget increase of \$392,000, which I've taken very seriously. It is mainly proposing an increase in staff of two analysts and one early resolution officer. In the past we have requested staff increases from this board, and I do thank the board for accommodating us and approving those increases. Each time I've asked for an increase I thought it would help and our performance would stay level or improve. But as I want to talk about this morning, our demands have increased and, in a sense, our performance has not been able to keep up.

So I would like to review what is happening. And I think the story as to what's happening in our office is told on pages 8 and 9 of our budget estimate, if members wish to refer to those particular pages. It shows up in the charts starting at page 8.

The first chart there is the number of files opened per calendar year. And in 2019 we opened 403 files; that's basically a 34 per cent increase over the previous year. And if you look at the numbers since I was appointed in 2014, the number of files opened has basically doubled plus a little bit. And to some extent that tells the whole story. I will get into what I think some of the reasons are. But to just follow that through, the next chart on page 8 shows the active case files that are open at the end of the year, and in 2019 it was 225. And if you go down, you can see that we had fewer and fewer files opened. If you look up, the reverse effect occurs. We're not closing them as quickly as we would like. Put in other words, we are getting behind.

If we turn to page 9 and look at the chart there, it's the average files per analyst. In 2019 we'd gone up to 32 files as the average. Now this is the average, which may mean some might have a few less or some will have more, and we do have some who have in the area of 40 files. And if you look at 2015 we had seven files per analyst. Now we have a benchmark that every analyst should have about 15 files on the go at any one time. You may ask why, and the reason is that from the time of opening, receiving the documents from the public body, doing the analysis, and issuing a report, it's about 15 files per analyst allows them to get it done in a reasonable amount of time.

But you can see that we've progressively increased to more files, and basically we've gone from having seven files per analyst at one time, when we were really getting to the files quickly, to 32.

So we're now basically operating at double what I think is a reasonable benchmark.

The next charts on page 9 show the average response times. And in what we do, we have files where people request an access for records either from a government ministry, or 744 municipalities, or the Sask Health Authority, school boards, universities. And there in 2019 we were taking 195 days from the beginning of a file to when we issued the report. That's basically six and a half months. And if you go down you'll see that in 2016 we were at about 81 days. So again we're getting behind and it's just taking us longer to close files.

We have a target, and it showed up in various forms in our annual report, that we should get a file out in 130 days. What is that? That's about four months. And you say, why four months? Well just the processes of giving people time to respond to us, getting draft reports, getting final reports. You know, 130 days or four months is what we think good performance or reasonable performance. We're clearly not there; we're more at six and a half months.

In reports that come to my desk after analysts have worked on them and Diane has worked on them, I'm signing things that basically started sometimes over a year ago. And really that concerns me a lot, but it is reflected in what's happening in our office and what these charts show.

The next chart, on page 9, shows the average response time for an investigation. So we have other situations where a breach occurs and somebody complains to us or the public body notifies us. It's now taken us 226 days to deal with that and led to closing the file or a report. So that's about 7.5 months. And you can see in 2017 we were doing it in 108 days. In 2016 we were doing it in 74 days. So we've gone from 74 days to 226 days. Again, in my mind that's just not performance.

There's a saying that I heard from another commissioner: if you're not timely, you're not relevant. And I'm getting really concerned about that. Now you might ask, why is all of this occurring? And I first must say I attended a meeting of commissioners last September, and almost all of them across the country were experiencing the same sort of thing. In Alberta they've asked and I believe they've received five additional staff. In the Northwest Territories, she has asked for three additional staff.

So it's having an impact in various places. My theory as to why . . . And I guess it's just my theory. It's difficult to prove, but it is showing in the fact that we had 403 files last year. I believe it starts to some extent with Edward Snowden and his exposure of governments with the United States government and his flight to Hong Kong and then flight to Russia. Regardless what you think of the issue itself, the publicity that he received — and still receives — has certainly created a great deal of awareness.

Another example is Facebook and Cambridge Analytica. Now Facebook is a US [United States] company — impact on the US election, impact on Brexit — but Cambridge Analytica was a Canadian company. And the amount of headlines surrounding those issues and breaches, etc., was considerable. Another one was the San Bernardino shooting in California. Again not in our country, but when the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] was

taking Apple to court asking them to open up their iPhone, the headlines around the world were amazing. And I even saw some headlines just a week or two ago sort of on the same issue. That debate is going on.

There's been other breaches such as Equifax. Now I believe it impacted 145 million. You could say many were in a different country, but 8,000 of those were in Canada. Generated lots of headlines.

More recently we have Desjardins, the credit union in Quebec — 2.7 million breaches of, I'm going to say, basically mainly Canadians.

Getting a bit closer to home, we have issues like the village of Pinehouse where my office issued 16 reports. And I can assure you, issuing 16 reports takes a lot of time. And in fact we have two more on the go. We're waiting now for Justice Vancise's report which has been submitted to the ministry. The minister has, I understand, committed to release it. And again whatever you think about the issues involved, the publicity surrounding it has been considerable.

Another example is Capital One — 6 million individuals in Canada affected by that breach and many, many more affected by the breach in the United States. But you can see that the breaches are coming closer to home.

LifeLabs, which is a breach that really just got a lot of publicity in December — 15 million Canadians, but bringing it closer to home, 93,000 in Saskatchewan. That investigation is going on by the Ontario commissioner, the BC [British Columbia] commissioner, and our office. And we're trying to coordinate it because they certainly have some expertise that we don't have. I was surprised one night when I was watching the national news and the first story on the CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] national news was about LifeLabs.

And most recently just in January, in Saskatchewan we have ransomware and eHealth. And announcements on January 5th or 6th, announcement my office doing an investigation after eHealth does some of its preliminary work. Again the technical side, but a real concern was Saskatchewan residents' health information breached or not? That's a key question but becomes technical when you're dealing with servers, firewalls, and many other things.

So regardless of what one thinks about the issue, all of these have resulted in significant media attention. And media attention creates awareness among the citizens and, I would suggest, a greater concern about people's individual privacy. And they are becoming more aware of their rights and they're becoming aware of the risks of identity theft.

When I read the headlines and hear about the breaches and the amount of identities that are held or available on the dark web, I mean I think it is something that all of us need to be concerned about. And if you hear about the frustrations of a person if they have to restore their identity or their credentials after they've been stolen and misused in credit card fraud or whatever, I think people are becoming a lot more aware. And thus they ask more questions of government, whether it's municipal, whether it's universities, whether it's the health care system, or whether it's

government ministries.

So frankly in pondering, asking for a higher increase than asked for in the past number of years, my conclusion was that if I don't ask for a budget increase that would allow a staff increase, we're just never going to keep up to what's coming. And we'd end up producing our reports and it'd be slower and slower. And back to that quotation of a fellow commissioner, if you're not timely, you're not relevant.

So what I'm mainly asking for, Mr. Chair and board members, is budgetary funds that will allow for two additional analysts, one early resolution officer. Related to that is rental increases which go through Central Services and some renovation costs. The space is there that could be used, but it would need some renovation to be used by us.

[10:00]

So in summary, for 2020-2021 we're asking for budget approval of 2.316 million, an increase of 390,000. The breakdown of that increase is on page 16. It does cover the things of staff increases in our office. We follow very carefully what executive government does with its out-of-scope staff. In terms of performance increases, again we follow what the Public Service Commission provides us in terms of guidelines, in terms of performance. But looking at it, two analysts would cost us \$164,000. One early resolution officer would cost us \$68,000. That totals a salary increase of 232,000. So basically the breakdown of the request is on page 16, and I do ask that the board consider it under these circumstances with the increased pressure that is being placed on our office at this time.

So in conclusion, we do have some challenges. We do have a problem and we are getting behind. And we don't think that's good for the citizens of the province or any of us. I certainly thank you for listening to me this morning and pleased to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Thank you, Mr. Kruzeniski. Members, questions? Ms. Sproule.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Commissioner. And I just want to understand a little bit more the nature of the work that your office does. This is my first time sitting at this table. And when you talk about reviews and investigations, if I'm correct, reviews are reviews of freedom of information requests. Or is that investigations? I want to make sure I understand the difference.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Okay. So when I use the word "review," basically a citizen asks the city of Regina for records and the city of Regina provides some of the records but refuses to provide the rest, and gives the citizen reasons why. There's a series of exemptions that a ministry or a city or town have. The citizen says, I don't agree with that, basically appeals to our office, and we do a review.

In doing a review we obtain a copy of the records that are not being released. We get a submission from in this case the city of Regina saying, we refuse to release the documents for this reason. And they'll quote a section number and give some reasons and quote some court cases. We do a draft report. We send it to the

public body, ask for any factual errors, and then release it as a final report. At that point the head of the city, which would be the mayor or the city manager — probably the city manager on the mayor's behalf — would say, we've received the recommendations of the commissioner to release or not release and we are going to comply with those recommendations or not comply with those recommendations. The applicant or citizen at that point can say, I still disagree with the decision of the head and can appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench. So that's one of the streams.

The other stream is a breach occurs — we'll pick on the city of Saskatoon this time — and you know, 1,000 individuals' personal information, their Visa card numbers or their bank account numbers are disclosed. One, two, or three of those citizens complain to our office. We do an investigation to determine, number one, what was the root cause of this breach. Was it a staff error? Was it a rogue staff member?

But mainly when a breach occurs, you know, to quote a prairie expression, the horse is out of the barn door. So our job becomes, how did they handle this breach to, number one, to sort of stop the breach, number one, retrieve the information if they could, and take corrective action inside their organization? We look to their investigation report — in this case done by the organization, which would be the city of Saskatoon — to see if they've uncovered all the difficulties that occurred. And most important is, what might they do in the future?

One thing we almost universally recommend is that they have mandatory privacy training for staff every year. When a breach occurs, do they have a policy to say, here's the steps we'll take immediately to rectify this breach? And again the head of that organization can say, we agree with the recommendations you've given, Mr. Commissioner, and we will follow them, or we will follow three out of five but we're not going to follow the last two. And at that point, you know, sort of our part is over and, depending on the circumstances, the citizen could take it to court. But I think most of the court applications or appeals happen on the access side.

So that's the main things that we do on basically all of those 403 files that came in last year.

**Ms. Sproule:** — I thank you for that. And so can I ask a couple more? In terms of those 403 files, which are reviews and which are investigations?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I have to turn to one of my colleagues to see if they have that breakdown. So out of that 403, 191 are reviews of people requesting records and not getting all that they expected. The balance would be investigations and a few of them would be consultations. We have organizations that say, we're planning to do this and here's our new privacy policy or here's our new plan to do that — would you please comment on it? So you could say about half are reviews. The rest are investigations and consultations.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Okay. So my interest is more on the review side because that's my contact with your office in most cases because we are looking . . . As the loyal opposition, we often do file a freedom of information request. And I'm just wondering if you could speak to those I guess 191 reviews. And maybe generally

in terms of requests, do you find that the requests are more and more complex? Like do you do a complexity analysis of files as well? Are they more complex? Are they less complex as the years go by?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — A couple of thoughts on that. One is I think they are becoming more complex. If you look at it, this legislation has been place since 1992, '93. You know, it is due for a good update in due course. But over those 25, 27 years, the easy issues have been worked out and those that are in ministries or local government, you know, are trained and are pretty knowledgeable on what will go and what won't go, sort of thing.

So as legislation matures, I think it does become a little more technical, a little more complex, and therefore more complicated. And a particular ministry may say, no, no, Commissioner, we do not interpret the legislation the same way you do. And we sort of run into, you know, sort of warring legal opinions on some particular issue. So I think that is there. And from time to time, which surprises me, when Diane Aldridge comes into my office and says, I've never heard of this before. And she's been with the office at least 16 years. So we have some new issues and just by logic they're probably more complex.

The other difference is there are issues which are pretty straightforward issues, and then there are issues that become hot issues, whether it starts in the media or it starts with the opposition or it starts in question period or however it might start. And the hot issues, I know as soon as Diane Aldridge comes into my office and says, here's one, it'll be more complicated. It'll be more time-consuming. It'll take more energy on our part. It probably involves dealing with more lawyers. I don't have an aversion with dealing with lawyers, but at the same time it probably just slows down the whole process and takes more time.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you. In terms of the reviews, can you sort of give us a breakdown of the types of people? Like, do you categorize who asks for reviews? Like, how much is the official opposition? Is that 20 per cent or 10 per cent of your reviews, or is it spread out? You know, who is asking for reviews, I guess?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I'm not sure we have those statistics here, but if not we can . . . We don't have those. I can certainly send those to the Chair of the board and ask the Chair to give it to all board members. And probably just off the top of my head, because of Pinehouse and a couple other municipalities, we're sensing sort of increased awareness in municipalities. And I certainly expect in the coming year that we'll see an increase in requests that centre around municipalities, but that's just off the top of my head. I can certainly provide that to the Chair and the board.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, and I would let that be reflected in the minutes that you will provide that information. And of the 200-odd investigations, you indicated there's a number of notorious stories in the news that are causing probably increased awareness of the availability of these types of requests, the request for an investigation. Has that number jumped up significantly? Again, we have your total number of files, but has the investigations jumped up since 2013, or is that more an increase in reviews? I can't tell from your bar graph.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — We might be able to provide you with some

statistics on that but, Diane, any off-the-top reaction to that?

**Ms. Aldridge:** — I think there's a general increase in the number of investigations over the years. And the types that we're seeing are very predictable in a lot of cases. Because there's still the errant faxes. There's still the mailouts going astray. There's still emails that people are not taking due care in order to make sure they're going to the right place. But we're also seeing increases in things like employee snooping, and then some of these malware attacks, which can of course impact thousands if not more people.

And so, you know, I think just in terms of the proactive reporting, that's occurring as well. That's an increase and that's why we are seeing more of these investigation files land on our desk, because it's something that our office promotes. But also there is that new mandatory breach reporting requirement since January 1 of 2018 for public bodies — that's our government institutions and local authorities — to report to the affected individual if they believe the incident creates a real risk of significant harm.

**Ms. Sproule:** — In terms of agencies asking for extensions of time to complete a request of information, freedom of information, do you track how many extensions of time are requested or multiple extensions of time? Like, what's your sense on how those are being used by agencies?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — A couple of comments. We're starting to track that now, and I think we made some adjustments to our computer system where we could track it. Certainly in our reports where it's past the 30 days or 60 days, we will point it out even though there are other issues. Occasionally we just have reports that say people have missed the deadline of 30 days or the extended one of 60 days if they extend. But usually we are also focusing on some other issue. You know, say a public body after 65 days provides some of the documents but claims exemptions on others. Number one, they're late. But number two, we need to also focus in on the exemptions that they've actually claimed, to see if we think they're valid or not.

[10:15]

**Ms. Aldridge:** — Ron, I can actually add to that. So every year the Ministry of Justice puts out its annual reports on freedom of information, protection of privacy stats when it comes to reviews. Now this is specifically on government institutions. It does not include local authorities or trustee organizations. It doesn't deal with privacy but it does deal with performance when it comes to processing FOIP [freedom of information and protection of privacy] requests. And specifically on page 10 of the annual report from last year, there is a specific section that speaks to those exact numbers in terms of processed within 30 days or processed within 31 to 60 days or processed in more than 60 days. So granular detail for you there.

**Ms. Sproule:** — And that makes sense. Thank you for pointing that out. I would like to see the trend but that would just mean going back to previous annual reports and finding it along that way. All right, I think that's it for me, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Sure. Thank you very much,

Commissioner, for the presentation — it's much appreciated — and for highlighting and pointing out the challenges and pressures that your office is facing. I just have kind of a short question, and that's in terms of the three additional term positions being requested. What would be your priority list in terms of the three? How would you put those? Would the analyst be first or would the early resolution officer be first? Just for our information and not to prejudge any discussion afterwards.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Well that's a difficult question for me to answer, and I'll try to. The early resolution officer starts off by, you know, it's either an email or a phone call and then working with the citizen that has the concern, and begins gathering the documents to get the file to a point where the analyst can begin to do some of the analysis. So the 403 files, all those 403 would have started with an early resolution officer. And a key thing that we want our early resolution officer to do is explore the possibility of getting a settlement. You know, can the citizen clarify what they want? Can they reduce the request from 1,000 pages down to 200 and still get what they want? Can we press the public body to say, your first reaction might have been to withhold X amount of records but frankly, take a look at this section or this case and that should be covered? So they're really an integral part of it.

Your question said which was priority. I'd probably have to sort of cut it in half and, you know, do a bit of an early resolution officer part time and part of an analyst part time, which would make it rather awkward. But you know, I have to defer to the board on your decisions on this.

You know, in thinking about it, I kind of said, I don't know where the coming year will go; I'm going to ask for term positions. That allows me and requires me next January to report to all of you to say, you know, here's our performance in this year. I'll probably provide you the same charts that are on pages 8 and 9. And have the three additional staff made a difference? It's very tempting to request of you full-time positions. It saves me having to come back and explain that it occurred.

So I don't know what next year will be. If you ask me to look in my crystal ball, I expect it will be around that 400 range again. And if our performance is exactly what you have in front of you, probably asking that we make those positions full time. But the purpose of the term is to say we're focusing on April 1st till next March, and we don't know where we'll be. But we certainly are behind now and the term positions will help us hopefully sort that out. And we'll report back to you next January or December saying here's how our year has gone so far.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Mr. Weekes.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Kruzeniski, for your report. My question is about the relationship between an MLA office and the minister's office. You know, we get lots of emails, letters, and people walking into the office with their concerns. Probably some we handle at the time, but in many cases we send it on to the minister's office and then what the minister's office does with it is really up to them. But it never leaves the ministry or a government agency. So my question is concerning consent forms. Could you just clarify the use of consent forms from the position of an MLA's office dealing with a minister's office?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I appreciate the difficult issue and particularly, you know, for the constituency assistants out there. The abundantly safe thing to do each time is to get some form of consent. And we've got some resources on our website that sort of talks about the consent in different situations that occur. If the fill-in-the-blanks form of consent can't be used because the person is 300 miles away — has no email, has no fax — then I would certainly get a verbal consent and note it down on the notes that you make.

And there's some other things, depending on how complicated the situation is, to basically say, you know what? This is complicated. You need to talk to somebody in the Ministry of Highways or whatever. And you know, you can call the minister or maybe you call the deputy or maybe you call someone in the region that can deal with their problem. So what you have been able to do is side-step to some extent having to collect a lot of information and pass on.

Another way is, you know, if it comes in an email, you say I would like to refer this to the Ministry of Highways because they will give you a much better answer. And you get that email consent — yes, please do it. Again if it's on the telephone and nothing else works, you know, a verbal consent can assist.

And I appreciate a constituency assistant has to make those decisions on the run, but an abundantly cautious approach is some form of consent or getting the person to phone directly to the ministry or to the official to lay out all the facts of personal health information and, you know, personal stuff.

And certainly, the other side of that is . . . and Mr. Boda talked a lot about an election. And in elections I wish all of you win, but in case you don't, put a plan in place to destroy that personal information that's housed in your constituency offices and sort of develop a plan to do that in an orderly . . . But I repeat, good luck to all of you in Mr. Boda's process coming up.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Ms. Beck.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Mr. Kruzeniski, for your report. I know that you mentioned you don't have a crystal ball, but I am going to ask you to attempt to conjure it a little bit with regard to your projections for next year.

I think you briefly mentioned you were expecting somewhere around the number of 400 again next year. In addition you have a number of files still open at the end of the year. And in the report, you outlined a number of reasons to perhaps believe that you might see an increase in the number of cases. I guess I'm just looking at confirmation that you're expecting at least the same number or an increased number of cases over the next year.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Yes. I don't necessarily have the best crystal ball but, you know . . . And it actually depends on which hot issues arise — which all of you here will have your finger on probably before me — and how much traction those hot issues take on. Another factor for the coming year is again what Mr. Boda talked about, is the election. Will that dynamic cause citizens or others to make more access requests? So I really don't know, but my gut instinct says I don't see anything that's going



to cut back the number of requests.

We try to work with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and others in the municipal area, and there's an interesting thing about educating people about their ability to get records and that sort of thing. But at the same time, you know, they ask for records and sometimes a municipality gives them half and not the other half or whatever the situation is. Education sort of results in more reviews to our office, so it has that double-edged aspect to it. So I see nothing that would cause it to be lower or to go back to 300.

**Ms. Aldridge:** — Just to give you an example of how we see those trends moving forward and that type of an increase, in January 1st again, 2018, because we had the amendments to the legislation, the police services came under LAFOIP for the first time. That's *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. So the total number of files that we ended up in that first year of 2018 was 21. Last year increased to 26. So if we follow that trend, maybe we're up to 32.

**Ms. Beck:** — So just to clarify then, the increase in staffing is to address the backlog that you're currently experiencing and potentially deal with what you're seeing as a trend line of increased number of both investigations and reviews.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Yes, I think it is to help us deal with the situation that we have. But assuming a similar caseload in the same year or in the coming year of 400, give or take, the same amount of pressure is going to be there and we'll just need that staff to keep processing the files.

**Ms. Beck:** — Okay. And one last comment or question noting the quote that you mentioned twice about relevance. On page 8 under the heading of increased workload, you note that the office has experienced significant workload increase from 2016, and this quote: "The increase has prevented the office from coming close to meeting the standards of which I would consider reasonable performance." What are the risks or consequences, implications of continuing with this level of backlog and the increasing time that you are experiencing to deal with cases that you have in front of you?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Well I mean the risks just end up being much slower from the time that someone complains to us, to us getting a report out. And as I say, I'm seeing stuff . . . Because what I present to you is averages. I am seeing stuff at the stage that I have to review it and sign off on it, that it started somewhere, some citizen asked for something and it started over a year ago. So staying at the same staff component that we have right now, I would say in due course everything I sign will be over a year old and that's just not performance.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Any further questions? Ms. Sproule.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you. I have a couple more arising out of the discussion. And I apologize for all my questions, but anyways . . . Do you track what you would consider to be frivolous or vexatious requests?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I'm not sure if we actually track that, but there are very few. I suppose I feel that my obligation to have a fairly high standard or threshold as to what's frivolous or vexatious, you know, and people look at this from different points of view. Somebody asks, you know, a question of a ministry or the city of Regina and because they've heard it from the person 10 times before, they're starting to feel it's somewhat frivolous.

[10:30]

I think our job is to look at it and say, well every organization is going to have some people that make more frequent requests. Is this request, you know, identical to one they made a month ago or two months ago or are they putting in the same request every month? And if they're really going after separate content, I would say generally it's not frivolous.

Now January 1st, 2018, a section was introduced, passed by the Legislative Assembly that basically said a head could apply to us for situations where something was frivolous or vexatious. And in the time we had one where someone almost made an application and another one in this last year where an application was made and we did determine that it was frivolous and they could ignore the request. So basically, one in two years where the public body was at the stage to say this is too much or this is too ridiculous.

But in my considering of that, I would want to have a fairly high standard of what becomes frivolous. You know, get into things like inappropriate language, being very disrespectful, being extremely competitive, asking for the same thing over and over again, all those sort of things, or expressed intent to frustrate the ministry because someone is just angry at them, would be some of the factors that come into it. But I think still keeping a fairly high standard.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you for that. And finally, of the 191 reviews that came in last year, do you track how many actual freedom of information requests there were? Like what does that represent in terms of the total? How many are not being reviewed, I guess, is my question. Do you have that information?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Of the 191 we get?

**Ms. Sproule:** — Yes.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I would say they're all reviewed. I think last year — correct me if I'm wrong, Diane — we had one where we discussed whether we would not continue. But basically I think they were all reviewed.

**Ms. Aldridge:** — Just a clarification. Are you meaning in terms of the number of access requests that are actually made to government institutions and what percentage of those are reviewed by our office? We haven't actually looked at that number specifically because our business is once we get reviews. But to refer you back to the Justice annual report, all of the access to information requests that are received by government institutions are captured there.

**Ms. Sproule:** — I think what I'm trying to understand is how well are institutions doing their job to reply so that you don't get

the number of reviews on your desk, and I don't know if you do any work on that at all. Or is there ways to assist them in ensuring that your workload is less? I'm sure you've thought of that. So has there been any success in reducing the number of reviews that way?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — The statistics that Diane is referring to I think, generally the government as a whole, executive government gets about 2,000 to 2,200 a year, and we can provide that exact number for you. So if we're getting 195 request from the whole public sector, which includes the ministries, Sask Health, 774 municipalities, the universities, that sort of thing, we're dealing in a sense with a small number. I kind of have a quarterly meeting with the head of the access and privacy branch that is under Justice to, you know, work on general trends or discussions about it. And we certainly do discuss the number that they're getting.

I mean, the other thing we do is we're just in the process of updating our exemptions guide. And before Christmas we had an event where we had some 80 people, which would be mainly the access and privacy coordinators from executive government plus some others, launching the guide. And one of the purposes of the guide is to say, you know, if you're going to claim section 17(a), you know, here's the things we'll be looking for, so that in a way everybody that works in this area will have a sense as to what we're looking for. And hopefully that informs their work when they're looking at an access request and saying, okay well if we don't do this, the person might complain to the commissioner's office. Well what has the commissioner said? Okay well generally that type of information is released.

So there's the aspect of giving what we call FOIP coordinators education and training events, speaking quarterly with the executive director in Justice and also participating — Justice has a day-and-a-half conference in June — participating in that conference to talk about our role. I just had a request yesterday for that conference for Diane to talk about what is the commissioner's role.

So I think it's all relevant and hopefully it all goes to, as ministries know what the rules are, it cuts down the number of requests to us. But then we do have the media headlines going the other way about the breaches across Canada and how they're getting closer to home.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Other questions? Mr. Hindley.

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one quick question here. Thank you for the submission. A lot of this is obviously driven by an increase in caseload files, number of, you know, just the workload generally is increasing, right? Just looking at your strategic objectives, you talk about continuous improvement in methodology to try and streamline office processes. Do you have any examples you can give of some of the things you're trying to do internally within the office to try and streamline things, you know, speed processes up, kind of improve that? Just some examples of perhaps what you've done in the past or perhaps are looking at. Thank you.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Well when I was appointed commissioner,

we had a major continuous improvement event and I think made significant changes to the process and cut out a number of hand-offs or delays. And if you look at the charts, I think that's how come we had what I'm going to call good results in years '14, '15, and '16. A lot of streamlining took place.

We do have an annual retreat of staff, and one of the things on that retreat would obviously be the strategic plan and the processes that, you know, by which we do our work. So I would say at least annually we do that.

I can't give you an example of something in the last year. Well I guess in the last year we developed a new process when a ministry was going to ask us to dismiss an access request. And we issued that guideline basically saying, here's the steps you should follow.

Another thing we've done is we've created what we call rules of procedure. And what that is, is when I was first appointed, people would say, well what do you want us to do? You know, how does your system work? And we created the rules of procedure — it's been up on our website for a couple of years — saying here's what we do. If you do this, here's the next thing we may ask for. After you do that, you know, here's what will happen. After you give us your submission, we'll provide a draft report, get comments on that, issue a final report, and then within a couple days that report will be on our website.

So I'm hoping all of those things . . . I don't want to sound too confident here, but I think we have a pretty efficient process ourselves. And you know, if you look at the chart on page 8 and 9, at one time we were doing pretty well. We were under the 130 days to get a case opened, analyzed, and closed. And then we started slipping back.

**The Chair (Mr. Hart):** — Any further questions? If not, seeing none, I'd like to thank Mr. Kruzeniski for his presentation. And what I would propose, members, is we're due for a break. If we break now and then perhaps move lunch a bit back to 12 o'clock, we probably could do both items 13 and 14 before lunch. Does that sound reasonable? Okay, we'll take a break till 10:55 at the latest. If we can start a bit earlier, we'll get to lunch. But thank you very much, Mr. Kruzeniski, for your presentation.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

**The Chair:** — Okay. Well welcome back, everyone. It is 11:03 and we've got a few more items to deal with before lunch, so our first item will be item no. 13. I'd also like to thank at this time Glen Hart for filling in for me. I appreciate that immensely. So item no. 13, a decision item, is a review of the 2020-2021 budget and motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates for the Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth. I would now . . . I've got Lisa Broda who's the Advocate for Children and Youth. I'd like to welcome and ask you to introduce your officials who are with you. Thank you.

#### Advocate for Children and Youth

**Ms. Broda:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the board for the opportunity today. Today I have with me, to my right, Wanda George who is my executive office assistant, who also has been filling in with supporting various aspects of our office

administration and finance responsibilities, and who is also here to observe the proceedings. Many, many thanks to Lynne Fraser who assisted with the whole of the budget submission and who is unable to attend today. So if there are questions from the board, I'll do my best to answer and provide the answers with supplemental material if required post these proceedings.

While on record, I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank all of our staff for their commitment and their passion for the rights of children in this province and for the dedication to our office. Their immense support is greatly appreciated to me. I would also like to say thank you to the Legislative Assembly Service for their assistance, and to my fellow officer colleagues as well for their support, and particularly Mary McFadyen for her ongoing support prior in the interim role of advocate and since my appointment.

I'm pleased to be here today to present my first budget request as the Advocate for Children and Youth. And before I begin, I'd like to address an amendment prior to commencing my presentation, tabling my '20-21 request. If you'll note on page 6, the number reported at the bottom of the table, our allocation for '19-20 was meant to be reflected as 2.79 million, the bottom of the table. I think you might have had a supplemental sheet provided to you in this regard. Thank you. My sincerest apologies to the board for that error.

If I may proceed, I'd just like to make a few comments before tabling my request. As the newly appointed advocate, I'm honoured for the privilege to serve as an officer of the Legislative Assembly and to do so on behalf of the young people of Saskatchewan. There's no doubt that having an advocate for children is critical in ensuring the governments who serve children are held in the highest standard, and the reliance on our office by children, families, communities, public ministries, agencies has been evident over the past 25 years. Because of the nature of this work we do, it's imperative that our work serving children is unbiased, it's impartial, and it's fair. And I believe our staff are exemplary in this regard.

Pursuant to our Act, our office seeks to resolve issues, investigate matters that come to our attention, and do public education and work systemically to better services for children. We do this in an accountable and transparent manner and working toward the safety and protection of children that is in accordance with our mandate and what is expected publicly.

Since my appointment in November, we have been continuing to work in addressing our immediate priorities and also engaging a strategic renewal — which is really in progress — as I move forward in my tenure. While our office works on behalf of all children and youth, there is particular importance working in a way that meaningfully addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the principles of reconciliation to fully support Indigenous children who are so grossly overrepresented in the child welfare system and who we primarily advocate for as a result of this in our work.

With respect to our intake and advocacy functions, our trend lines have remained relatively the same over the past five years. And while we note a slight decrease in the number of calls and issues we see within our intake and follow-up advocacy, it is negligible.

As you will note at the onset of our written submission, the work we have seen over the last several years — and no different this past year — has been extremely multi-faceted in terms of the complexity and nature of the issues we are dealing with to resolve matters for children. It is evident within our work. We can see young people are extremely vulnerable, have multiple issues, are often at the mercy of multiple systems and stakeholders both within and across entities and whose families are vulnerable and experience a gamut of issues like poverty and addictions, trauma, intergenerational trauma, that families impact families and child safety and well-being within those families. And we also know that while keeping families together is paramount, there is not enough resources to do this and to address it.

Another arm of our mandate is public education. And given the unique circumstances we have had this past year, our public education was substantially lower than in past years due to not having a full complement of regional advocates across our province doing presentations and engaging with stakeholders and young people in the last half of this year. The impact of being out in the communities typically renders an increase in calls to our office, and there's a natural correlation to the marginal decrease we have seen in those calls as a result of this and that we have experienced this year with less presentations. I highlight this as one of our important mandated functions of connecting with young people, communities, entities to know who we are or how our office can advocate for children and help children know their rights and advise about our mandate. This takes us significant resources to do this.

As you will also have noted in the introductory comments in our written submission, I highlight that we have seen a sharp rise in child deaths in the past year for 2019, and this is deeply concerning to me. We can surmise, based on the information provided at the time of notification, approximately half those child deaths are related to suicide. The remainder of deaths are related to other causes like medical fragility, safe sleeping, or other. However it's difficult at this time to determine what that is without the coroner's information and at time of notification is typically limited to what we receive. To fully and accurately understand the trends require the coroner's manner and cause, which we typically report in our annual report once we have this information, and you'll see that in our 2019 annual report released in April. Nonetheless the notifications we receive do provide a snapshot sample of a larger issue, so we pay close attention to our trends in this regard.

Relatedly, our office continues to work more systemically as well, resulting from our advocacy and our investigations work. As we know from research and practice, systemic changes produce better services for children and work to help governments serve children to break down the silos and work inter-structurally is part of the work that leads to this change. Broadly speaking, one of the largest systemic themes we've seen in child welfare is gaps in case practice, gaps in policy, or where policy is not followed to ensure the child is receiving the services to which they are entitled.

Our office continues to work in a manner that holds the systems accountable while assisting and suggesting creative methods that may address the systemic issues that plague children and may not address their rights. One of the things that we are seeing with respect to these systemic issues is around mental health as well.

And we're currently working and maintaining the priority of a special report on mental health and addictions, sort of a state-of-the-nation or landscape report across the province, and we're anticipating that to be released in fall of 2020.

I know there's been extensive wait lists for mental health services and when there are services, we know that integration and coordination has been an issue and that integrated service delivery is challenging. The Canadian Council for Child & Youth Advocates, we led a national paper for the council on youth suicide, and again highlighting some of the issues around trauma that young people face around integrated service delivery has been a finding of that report. And the council made recommendations in that regard.

The issue speaks volumes in terms of work that needs to be done. I'm hoping our office can support the ministries in terms of the gaps and to be a catalyst for the changes that are required. I anticipate the results of our report will generate some guidance with respect to cross-ministry collaboration and partnership in the siloing that is part of the issues we see and some calls to action as well in that regard.

Also this past year we've seen an increase in requests in consultation on legislation, regulations, and policy that serve children, and this has been across ministries. We are pleased to be invited to provide our rights-based lens and we are fortunate to have staff who have expertise and experience in child right-based knowledge, and our office has been willing to work collaboratively to ensure the legislation and policies reflect what is in the best interests and rights of the young people here.

In the same vein we are facing a new landscape with respect to the implementation of an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and their families, and while an absolute step in the right direction for child welfare services for Indigenous children, navigating the nuances of the implementation may be challenging. Ensuring we fully understand this new legislation in terms of its operationalization, any implications and transition, and our role will be critical. From a resource and legal advice standpoint this will be an added pressure point for us financially that we'll manage.

We do all of this type of work against the backdrop of our independence and within the boundaries of our Act, and I feel strongly that providing the rights lens to legislation and policy has impacted some very important changes that will benefit children and young people who are beneficiaries of the services in those systems. That said, while it is another added pressure point for us, it is a necessary one, and my hope is that we are able to manage the work on this front as we go forward.

And while I know some services are improving because my office is collaborating and supporting ministries in those changes that are being made for better services for outcomes, there's still a lot of work to do in that regard. And as referenced earlier, there's no doubt that we are experiencing added pressures in regard to the increase in child deaths, nature and complexity of the issues we see, and from the calls to our office, and we have been managing that workload creatively within our existing resources and continue to streamline for maximum efficiencies in a quality and accountable manner. The identified pressure points I anticipate in the upcoming year will require continued

navigation to ensure that we can fulfill our mandate.

In reference to page 5 of our submission, our office will be absorbing the salary increases and retro pay for 2019-20 fiscal year and the CPI [consumer price index] goods and services anticipated costs for 2020. We would only request the salary increases for the new fiscal to offset costs in this regard.

[11:15]

With this I respectfully request to the Board of Internal Economy recommend to the Legislative Assembly an appropriation for the Advocate for Children and Youth of 2.844 million for the fiscal year 2020-2021. This request will ensure we can maintain the status quo services with quality and integrity we are currently providing and address our known increases. Given the current pressures, less than full funding will compromise our ability to meet our mandate, meet our stated goals, and our statutory obligations pursuant to our Act. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission. I'd be pleased to take questions.

**The Chair:** — Thanks so much for your presentation. Now I'll turn it over to the board for questions.

**Ms. Sproule:** — I do have a few general questions that we were talking about at the break and I'll use you as an example. But like, your salary is statutory and that's a \$6,000 increase. And then is the 48 over and above that or is that included?

**Ms. Broda:** — That's included.

**Ms. Sproule:** — So that wouldn't be a 1.7 per cent increase would it, for your salary?

**Ms. Broda:** — I think that's in total.

**Ms. Sproule:** — I'm just wondering, the calculation for the advocate's salary, that 6,000 seems to be across the board. So that's not a 1.7 per cent increase, is it? It's just a statutory increase.

**Ms. Broda:** — Yes, just a statutory increase.

**Ms. Sproule:** — So you combine the 1 per cent increase plus the statutory increase in that 48,000?

**Ms. Broda:** — Yes.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Okay, yes. Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Any more questions? Seeing none, thank you so much for your presentation.

**Ms. Broda:** — Thank you to the board as well.

**The Chair:** — And your great work.

#### Legislative Assembly Service

**The Chair:** — All right. Welcome back. We are now moving on to item no. 14. The decision item is a review of the '20-21 budget for the Legislative Assembly Service. Two decision items, a motion to approve the expenditure from the reimbursement and

asset replacement fund for projects, and a second decision item, a motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates and review estimates.

Welcome, Greg Putz, and could you introduce the officials that are with you and please move on to your presentation. Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Putz:** — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to members. And I doubt I need to introduce the folks I have here with me but for the record I'll introduce those that are here with us today. So in no particular order, I'll just look over my shoulder. We have Ken Ring, our Law Clerk; Iris Lang, our Principal Clerk; Dawn Court, who is next to me at the left. She's our executive director of member and corporate services. Melissa Bennett, the Legislative Librarian; Ginette Michaluk, the director of human resources.

And I just want to pause there for a moment and say that this is Ginette's last time before the board. There you are. The Speaker was pointing his finger. I wasn't sure he was pointing at me but thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that interruption. This is Ginette's last time at the board because she is retiring in April. So I just want to say that we have a huge hole in our organization to fill and I just wanted to take a moment on the public record to acknowledge the great work Ginette has done over the years for the Legislative Assembly Service.

Also joining us from member and corporate services, Mike Halayka, our director of member services; Cindy, next to me, is our director of financial services; Darcy Hislop, our chief technology officer; Theo Tsechelidis, our senior manager, financial services. And is Terry here? Oh, Terry snuck in. Thanks, Terry. Terry's here as well, and Sarah Wood, our director of visitor services. Is Kathy here? Did she sneak in? Okay, I think I got everybody.

So I'd like to start with a few broad introductory remarks regarding the budget and then turn over the presentation to Cindy to take you through the sums. The budget document before you has two main parts, the strategic goals and key actions of the legislative service, and the vote 21 budget.

So just for the members who are fairly new to this process, the purpose of including our key actions in the budget document is to identify for the board emergent priorities for the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service], and by extension the Assembly in some cases, for the fiscal year '20-21. As you might expect, many of the actions are election related to support the dissolution of the twenty-eighth legislature and the opening of the twenty-ninth legislature, which includes the induction of new members. And I say new members because we know that at least 10 — well there's 12 if you include the two that resigned to run in the federal election — will not be rejoining us the next time around.

So some of the key actions also are connected to our refurbishment asset replacement proposals, which are outlined in detail in the budget part of the document, and these are a broad range of actions that require funding approval in order to proceed. Just a reminder that RARF [Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund] is a fund that the board established in 2007 specifically to support improvements to the infrastructure,

workplace facilities, replacement of furnishings and non-capital equipment, and major capital asset acquisitions. So most of the 23 key actions in the document before you are actually non-budgetary initiatives that we have identified to move the organization forward and position us for the future.

I also want to remind you that our action plan is not a complete catalogue of LAS responsibilities and service commitments. Our service commitments to members are catalogued on the MLA portal, where we describe each of our services in detail and provide the names and contact information for key LAS employees. The LAS, as you heard me say this many times before, provides approximately 80 specific core services and we support over 400 individuals, including MLAs, CAs [constituency assistant], caucuses, officers of the Assembly to one degree or another, the Speaker and his office, public programming, as well as the LAS itself. So as always, all of the folks here with me today would be pleased to answer questions you might have on our action plan, the budget, or any of the core services that we provide to MLAs and to the public.

So now I'll move on to the budget portion of the document. The budget presented to you today is for the Legislative Assembly or vote 21. The main components of vote 21 are framed by *The Legislative Assembly Act* and they include members of the Legislative Assembly, Office of the Speaker and Board of Internal Economy, caucus operations, and the Legislative Assembly Service.

Vote 21 has two fiscal components, statutory and budgetary estimates. The statutory component represents 61 per cent of the total and it's principally the payments and allowances to members and the funding of the caucuses. The budgetary component represents 39 per cent of the vote 21 budget and it is primarily the LAS and the Office of the Speaker portions of the estimates. The budget proposal before you represents an overall increase of \$3.3 million or an 11.71 percentage increase from last year. There are four basic elements that contribute to that increase.

First on the statutory side of the ledger is \$704,000 or 21 per cent of our overall increase for costs related to the upcoming 2020 election. We also include \$334,000 or 10 per cent of our overall increase relates to the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan as stipulated by board directives. So that's the statutory side increases.

Increases to the budgetary side comprise: an aggregate amount of \$266,000 for salary and other operational pressures, and much of this increase is to provide LAS employees with an economic adjustment that parallels that applied to executive government after the signing of the new agreement with the government's employment groups; \$2 million for an Assembly-proposed project to develop accessibility, multi-use committee facility on the fourth floor of the Legislative Building.

The increase is considerably more than the usual status quo budgets normally presented to the board. This is because of three factors: the Assembly is coming to the end of an electoral cycle; the LAS workforce is eligible for an economic adjustment after many years of wage freezes; and we hope to set in motion a plan to finally fulfill an Assembly recommendation for a second committee facility that dates back to the year 2001.

Now Cindy will take you through the details, but before that I just want to briefly address the proposal for the multi-purpose committee facility. The decision item in our budget request is a proposal for the Assembly to develop currently unusable space for committees and other meetings. The proposal is a two-year project which in the first year would focus on updating cost estimates, revising design plans, and beginning the job of bringing this space up to current building code and accessibility standards.

As many of you know, this is not a new proposal. The Assembly agreed that it should have a second committee room in 2001, and by my reckoning the board has discussed the idea on 18 different occasions. And it considered decision items related to the project in 2002, 2004, '05, '07, 2010, 2011, and 2012. The board has twice approved the committee room and the Assembly has already spent \$375,000 on the project — \$160,000 for the design plans in 2006 and '07; \$50,000 for demolition of the space in 2007-08; \$75,000 for revised design plans and tendering documents in 2008-09; and then finally \$90,000 for project design and tender documents in 2011-12. The project was shelved in 2013 partly because the dome rehabilitation project was a priority.

It's brought forward now because in December we were advised that there might be interest and support from the House leadership to revise the project. The cost estimates I've given you are based on previous submissions to the board. So with that I'm now going to turn over the presentation to Cindy, and she'll take you through the budget in more detail. Then at the conclusion of her remarks of our presentation, we'd be pleased to answer questions. Cindy.

**Ms. Hingley:** — Thank you, Greg. Good morning, Mr. Chair and board members. To begin I'd like to draw your attention to the principles and assumptions that we used to develop the Legislative Assembly's 2020-21 budget. You can find the details on page 11 of our budget book. The first principle is to develop a budget that is fiscally responsible and mindful of the information provided to the Board of Internal Economy by the Minister of Finance.

The second principle that we used was to incorporate the known financial pressures that occur in the year of a provincial general election. Under budget development assumptions, we used an estimated increase of 2 per cent in the consumer price index which impacts members' indemnity and additional duties, travel and living allowances, caucus resources, and constituency service expenses.

Our next assumption is with respect to the new collective bargaining agreement between the Public Service Commission and SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union]. We have incorporated the cost-of-living adjustments as outlined in the new agreement and have included in-range progression for eligible employees into our base funding.

[11:30]

As Greg has already mentioned, our budget submission provides for an overall increase in LAS expenditures of 3.3 million or 11.71 per cent. He also outlined four key elements that contribute to this increase. I won't go into detail again, but with respect to

election costs, you can find a breakdown on page 13 of how we determine those costs.

If I could ask you to turn to pages 16 and 17, we will now focus on the details of our budget request. On page 16 you will find the members and Office of the Speaker recommendations which break down as follows: our offsets of \$149,000 include \$114,000 for a reduction in members' indemnity related to two members who resigned in 2019-20, and \$35,000 to return funding for the recruitment of an officer of the Legislative Assembly that also occurred in 2019-20.

Our increases include \$684,000 for known provincial election-related costs. These include transition allowance for known members who will not be returning and their constituency assistants, the IT [information technology] resources grant under caucus operations, and telecommunications and related service expenses related to website design. \$334,000 for annual consumer price index increases as outlined in the directives, and \$89,000 to reflect economic and in-range increases for constituency assistants and the Office of the Speaker.

On page 17 you'll find Legislative Assembly Service operations, other Assembly proposed projects, and the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund recommendations. These break down as follows: for Legislative Assembly Service operations, our increases include: \$293,000 which primarily relate to economic increases and in-range progression; \$30,000 for the renewal of contract security services; and \$20,000 for other provincial election-related costs.

Other Assembly proposed projects include the request for \$2 million to make the fourth floor of the Legislative Building accessible and to develop a multi-use committee facility. This is funding for the first year of a two-year project, and Greg mentioned a little more detail on that.

For the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, the board increased our budget of \$250,000 to \$350,000 last January. Therefore this year we're proposing six projects. I won't go into detail specifically on them but they're outlined on pages 21 to 26, and we welcome any questions you might have with respect to any of those projects.

Page 18 outlines the offsets and increases for interparliamentary associations. This year we have a reduction of \$15,000 in the annual CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] grant and increases to the International Legislators' Forum and the Midwestern Legislative Conference membership fee.

On page 20 we identify our revenue estimates as \$10,000 for the upcoming fiscal year, and this amount remains unchanged from last year.

I would like to thank the board for their time and consideration of our budget submission and now invite any questions you may have at this time. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you so much for your presentation. I'll now invite the board for some questions. Ms. Beck.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, and thank you for the presentation. Looking on page 17 under Legislative Assembly Service

operations, I believe in the preamble there is mention with regard to the renewal of contract security services, that there's a partial offset there. I'm just wondering if you could expand upon that.

**Ms. Hingley:** — So there are other offsets with respect to . . . like the Board of Internal Economy had funding related to the recruitment of the statutory officer last year, so those are offsets. And then for '20-21, we have a renewal of the commissionaires' contract that was just renewed this year. So those are increased costs for those.

**Ms. Beck:** — My second question was with regard to the two-year project, the development of the committee space. I know that part of the project for this year is updating those costs. I'm just wondering if you have a ballpark figure for the second phase, the second year of that project.

**Mr. Putz:** — We're assuming that the costs will be roughly the same as the last time that we had a detailed costing of the project. And we worked with Central Services and I think the contractor. I'd have to ask Darcy probably because he was on the committee. Dominion Bridge worked with us with some of the senior engineers in Central Services to come up with those numbers.

Now that is some years back, and at the time we figured that the costs from when the project was originally proposed, first proposed in the 2002-2005 era, was about half. But you've got to remember that the last time we came forward with this project when there was thought to be an opportunity to develop that space, we were at the height of a building boom in Saskatchewan and that had inflated costs. So there is a possibility that these costs could be somewhat less, but we won't know.

And that's part of the exercise for this year if this funding is approved, then to proceed to the next step of partnering again with Central Services and costing it out. So these are cost projections based on the last time we put forward a detailed proposal to the board, and it was approximately \$4 million.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Any further questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your presentation. And with that, we will break for lunch and we'll come back. We'll reconvene at 1. Thanks.

[The board recessed from 11:37 until 12:50.]

**The Chair:** — All right. Welcome everyone back. It is now 12:50 p.m. and I would ask someone to move a motion that we move in camera. Mr. Weekes. All right, this board stands in camera till the call of the Chair. Thanks.

[The board continued in camera from 12:51 until 13:16.]

**The Chair:** — Okay, we'll call the Board of Internal Economy back to order. It is now 1:16 p.m. and after in camera we have a number of motions.

Okay, so item no. 9, which is the approval of the 2020-2021 budget for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Saskatchewan, approved in the amount of \$24,689,000. I'm looking for someone to move that.

**Ms. Sproule:** — I'll move that.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Sproule. And can I have a seconder? Mr. Harrison. Thank you. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay, thank you.

Item no. 10:

That the 2020-21 expenditure estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$4,249,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$4,015,000; statutory, \$234,000.

Can I have a mover? Mr. Weekes. Can we have a seconder? Ms. Beck. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

All right, let's move to item no. 11:

That the 2020-21 expenditure estimates for vote 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists, be approved in the amount of \$582,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$582,000.

Can I have someone move that? Mr. Merriman. Secunder? Ms. Sproule. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Okay, let's move on to item no. 12:

That the 2020-21 expenditure estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$2,237,000.

Can we have someone to move that? Mr. Hindley. Secunder? Ms. Beck. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Moving on to item 13:

That the 2020-21 expenditure estimates for vote 076, Advocate for Children and Youth, be approved in the amount of \$2,844,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$2,610,000; statutory, \$234,000.

Can I have someone move that? Ms. Sproule. Can I have a seconder? Mr. Harrison. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

All right, let's move on to agenda 14(a):

That for the 2020-21 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved for a total amount of \$350,000.

Can I have someone move that? Mr. Merriman. Secunder? Ms. Beck. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Okay, item 14(b), we're going to defer that decision until the next meeting.

Now move to item 15:

That an open competition be authorized for the position of Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists; and further, that the competition shall be conducted as follows:

That a budget of \$25,000 be authorized;

That a subcommittee of the Board of Internal Economy, to be chaired by the Speaker and consisting of a government member of the board and an opposition member of the board, be established as a selection panel;

That the Legislative Assembly Service provide human resource assistance to the selection panel;

That the selection panel may identify a member of the public with subject matter expertise to provide assistance;

That the selection panel recommend a preferred candidate or candidates to the board for consideration; and

That the name of the candidate approved by the board be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by the Speaker.

Can I have someone move that? Mr. Weekes. Second? Ms. Beck. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. That concludes the business for the Board of Internal Economy and the board will stand adjourned until February the 4th, 2020 at 9 a.m. I need a motion to adjourn. Mr. Weekes. Second? Ms. Sproule. All in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Again, stands adjourned until February the 4th, 2020 at 9 a.m. Thank you all.

[The board adjourned at 13:25.]