



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT**

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No. 6 — December 6, 2016

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Corey Tochor, Chair  
Saskatoon Eastview

Hon. Dustin Duncan  
Weyburn-Big Muddy

Mr. David Forbes  
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison  
Meadow Lake

Mr. Warren McCall  
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Paul Merriman  
Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland

Ms. Laura Ross  
Regina Rochdale

[The board met at 12:32.]

**The Chair:** — All right. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here today. I'll call this meeting to order at 12:32 on December 6, 2016. I'd like to thank the members being able to make it here today. From the opposition we have David Forbes and Warren McCall. And from the government we have Dustin Duncan, Paul Merriman, and Laura Ross.

First up I look for a mover to approve of the proposed agenda.

**Ms. Ross:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Laura does, seconded by Paul. All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Next is the approval of the minutes from 5/16. I'm looking for a mover. Warren McCall, seconded by Dustin.

On the agenda, as you can see, there's seven items that we're going to table and pass. The first item, item no. 1, tabling decision item, approval of the Legislative Assembly Service second quarter financial forecast for the year 2016-2017. I'm looking for a mover. Laura Ross. And a seconder of that motion, David Forbes.

All right. For item 2, the tabling and decision item, approval of the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar, the second quarter financial forecast for fiscal year 2016-2017. Mover of said motion, Paul Merriman, seconded by Laura Ross.

Item 3, tabling and decision item, approval of the Advocate for Children and Youth second quarter financial forecast for the fiscal year 2016-2017. I'm looking for a . . . move the motion. Laura Ross, seconded by Paul Merriman.

Item no. 4, tabling and decision item, approval of the Elections Saskatchewan second quarter financial forecast for the fiscal year 2016-2017. Moved by Dustin, seconded by Laura.

Item no. 5, tabling and decision item, approval of the Ombudsman Saskatchewan first and second quarter financial forecast for the fiscal 2016-2017. Moved by Laura Ross, seconded by Paul Merriman.

Item no. 6, tabling and decision item, approval of the Information and Privacy Commissioner Saskatchewan's second quarter financial forecast for the fiscal year 2016-2017. Moved by David, seconded by McCall.

The final item, item no. 7, tabling and decision item, approval of the Legislative Assembly Services mid-year report on progress for the period April 1st to September 30th, 2016. Motion moved by Laura Ross, seconded by Paul Merriman.

We'll move shortly here into budget presentations. I'd like to make the announcement to members and guests that all

decisions on these items will be reserved for a later date, but we do look forward to your presentations and the Q & A [question and answer] session that will follow after each presenter.

#### Chief Electoral Officer

**The Chair:** — First presenter would be item no. 8, a decision item, and this will be from the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to make his presentation. Michael.

Thank you, Mr. Boda, for being here and I'd ask you to please introduce your staff with you and carry on into your presentation.

**Mr. Boda:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, for inviting us here today to discuss Elections Saskatchewan's 2017-18 budget estimates with the board. I have with me today Jennifer Colin, deputy chief electoral officer in charge of corporate services and electoral finance; and Jeff Kress is with us, deputy chief electoral officer in charge of electoral operations.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to take about 15 minutes to offer a brief overview of the budget estimates document and to provide some additional background information regarding the '17-18 fiscal year request. And following that we would be happy to take any questions from members of the board.

Some members may remember the first budget request I submitted as Chief Electoral Officer in 2013, January, where I was intentional in outlining a path for renewal that Elections Saskatchewan could follow. At that time I described a path that would involve two phases. Phase 1, which coincided with the remainder of the province's 28th electoral cycle, was focused on stabilizing our province's election management body and our framework for managing electoral events, particularly our general elections. Phase 2, which we are now just entering, involves a pivot from stabilizing to modernizing our election system, making improvements that will ensure Saskatchewan has an effective and efficient voting system for the future and a healthy election management body to support it.

Modernization — you will hear us say that word a number of times today. Even more than in 2013 when I first came before you, I am absolutely convinced that modernization is necessary if we are to sustain our provincial voting system. To be frank, the administrative mechanisms we currently use for electing representatives to the Legislative Assembly have reached their best-before date. The administrative approach we use in the province is essentially the same system as we use to elect federal members of parliament. I do need to be clear that I'm not talking about the electoral system that determines how votes are translated into seats in the legislative body. What I'm referring to is actually the process of voting.

Outside of voting, I can't think of any other broad-based societal activity that exists more or less unchanged by technology. If you enter into a voting location in a provincial election, the general set-up and the procedures are almost exactly the same as they have been for more than 100 years. The current system, which relies on recruiting and training a small army of temporary election workers — more than 10,000

in the last election — to administer increasingly complicated paper-based procedures is antiquated, and the fact is that it's unsustainable.

Each of our budget priorities are based around this overarching topic of modernization and the urgent need to begin introducing necessary changes before this system falls apart. Under the broad theme of modernization, we have offered four priority areas in our written budget submission. These are modernization of the legislative framework, modernization of processes, modernization of how we manage Saskatchewan's electoral service, and finally, modernization of our systems and infrastructure. So at this point I want to ask Jeff to briefly expand on each of these four priority areas and to offer specific examples of what we intend to work on during the coming fiscal year. This is year 2 of the 29th electoral cycle. So Jeff.

**Mr. Kress:** — All right. Perfect. Thank you, Michael. I'm going to begin by looking at modernization with respect to the legislative framework. That's the first key priority that's indicated in the budget submission.

In December 2013 Michael published a report called *Toward an Improved Legislative Framework for Elections in Saskatchewan*, and that was a CEO [Chief Electoral Officer] assessment that included 15 recommendations for legislative change. Eleven of these recommendations were accepted and passed with the support of both government and opposition, resulting in the creation of the permanent register of voters, the introduction of homebound voting, opening up advance voting opportunities to all voters, among other innovations. In that report, a commitment was made to revisit Saskatchewan's electoral legal framework shortly after the province's 28th general election.

Within the first few months of the 2017-18 fiscal year, the CEO will submit a final report on the 28th general election, a volume that will provide recommendations for legislative reform. This report will contain recommendations that, if accepted by legislators, will serve to effectively modernize the way that we administer elections in the province.

So what tangibly does that mean when we talk about legislative modernization? So the first example would be a good one we could find on page 17 of the budget submission. The size of a provincial polling division is legislatively set at 300 voters, so for every 300 voters, legislatively we require one team of a deputy returning officer and one poll clerk. We do this, yet we know that more people than ever are making use of advance polls, so moving forward we need to consider whether 300 is the right number or whether that number should be increased substantially. If you increase that number, you potentially reduce the need to hire so many election-day workers. And we believe that modernization in this kind can offer economic savings as well as operational benefits.

[12:45]

The second example I'll bring forward is that modernization could also mean introducing technology, and by that we certainly don't mean online voting. It might mean using electronic tabulators to count the votes. It's much faster than two people with pens and papers. It could also mean switching

to an electronic poll book. That's a big departure from our existing system, which requires a poll clerk to hand write information about every single voter who's issued a ballot.

Ontario is currently working towards a substantial introduction of polling place technology for their 2018 general election, and part of their model involves making a large technological investment in hardware that, by its design, other jurisdictions will be able to rent or lease. By introducing legislative change to allow for these types of activities, we can ensure the people of Saskatchewan have access to the same modernization initiatives as other provinces, and can benefit from interjurisdictional partnerships.

So secondly I'm going to talk about, which Michael briefly spoke about in his notes, was the modernization of processes. And anyone familiar with *The Election Act, 1996* will know that the electoral legislation is highly prescriptive. So as we've mentioned, modernization, amending the legislation is a priority, but the modernization of processes not requiring a legislative change will also be considered carefully and will be our second key priority during the coming fiscal year. In short, every policy and procedure will be reviewed in detail to determine how they might be revamped, improved, changed, or eliminated to improve and streamline the election process for voters, candidates, registered political parties, election workers, and our returning office teams.

Our third priority is focused on the electoral service, and that's the dedicated people in the field who make an election possible. As Michael indicated, our voting system is based on temporarily employing many thousands of people in communities across the province. And while we can envision a modernization effort that uses technology to reduce the reliance on our workforce, we're always going to have to rely on citizens across the province to conduct our electoral events. And if we are to modernize the way that we manage the members of our electoral service, it's important that we begin this process early in the election cycle. So an initial first step will focus on re-establishing our field leadership team which is made of supervisory returning officers, returning officers, and election clerks.

You might already be aware that as of October 27th, employment contracts for our field leadership team members have expired, and this is a legal requirement which allows the CEO to renew this team during every election cycle. While we're not proposing to recruit election clerks until fiscal year 2018-19, it's important that we begin recruiting for other field leadership positions that will offer the leadership to thousands of people who will work in the 2020 general election. Of course, many of the returning officers who served in the last election will be involved again, but we also do anticipate competing recruitment efforts in different areas of the province to ensure that positions are filled.

A second step in modernizing how we manage Saskatchewan's electoral service will involve updating the training systems that we have in place so that we can begin to move away from training that is conducted exclusively in person and classroom based. Part of that modernization, it's going to involve seeking efficiencies. And as you can probably imagine, it's very expensive to bring people from all over the province together to

one place — meals, mileage, accommodations, travel cost — to train. So it's our intention to reduce these costs while maintaining an essential environment that will be conducive to training. And across the country, electoral management bodies are moving towards more and more of their training being done online. This kind of training offers potential educational benefits such as being able to revisit certain topics and allowing individuals the opportunity to learn at their own pace. It also offers the benefits of financial savings, both in the short term and over the long term.

So the fourth and final priority area that I'm going to speak about this afternoon focuses on the modernization of systems and infrastructure at Elections Saskatchewan. And the first thing I'm going to talk about is our electoral management system. And our estimates last year indicated that the CEO would need to begin looking for a replacement for our election management system. It's a system internally that we call ESPREE [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors]. And considering more broadly the work involved in replacing an enterprise-wide software system, we know that this will likely be the work that's going to take several years and quite possibly require more than one electoral cycle to complete.

Our staff are going to continue to focus on, first and foremost, a complete and comprehensive business analysis. This is already under way, and the purpose of that is to determine what exactly the organization needs are and what options are available to put in place a system that will meet those needs.

So the next thing is the permanent register of voters. This coming year we'll also see the permanent register of voters development project come to an end, and it's going to transition to a state of ongoing maintenance as part of our program activity. Before March 2018, the permanent register, or PRV [permanent register of voters] as we call it, will be outputting data, including the provision of the first annual updates to our registered political parties and MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who have signed the information-sharing agreement with the CEO.

So that concludes my comments, and at this point in time I'd like to pass it across to Jennifer Colin who will discuss the financial implications with the work that I've just described.

**Ms. Colin:** — Thank you, Jeff. So consistent with how we've presented our budget over the past number of years, we are distinguishing between two major categories of costs that we incur as an election management body. The first category focuses on our ongoing costs of administration, and these are costs that are incurred regardless of an electoral event and include things like salaries for our core team, rent for our office space, telephones, and other costs associated with just simply keeping the lights on.

The second category of costs are event-related costs that are associated with preparing for, delivering, and closing out the various types of electoral events that we're responsible for.

For the upcoming '17-18 fiscal year, our ongoing administration costs are projected to be \$2.675 million, or \$827 less than our 2016-17 administration budget. If however we

were to remove the administrative costs associated with having the permanent register of voters becoming part of our ongoing programs, our projected administrative budget would have actually decreased by approximately \$90,000, which translates into approximately 4 per cent less than what we required last year. And there's a table in your budget document on page 13 that outlines this comparison. I'd also like to point out that fiscal '17-18 is actually the second year that Elections Saskatchewan has absorbed these ongoing costs associated with the new permanent register of voters into our ongoing administration budget.

Our event-related costs for '17-18 are budgeted to be \$967,000, and the majority of these costs relate directly to the modernization efforts that Jeff has already outlined for you, and are directly related to the next general election, which is scheduled to be held on November 2nd, 2020. However there is a relatively small portion of this projected event budget that is actually related to closing out the 28th general election and completing the work associated with that event.

Fiscal '17-18 will also see the completion of the permanent register of voters project, and development is forecasted to be complete sometime in the 2017 calendar year. And starting in that fiscal year, all of the regular maintenance and production costs associated with the voter registry will be covered in our ongoing administration budget. And the projected cost for finalizing the development of the permanent register of voters project for next fiscal year is \$600,000.

And after Michael concludes with some remarks, we'd be happy to answer any questions you have on our budget.

**Mr. Boda:** — Well thank you both, Jennifer and Jeff. Mr. Speaker, and members of the board, while developing this budget submission, the province's fiscal situation has been very much at the forefront of our minds as we've attempted to balance the need between the need to modernize our election system and the responsibility to be effective in the use of resources that are allocated to us.

I know well that there may be the temptation to point to the fact that the province's next general election is not scheduled until 2020. So why does Elections Saskatchewan need any event-related money now? Taking it further, the question could be asked about whether our voting system really needs modernization. After all, the 28th general election was delivered without significant complaints or major incidents.

To those points, let me reiterate two important things. A first is one you've heard me articulate since my arrival in 2012. A modern election management body cannot focus on a general election as an event, but instead as part of a four-year cycle. If we do not pursue change in year 2 of the cycle, we will have lost the cycle. There's no opportunity in year 3 and 4 to change.

A second point is that our traditional framework for election administration is rapidly becoming unsustainable. Across the country, election management bodies are engaging in a modernization effort, and if we in Saskatchewan do not continue the process we began in 2012, we are likely not to be able to realize the efficiencies that will come by partnering with other jurisdictions.

As was briefly mentioned in our submission document, year 1 and year 2 of an electoral cycle are the only time period in which significant change can be made. So we really do require the resources we've requested in order to introduce long-term efficiencies and operational improvements to how voting is delivered in Saskatchewan.

As I know you can appreciate, by the time we get to year 3 and 4 in the cycle, the election is simply too close to make those changes. And in fact, significant changes introduced closer to an election will almost certainly guarantee a far greater cost than if they are made earlier in the cycle.

So to wrap up our presentation then regarding our budget estimates for fiscal year '17-18, our budget request for the fiscal year '17-18 reflects our ongoing commitment to providing high-integrity, widely accessible electoral events at the most reasonable cost possible. We would ask the board to recommend to the government that an allocation of \$4,241,561 to Elections Saskatchewan be approved for the fiscal year '17-18.

Thank you to both current members and prior members of the board for the work and assistance you provided my office throughout the province's 28th electoral cycle. I sincerely hope that the same level of support will continue to be provided during the 29th cycle. And, Mr. Speaker, at this point we'd be happy to take some questions on our presentation or the detailed content in our written budget submission.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Michael. And thank you, Jen and Jeff, for your presentation today. And for everyone that's back at your shop that worked on the last election, thank you very much for I think a well-run election, most would agree. And I've got a couple of questions. First off, on the permanent register program, those costs that's built into this year's budget, will they decrease in year 3 and 4? Or is that an ongoing increase that's going to be there?

**Mr. Boda:** — So you'll see a capital budget of 600,000 in this year's budget, and that is essentially a project cost. This will be the . . . Next year will be the last year in which you'll see a project cost in which we are continuing to build the permanent register of voters.

Now the permanent register of voters had to be ready for the 28th general election, and we needed to print, from the PRV, the list. It wasn't entirely ready. It's continuing to be built until the end of the next budget year. After that, that project will fully transition to becoming a program alone. Right now we have been transitioning some of it into the program area, and that's the reduced . . . We have been eating some of those costs. That's the reason why we have a 4 per cent cut, actual 4 per cent cut in our administrative budget. But we still have project money to finish off the project. After that, there won't be any more project money so you won't be seeing the \$600,000 that you see this year in order to finalize the building of the PRV.

[13:00]

**The Chair:** — Okay. And there's one more question I had, probably for Jeff on the technology side. When you talked about how Ontario may be looking towards technology for help

in an election, is it the counting of votes or is it the registering of voters is where that technology is focused?

**Mr. Kress:** — So what Ontario is doing is they're looking at an entirely new voting services model. So when you come in, in Saskatchewan we have to hand write everything. They have electronic registrations in place, is what they're going to try to move into. So imagine that you come in with a voter information card and you have it in your hands in front of you. Somebody can just scan that, can automatically get you registered in. Allows for much quicker processing of people that come in with ID [identification], and it reduces some of the inherent errors of people just sitting there all day with big lineups in place.

So one half of it is on the registration side, and another big element that they're looking at putting in place also involves counting at the end of the day, so using tabulator-type machines to be able to make sure that the results are available quickly and accurately in place. So some of the things that we're looking at involve looking at what Ontario's doing as well as other jurisdictions. Michael?

**Mr. Boda:** — The only thing I would add to that is there is a strong linkage between the use of an electronic poll book and the tabulators on the other end. There's also a linkage to the size of the polling division. Jeff mentioned that. He talked about the increase in the size of the polling division. And in so doing, we're able to reduce the number of people that we're using, but in order to ensure that we can be efficient and we can serve the voter in an efficient way, we need to introduce the technology that will speed up the process as well.

So in Ontario what you'll find is there is a strong linkage. You don't do one or the other; there's a linkage between both. And we are working very closely with other jurisdictions to talk about how can we do this in a cost-effective manner; given the fact that some of this technology is very expensive, how can we share this technology in a way that it will be cost effective for all of us? And Ontario currently is taking the lead in that regard. Elections Canada is looking at how they can introduce technology as well. We know in British Columbia as well, we're working with them. They're introducing an electronic poll book as well.

So I can tell you that we are actively engaged with other jurisdictions in this regard so that we can get, so we can be the most cost effective possible in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Paul, you have a question?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of quick questions. You talked about more people going to the advance polls. How much has it gone up over the last three elections, just percentage-wise? Has it gone up 5 per cent?

**Mr. Boda:** — We do have those numbers as they're coming. The advance voting from 2011 was a 66 per cent increase. So in the end, there were 25 per cent of voters who voted in advance of election day. Now you may recall that we had absolutely planned for an increase, but that was a remarkable increase. And so as a result, Jeff and his team had individuals ready to go out if there was even a greater increase than we expected. And

as a result, particularly in Saskatoon and Regina, we dispatched teams, which we were careful about for cost-effective reasons because if you did dispatch a team, that meant they were there during the whole process — part of the problem with the legislation that we have.

So in the end, there were 110 votes cast in 2016 and there were 66,000 in 2011. So a dramatic increase and this is not something that we expect is going to diminish over time. And I know from our engagement with your folks over at the registered political parties that it's important to expand on that advanced voting period.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — And I think you did a very good job of getting . . . of the scope and over the days, the time, the availability, the location. Certainly in Saskatoon, I thought it was much better run this go-round than the last go-round.

My next question is on the ballots itself that you were talking about, Jeff. The city of Saskatoon did this in the last civic election. They had the electronic ballots. I went in. It was a two, I mean literally, it was a two-minute process for me to vote in the advance poll. It was done electronically. It was fed into the computer and it was done. There was no handwriting of anything. Why wouldn't we be looking to see what they're doing at the civic level versus looking at what they're doing in Ontario? I understand the scope's different, but the voting process as far as a voter coming in should be the exact same.

**Mr. Boda:** — Were you saying that they did not mark off a ballot and then it was tabulated with the machine?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — It was electronically done.

**Mr. Boda:** — In 2016?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — In 2016, in the civic election. I would fill out the dot on there. It would go through the scanner. The scanner would read that everything was filled out properly, and it was done. It was a large, looked like a printer-type machine, and it was done. My vote was in there. And it kicked the other one out just for verification if they had to do a hand count, but it was already tabulated.

**Mr. Boda:** — Okay. So you . . . I thank you for clarifying because for a moment there I thought they went down a different path that I was unaware of and they had purely electronic voting.

The system that you see in our municipalities, when you see those tabulators at the end, is consistent with the kind of machine that we would be looking at implementing in a Saskatchewan context. And the approach that, actually the approach that municipalities take is really the bank teller model that we're talking about, we're doing our due diligence on, and what Ontario is looking at implementing.

The thing that is missing in that equation, within Saskatoon . . . I was out in Swift Current on election day for the municipalities, and the thing that's missing there is the electronic poll books or a poll book arrangement where you have a voters list. Now when you have turnout rates — in Regina, they were as low as 20 per cent; Saskatoon was closer

to 40 per cent — you see long lineups when you have to have election day registration, and that can prove problematic. When you see numbers that are closer to ours, we'll talk more about turnout rates in January when we fully release the statement of votes, but our numbers are over 50 per cent. You would see massive, long lineups if you did not take the time in order to maintain a list as we are, and continue down the route of having that voters list and sending out voter information cards.

And we are in discussion with our municipal colleagues on a number of levels, not just on the electronic voting side, where if we were to work with Ontario on this or we were to work with Canada on this, we're also talking with the municipalities how we could introduce cost-effective approaches by sharing with them in terms of technology.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — And I guess my point is we don't have to go all the way to Ontario. This is happening right here in Saskatchewan in the major cities: in Regina and Saskatoon. We could look to our civic counterparts to make sure that, how they're doing it and just dovetail off of what they're . . . even if we're doing it in the major centres, in the cities; rural, I understand, is a little different. But there was no sign this, spin the paper back and forth that creates those long lineups in the provincial election, which frustrates people, which in turn deters them from voting. So I mean, I walked in with two pieces of ID, gave it to the gentleman. He pulled out a form, here you go. I was in and out.

**A Member:** — How did you vote?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — How did I vote?

**A Member:** — Yes.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I voted . . . That's a personal vote. It's a personal situation.

**Mr. Boda:** — Secrecy of the ballot.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I still had paper, and I still filled it out. I still filled out . . . [inaudible].

**Mr. Boda:** — I hear what you're saying, and I agree with you 100 per cent. We just met with the city clerks in the past couple of weeks and have been in discussion with them over a four-year period. We are working very closely with them.

There is something, you may not be aware of it, in Saskatchewan, that most of the election equipment however is at the end of its life. And so I'm interested in working them because they're at a point as well where they're looking at election equipment. And whether that's part of a . . . or they've already used the tabulators. They haven't been voting using voting or electronic tabulators, sorry, electronic poll books. But I'm looking at how we can collaborate together and in a cost-effective way make use of equipment which is being used across the country.

If we were in Saskatchewan and just the . . . If the province was to purchase equipment on its own and work with the municipalities, it still would be cost prohibitive because the number of polling sites for a municipality is very low. Our

polling sites, we have over 2,000 of them and, as a result, I don't see any other cost-effective way other than to work with other jurisdictions outside of the province in this regard. And we would work with them, they would work with us, and we would try to reduce our costs significantly.

But I hear you very strongly saying, let's look at what the municipalities are doing. And that's absolutely what we're doing.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Dustin.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Dr. Boda, for your presentation. Maybe just to further on to Paul's question or the point that he was trying to make — and I'll maybe preface this by saying that I hope my Luddite tendencies don't cause too much bias in my questions — when you talk about electronic poll book, which I kind of understand the concept and I get where you're going with that, but I think in perhaps Jeff's presentation that you said it's tied to, really the idea of electronic poll book is tied to electronic ballot tabulation. The two are kind of linked, one and the same, or they're kind of linked.

But I guess my question would be, if we move away from the 300-voter limit that is currently set in the legislation, I guess my question is, how many voters per polling division is it going to be necessary to move to electronic tabulation? Because I don't think right now counting 300 votes in a division is that onerous, is that much time consuming. Now correct me if I'm wrong. Obviously the last number of elections I haven't been there counting the votes, but I remember scrutineering in high school. And don't laugh because if you're in this room, so you're interested in this as well, just like I was. Yuk it up . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Yes. You wouldn't be in this room if you weren't interested in it.

But I guess at 300 votes maximum in a polling division, is it really necessary from a time-saving perspective to move to electronic tabulations?

**Mr. Boda:** — I'll let Jeff follow up on what I have to say, but it is really about the linkage. It's how we . . . I mentioned that the system itself is growing unsustainable. And it's becoming unsustainable because we're having a great deal of difficulty finding 11,000 people in order to work the election. So as a result, what we need to do is reduce the number of people who are required for each poll, but then by reducing the number of people, you have to compensate in some way. And what we're doing is we're compensating on the front end, which is the electronic poll book, but compensating on the other end of the counting. With the tabulator, counting is done throughout the day because you put yours into the machine. It doesn't tell you how many . . . what the vote is before. But at the end you have an electronic output, as opposed to one person, instead of two people doing the count and slowing it down even further than it is now. So it's almost an overall package that we're looking at. So I'll let Jeff follow up on that.

**Mr. Kress:** — Sure. It really is a great question. And certainly when . . . Everything we're doing, we're asking ourselves, well

how much is that going to cost, and is it cost effective to do it?

I can tell you that when I look back at the general election, probably the biggest challenge that I faced, the operations team faced, was really related to advance polling. Huge numbers come out. Anyone can vote, anywhere in a constituency. And actually at a registered political party meeting that we had at the office, and we had the chief official agents come in, I actually walked through the process of looking through 13,000 names on a list and, depending on whether you're rural or urban, they're ordered in different ways, and the amount of time that it takes to do it and how that quickly comes up to creating lines and delays. And even following that more forward, knowing who voted and being able to provide the political parties with information on who voted at advance polls — things that you can't do in a highly manual system.

So first and foremost, we're still doing planning. And that's a lot of what's in our event budget for modernization, is trying to figure out and scope exactly where things are going to be and how they're going to be done. But for advance polls, using as an example, there's a very clear linkage between the registration and for the actual tabulation. And some of the late results that we had coming in for advance polls were simply related to teams trying to count 12, 13, 14, 1,500 votes, you know, shortly after a long, busy day. So there is some linkage there, maybe not for all polls, but that's certainly something we're going to investigate and look at moving forward.

[13:15]

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just as a follow-up on that, based on the different technology that you're looking at, do you have an estimate on the fewest number of people it would take to run a successful, from your standpoint, a successful election in this province?

**Mr. Boda:** — I can't give you a full estimate because we haven't done our due diligence yet. That's what year 2 is about. What I will be able to do is, at the end of spring next year the discussion is that we will provide you with volume IV, which is the CEO's recommendations on legislative change. And by then we will have a better sense of those kind of numbers that we're talking about.

But what I can tell you . . . What is the number? It's currently at 300 which is very, very low, especially considering most of the people, well not most of those people, but 25 per cent of the people are voting before election day, which reduces that from 300. It's actually a smaller number.

So what is the number? Is it 500? Is it 700? I don't know exactly what the number is because we have to account for it in the context of Saskatchewan, and that's what we will be doing in our planning for this year. But we want to be able to set that direction in year 2 so that we can move ahead understanding, of course, that we're doing our due diligence. And our job as election administrators is to offer you the best, the best options that are possible out there for Saskatchewan. But ultimately, it's you as legislators who are going to make those decisions and we appreciate that. We understand that.

And in the last cycle we worked very well with government and



opposition in order to bring forward some sustainable changes to stabilize. I think you will find that this will be a more comprehensive change as we look towards modernization but ultimately, it's up to you to make that decision.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Just a couple of observations. It was interesting. I was in Indiana a couple of years ago and what they do for staff or volunteers for their elections — grade 12 credit. And it was very interesting. They got a lot of kids working, yes. And so just to put that out there. And I'm looking forward to seeing your legislation.

But I do want to . . . And I have raised this and I know we've raised this to our party, but it is something that I find I had . . . In Saskatoon Centre, there were two polls where the turnout was less than 10 per cent and we don't know what the impact, of whether they all decided to go to the advance poll. I've got a funny feeling, knowing the demographics of those two polls, they didn't go to . . . Some may have gone to the advance polls but many didn't.

And to me, that . . . And I understand you'll be bringing that forward, a bit of a report on those two. I know our people have raised that with you but I just want to flag that because I just feel, how many other polls in Saskatchewan had less than 10 per cent turnout? To me that's a huge issue, particularly in ridings that might have been close, where if you have, you know, 5 per cent turnout of 300, that's 15 people out of 300 people voting. I can't believe that. Something went horribly wrong in that poll. And I know that we often think it's up to the political party to create the excitement to get people out to the poll, but when it hits 5 per cent, I think there's many players in this. And we need to understand completely what happened in that poll.

And I don't think waiting several months . . . I think this is something where it should have actually been a very quick response. Like these are the kind of things where you go, we're not waiting to see, months down the road, to see if something illegal happened or something untoward happened. Who knows what the staffing . . . what happened in those two polls?

And I think that I would really encourage you, especially when you do your reflection on improvements, that whenever a poll goes between 10 or 20 per cent, it should be like the very next day the deputy returning officer is explaining what happened because that kind of numbers could explain or it could overturn an election outcome, could overturn the outcome of a government. But because if you're, you know, five people voting out of 300 when typically it would be 75 up to 150 people, that's a huge issue. So I just want to flag that. To me it's, you know, out of the — how many voters do we have? — about 300,000 or something, 400,000, maybe that's not significant, but to me it was. And I look at that and we often talk about voter suppression and all of that but to me, something needed to be looked at right away, within 24 hours. How come this happened?

And I know election day is very important but I know you go back to work the very next day to take a look of what's happening. So I don't know if you want to have a comment on

that but I do hope that in your review and your looking forward that those kind of things . . . I know you have to take a look at this in both directions, from the big picture, you know, the 30,000 feet up there, but also on the ground to make sure people have complete and fair access to the poll and the balloting box.

**Mr. Boda:** — Okay. Well first of all I want to thank you for your question again. And when you mentioned it the first time, I had . . . I guess I anticipated you were talking about it in generalities. You were talking about 10 per cent turnout in a variety of locations. And what I can say is that you will learn a lot more through the statement of votes which will be issued. I think you're going to find this statement of votes to be very different than the last one in terms of the data that is provided and the way that you can have a very close look at it.

I know that your chief official agent is waiting for that particular document. We've provided some other information to him as well. We've done that for all six registered political parties. So I think you're going to find our assessment of the 28th general election to be very different than perhaps you're used to in the past because of the amount of analysis that we have done and the evaluation that we did during the electoral event itself.

In the more specific question that you asked, I actually . . . We did go back and look at it very carefully. It's just a matter of I thought you were talking in generalities. And what I want to encourage members, if you have an issue about a poll, please just . . . You don't have to wait for the board, to have a meeting of the board with me in front of you. You need to be in touch with us, and we can offer an explanation or we'll dive into the particular poll and try and understand it more effectively, in the context that we can within the legislation. It ties our hands in some ways.

But I believe you're talking about poll 39, and poll 39, there are . . . First of all, we had our team look very closely at poll 39 and we could not find an administrative reason as to why it was so low, the turnout was so low in that particular context. There are some socio-economic issues that are certainly there. We went back to 2011, and we found that actually 100 more people voted at that poll than in 2011. So there were more people that came to the poll. And we saw that as a positive, but it's still not there.

Elections Saskatchewan's primary mandate is about reducing barriers for voters. And I don't know; I've tried to demonstrate that over the course of the last electoral cycle, how important we view the reduction of barriers so that everyone in the province can vote. In terms of inspiring people to come out to vote, that's a different conversation. We are a stakeholder in it, but the political parties are . . . third-party organizations, the Rotary Club, we're all part of getting that vote out. And I think we're going to have more of a discussion on that in January when the statement of votes comes out.

But in this particular case, first of all we are very concerned about barriers and we are working very hard. I know Jeff's team has been mandated to focus on barriers and how can we reduce those barriers for every voter. But in the particular case of poll 39, we did not find any administrative barriers. I do feel that there were more people that voted there. The percentages are lower because we did . . . We registered more voters as well. So

you will remember in 2011 we registered just over 70 per cent. In 2016 we registered over 90 per cent of voters. So in terms of percentages it might look lower, but in terms of actual voters, it went up by 100 in that particular poll. So I'm happy to answer more questions as they come.

**Mr. Forbes:** — No, no I just wanted to flag it, so thank you.

**The Chair:** — Warren.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Dr. Boda and officials. Thank you very much for the presentation and certainly for the work that you do making sure that the citizens in Saskatchewan are able to get to the polls and make their democratic choices known. I appreciate that this is sort of an awkward year in terms of the battery of reports that are yet to come, and obviously the sort of direction for action, and to continue to the moving from stabilization into the modernization phase of the Elections Saskatchewan's work.

And you know, nowhere less than . . . You know, if 300 isn't the right number, then what is? And I guess I'm sort of, you know, akin to my colleague from Weyburn-Big Muddy. You know, I'm not much beyond the one potato, two potato, three potato sort of method of counting. That usually gets me to 300, but if it's much more than that we'll see how that goes. But I'm presuming that that optimal number will be forthcoming in the reports. Is that correct?

**Mr. Boda:** — I'm not sure that you'll see the specific number, but we'll be able to articulate it more clearly. The first step is we have to get to the point where legislation will even allow us to do this, and it's at that point that we begin to look at that number and we begin to frankly figure out how it works across the province.

And I can't give you exact answers, but I will tell you things like, there has to be an accounting for the locations where we have six polling divisions and it's easy to introduce this kind of technology, as opposed to other locations in the province where the geography just doesn't allow us to do it; there is a single polling place and we can't introduce the technology because it's too far away and it's too great a risk to us to have to replace that technology on election day.

The largest jurisdiction in the country, which is Ontario, which is doing this — they are wholeheartedly jumping into this for 2018. They're doing a full technology election, but they are still allotting for those locations where technology isn't viable.

In our context, I'm going to take account of what will work here, what will work in Saskatchewan. And you know, our jurisdiction, our people are not the same as they are in Ontario and we have different needs here, so it won't be just a carbon copy of what goes on in Ontario. What we're looking at in the Ontario context, in the BC [British Columbia] context, in the federal context, is cost efficiencies. How can we make use of technology that's already been paid . . . the full price has been paid for, but then we're leasing it back at a very, very reasonable rate.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you for that. I guess given that the budget year to come will be essentially the completion of the

establishment of the permanent register of voters. And just a point of clarification, have you identified an estimated ongoing expenditure thereafter for the maintenance of the PRV?

**Ms. Colin:** — The cost associated with the four staff members as well as the increased costs for the infrastructure, and there's some . . . we pay some data subscription costs so that we can access addressing data and other types of data, is approximately \$390,000 a year.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks for that. I guess, you know, the register is only as good as the data that it rides upon, and there are parts of the province geographically, socio-economically where there are some challenges in terms of making sure that that representation in fact for people out there in different places in the province are then represented on that register of voters. And then that in turn has an impact on who's more or less likely to be voting come election day. It's certainly not the only consideration, but it's part of it.

And again I also say this knowing that there are more reports to come within months, within weeks even, from Elections Saskatchewan as to how the last election went and recommendations for further action going forward. But certainly for the constituency that I have the privilege of representing, a permanent register of voters is challenged by the fact that there are a lot of people that are moving on a fairly frequent basis, and in terms of being captured in that.

[13:30]

Now the old system would, the correction there was that you'd have the enumeration with each election and that would capture who was around. And I guess the way I've always understood the permanent register of voters is that you get ahead of that by . . . You've got a good list to start out with and then you can focus on challenging areas within the enumeration or where the data set is not to a standard that it should be, and therefore, you know, making sure that people are on the register of voters. What safeguards will Elections Saskatchewan be taking forward to ensure that that register of voters is accurate and as comprehensive as it should be?

**Mr. Boda:** — Well I thank you, thank you for the question. It's an important one and it's an important one to understand in light of the different benefits of pursuing a door-to-door enumeration versus a permanent register context. We're looking at coverage, currency, and accuracy. Those are the three main indicators that we look at in terms of is it a good list, how good of a list is it. And there's different ways to measure that.

And I can tell you, over the years my experience in election administration tells me very clearly, and the literature will tell you very clearly, that a door-to-door enumeration is not, over time, is not as accurate. And it can offer greater currency, but the coverage is not necessarily up to the level of a permanent register. And that has been demonstrated in the approach that we took in the last election with the permanent register being in place. The coverage alone went from, I mentioned before, over 70 per cent to over 90 per cent, so you had that many more people on the list.

Now you asked the question, what certainty do you have that

this quality is going to be maintained over time? It really has to do with the professionalism of the election management body and the certainty that we'll have ongoing resources in order to maintain that over the four-year period. We are trying to do a bit of a . . . We will look forward to a crescendo at the end. You want your CCA [coverage, currency, and accuracy] to be best at the end when you're having a general election, and we'll be working toward that.

So how do you achieve that? You achieve that by maintaining best practice. You also look at the end and understand that a permanent register doesn't mean that you're just drawing data from institutions which already have the data, whether that's eHealth or SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] or Elections Canada. There's also a thing called targeted enumeration, and that is absolutely part of a permanent register where we already have the ongoing list.

But at the end we then begin to say, where is our CCA? Not where it should be. And so you look at areas where there's a lot of mobility. You look at the universities, of course. You look at new areas that have been established. You look at communities that have a lot of mobility in it, and we begin to do targeted enumeration in those areas so that we can ensure that the quality goes up, in general, of the list. If you have a good list, you will have a better election. It's clear that if an individual receives a voter information card in the mail, that is more effective in getting them out to vote. And so the voter information card is an important part of that process. Does that help?

**Mr. McCall:** — Absolutely. And one last question, just the placement of polling stations in terms of the . . . again anticipating certain of the workarounds that might be on offer in reports to come. I think of one example in the province of Saskatchewan is I know that it was the stated intent on the part of Elections Saskatchewan to work in co-operation with First Nations and to make sure that there was that invitation to come work on First Nation, and that that was a matter of co-operation. It wasn't that . . . The onus was very much left to individual First Nations to ensure that there would be an invitation to come on reserve in some cases, and then as well to set up a polling station on a given First Nation.

There was certainly some challenges around that in the execution of the Lloydminster by-election, and anecdotally I'm familiar with some circumstances where individual First Nations members couldn't understand why the polling station wasn't warranted on their individual First Nation, given the population, given past practice, and given, in some cases, the alternative which was to travel a great distance to go exercise that ballot, that franchise.

So in that particular circumstance, and the importance of ensuring that we've got access to the polls, and as well looking at who has shown up to vote, what sort of game plan does Elections Saskatchewan have to work with First Nations to ensure that that is barrier free as an accessible proposition as is humanly possible?

**Mr. Boda:** — I would begin by saying that I think we took a different approach to working with the 74 First Nations in the province during the last cycle, and it's one that we found to be effective, and we will plan to continue down that road.

I'm not sure the onus was on First Nation chiefs to determine . . . It was their right to refuse to have a poll on First Nations, but I can tell you I corresponded numerous times with every single First Nations chief in the province, and I can tell you that our staff was in touch with those bands over the course of almost a year, which has not been the tradition in the context of Saskatchewan. Usually it's been a very last-minute affair. And we have taken a different approach in that, first of all, we want to be very respectful of our First Nations chiefs, and we need to have a relationship with them on an ongoing basis in order to move forward.

And I would say . . . You'll see more in the statement of votes, but I would say that there was some significant successes with respect to the number of polls that were on First Nations. With respect to 2011, there were far fewer than 100 polls on First Nations polling divisions, and in this particular case there were about 150.

So we saw some increases. We saw some significant work that was, some heavy lifting that was done in that regard, as there was for other communities in the province. You'll see some significant advances on the universities and at the polytech in terms of getting students registered and finding out ways that they could have access to the ballot.

So the game plan is to continue with that relationship building over the course of the four years. Again, because the election management body should be one that's focused on the electoral cycle rather than just getting ready three months in advance, we will continue with that relationship. We will continue to build an understanding of what it takes to deliver voter information cards to the 74 First Nations.

I can tell you my discussion with other jurisdictions federally. Federally they have been coming to us to ask for how they can be more effective at gaining access to First Nations for not just polls but really for registration and identification. And we have been collaborating together to determine how we can be more effective in that regard. Nova Scotia has done work in this regard; of course Manitoba's involved as well.

So I can tell you that we will continue that relationship and that I think is . . . And you will know, having worked in this field for some time, that relationships are extremely important, and we will continue down that road over the next four years.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Laura.

**Ms. Ross:** — Okay. Thank you very much. I would imagine . . . This one I'm going to direct to Jeff because you did talk about it. So the online training, it's BC that's already looking at doing online training. Am I correct in understanding that?

**Mr. Kress:** — Yes. There's a number of jurisdictions that are already starting to do online training and BC definitely, for returning officers, has put online training in place.

**Ms. Ross:** — Okay. Well it should end up with a result of a better equipped election personnel then because they had the opportunity to go back, right? And because if it's online and it's

modules, they would have the opportunity to make sure that they get it.

**Mr. Kress:** — Yes, there most certainly are opportunities to better train staff, you know, especially the first time someone sees something. If they come to a training session three days, eight hours a day, there can be a lot of information thrown at it. And I remember a course I took years ago and before I went into it, they almost described it as trying to drink from a fire hydrant. And I think if you throw too many things at people, it can be a challenge.

So what we're trying to do is make sure that they have the basics, as you say, be able to go back and be able to refresh themselves on it. It also provides an EMB [election management body] with opportunities to do assessments, to see whether the information that's being communicated is reaching out to them. And I think long term, as we look, online training is definitely an option, but even some blended training where we allow the face-to-face sessions maybe to be more hands on, simulation based, to really aid, to make sure that they maintain that understanding moving forward. Those are going to be key.

**Ms. Ross:** — I have one more question here. So then because you said there are some jurisdictions that are already doing online training, have they figured out what the cost benefit is? Like what's the difference for dollar wise?

**Mr. Kress:** — It'll totally depend on the jurisdiction and how it's set up and whether they do regional training or whether they all had people come to central types of location. I think a lot of the benefits from the training perspective are very much going to be qualitative: better trained workers, less non-compliance with policies and procedures.

In our case, when we get the model in place and we figure out what exactly we'd still need to do face to face, if any, what we'd need to do for the training, that's part of that planning that Michael keeps coming back to for the next year, to say, all right, what exactly would training look like three years from now when we're rolling it out to returning officers? What are the modules that we want to have online? When do we want to deliver them, and how best do we want to deliver them? And we consciously have to keep coming back and say, what's the most cost-effective way to do it that's going to provide the best results, which is an exceptionally trained workforce? Because that has better outcomes for the voters, for candidates, registered political parties, and everyone involved in this process.

**Ms. Ross:** — Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Boda:** — Can I just add that . . . I mean the most cost-effective way of doing this is not to have any training at all, but that's not an option. That's not an option for a modern . . . to run a modern general election. And so what we're doing is we're balancing this. And we took a certain methodology during the last cycle. We did that intentionally. We did a lot of the face-to-face intentionally for the reason of building a team that wasn't there before and to build that team environment. But what we are now finding is that we will have a good number, I'm pretty sure in terms of returning officers we're going to have a pretty high returning rate as opposed to in 2011. And so

we're going to be able to make efficiencies in terms of how we train, in terms of breaking that down into smaller groups, for example. We may not do large groups. We may bring in a zone at a time. We may also do . . . We'll do online training and we'll do also distance training in terms of making use of Skype and various other avenues for communicating so that we don't have as much travel involved.

**Ms. Ross:** — Excellent. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — That concludes our item 8 item for today. I'd like to thank Michael and Jeff and Jennifer for their presentation.

### Ombudsman

**The Chair:** — Next up is item 9, and I'll get Mary to come up. Item 9, decision item, review of the 2017-2018 budget and motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditures, estimates for the Ombudsman.

Welcome, Mary. I'll let you introduce your staff with you and then proceed into your presentation please.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Okay. Thank you very much. I'm here with Andrea Smandych, our manager of administration. She works out of our Saskatoon office so she drove up this morning in the nice weather. Not too bad until Lumsden, I hear, so that's good.

[13:45]

So I'm happy to be here today to present our budget submission for the '17-18 year. In my opinion, I think our office has a long-standing history of conducting its operations in a modest and prudent manner and always within budget. Even though the number of complaints that we've received rose substantially this past year, we are not requesting any additional funding. Our '17-18 request is to maintain our existing operations.

We are very cognizant of the direction that has been given to executive government, that significant restraint is needed right now, and we have prepared our budget submission with this in mind. So this afternoon I'll just hit the highlights of our submission. I will talk a little bit about our two roles and our two mandates and I will also talk a little bit about some of the work we've done over the past year that has contributed to making provincial and municipal public sector institutions more accountable to the citizens of Saskatchewan that they serve.

And please feel free to ask me any questions at any time. And if there's any information that you're looking for that we can't give you today, we can certainly supply it afterwards.

So as the Ombudsman, we have the role to help the Legislative Assembly ensure that the executive branch of government, both provincial and municipal, delivers services fairly and in a timely manner. We are independent and impartial. We receive complaints from the public who feel they've been treated unfairly while applying for or receiving government services.

Our first step is always to try to resolve complaints informally, as this is usually the best for the citizen and for the organization complained about. If that is not appropriate or does not work,

we have powers under *The Ombudsman Act* to conduct thorough investigations. Our investigations may lead to recommendations that are aimed at fixing unfair public administrative processes for all citizens.

We received very good co-operation from government institutions during our review of complaints. I feel we're all working towards the same purpose. Government institutions want the programs and administrative procedures that they've established to be fair and reasonable, and that is our goal as well.

Some board members — not that many; it's quite a new board — recall that last January when we made our '16-17 budget submission that our workload had just been increased considerably. Before November 2015 the Ombudsman's jurisdiction was limited to provincial public sector institutions, which includes about 209 ministries, agencies, boards, tribunals, Crown corporations, regional health authorities, and publicly funded health entities.

After November the 19th, 2015 and the passing of *The Municipal Conflict of Interest Amendment Act*, the Ombudsman's jurisdiction was expanded to receive complaints about the 780 municipalities in the province. Our mandate was also expanded to allow us to take complaints about allegations of conflicts of interest or contraventions of code of ethics of the approximately 3,700 municipal council members in Saskatchewan. With this substantial increase in our jurisdiction, we are very busy.

On top of the increases in complaints from the expanded jurisdiction over municipalities, the total overall number of complaints we've received in 2016 has increased significantly. In 2015 we received a total of 2,816 in-jurisdiction complaints. By October of this year we had already exceeded that total. At the end of November, our total in-jurisdiction complaints was already at 3,207, and we had received a total of 504 municipal complaints, which accounts for about 15 per cent of the total complaints within jurisdiction that we have received so far this year.

If we are unable to resolve a complaint, we can investigate. Already this year, as a result of those investigations, we've issued 27 formal recommendations to government institutions aimed at improving administrative processes.

So now as well as carrying out a role as the Ombudsman, our office also fulfils the role of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner. So under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*, provincial public sector employees, if they can come forward to disclose allegations of wrongdoing that occur within their organizations, the Act sets up a process for alleged wrongdoings to be investigated. And public sector employees have two choices: they can use the internal process set up by their organization, or they can come directly to our office. In either case they are to be protected, and allegations of wrongdoing must be confidentially reviewed and, if necessary, investigated. If a public-sector employee feels that they have been reprimed against for coming forward or for refusing to participate in a wrongdoing, they can also make a complaint to our office.

To date our numbers remain consistent in 2016 compared to past year. We have received eight inquiries and three disclosures of wrongdoing and one complaint of reprisal so far this year. So all these statistics seem small. They are in line with the numbers received in other jurisdictions throughout Canada.

This is relatively new legislation throughout Canada, so we are also taking opportunities to reach out to public servants to make sure they are aware of the protections they have under this legislation so that they are not afraid to come forward if they think something is wrong within their workplace. And we also want to make sure the role of the Ombudsman is well known to the public and is accessible.

In 2016 we again looked for ways to ensure that we were serving all parts of the province. We recently visited Moose Jaw and North Battleford. We provided public information sessions and set up temporary offices for the day to meet directly with complainants.

We also looked forward to ways to reach out to the municipal sector in 2016, basically to reassure them about the role on the Ombudsman and how we carry out our work. We participated at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] annual general meetings. We spoke at the Regina district association of RMs [rural municipality] meeting. We spoke at the Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks meeting. We met with the city of Estevan elected officials and senior managers. We attended the SUMA village sector meeting, the New North administrators conference, the Canadian Bar Association municipal sector and municipal law section. So we've been very busy reaching out to municipalities.

And given the large number of municipal officials and where they are throughout the province, we also looked at efficient ways to reach out to many municipalities at once. We conducted three webinars for municipalities in April 2016 which explained our role and how we do our work. It was a good way to reach all areas of the province without incurring travel costs. It gave municipal officials and employees the opportunity to interact with us and ask questions about our role. Our webinars were very well received and allowed us to reach a lot of people in an economical way. And given that there's recently been municipal elections, we will be putting on additional webinars in early 2017.

We also conducted several fair practices training sessions this year which are aimed at educating public sector employees. During these training sessions, we explain what the Ombudsman does. We help public servants who deal with the public understand what administrative fairness is and how they can better communicate with the public when they carry out their duties. We reduced this training from two days to one day. This was one of the many ways we've addressed the financial restraints we're all under. This reduced both our costs and the cost to organizations whose employees were attending the training.

So going forward in 2017, I acknowledge that we have many pressures. As I mentioned earlier, our complaints have increased substantially; they are in total up 23 per cent

compared to last year. We also have accommodation pressures in our Regina office. We have been in the same space since 1994. As most of you know, Mr. Barclay had an office in our Regina location. He left us in February of this past year, and once he moved out, we put three employees into his office. So just to say, we are very cramped. And so while my staff are not complainers, we realize that's not an ideal way to work. We will need to address that pressure eventually, but for now, given the current fiscal climate, we have renewed our lease in our current space until 2018.

And dealing with the increased number of municipal complaints we are receiving, this is also a pressure. As I mentioned, after one year they already amount to 15 per cent of our total complaints. And given that our oversight role is new for municipalities, we know there is a great interest from the municipal sector for us to educate them on what we do and what we mean when we say the public should be treated fairly. SARM and SUMA have both indicated to us they're interested in knowing about the types of issues that we are getting about municipal services so they can help municipalities better serve their constituents. So we see this as another opportunity that we can take to help educate the municipal sector about delivering services to the public fairly.

Last year when we appeared before the board to present our '16-17 budget, we had estimated that we would initially receive about 600 complaints per year about municipalities. And based on that number, we made and were granted a very modest budget increase to respond to that expansion of our jurisdiction. And this increase allowed us to continue to provide the same level of service under both the Ombudsman and the public interest disclosure mandates while addressing the additional complaints that were received in the municipal sector.

And our estimate of about 600 complaints a year was pretty accurate. We're up to over 500 right now. Of interest, we are finding that approximately two-thirds of the municipal complaints we are receiving are about administrative actions and processes, which means the other third are about council member conduct, allegations of conflict of interest. And we are finding that these investigations are very resource intensive compared to other type of Ombudsman investigations. But we do understand and believe the Ombudsman can conduct these types of investigations in a less resource-intensive manner than setting up a separate stand-alone body to look at these matters.

So in conclusion, while overall our complaints have increased this year, including those about municipalities, we are not requesting an increase. We believe we can handle the increase in our workload and the pressures we are facing under both our mandates within our existing budget. When times are tough, it's important that the public be able to reach out to our office. It's free of charge, and someone can assist them if they feel they've been treated unfairly by government. Therefore we are requesting the amount as set out in our budget submission on page 16, which would support our existing operations. Thank you. That's it for me and I'd be happy to entertain any questions.

**The Chair:** — Any questions? Thank you so much. It was a thorough presentation, versus I guess Michael's, that went . . . needed more explanation maybe. It was a good presentation,

and I appreciate your comments around being mindful of taxpayers' dollars in the current environment.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mary. I think Laura has one.

**Ms. Ross:** — Yes, I just want to say I like the resourcefulness of using electronic communication to be able to connect with different levels of government to let them know exactly the role you play, and what you're able to do to help facilitate with that. So thank you very much and congratulations on being very resourceful for that.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Thanks, Mary.

### Information and Privacy Commissioner

**The Chair:** — Moving along, we'll have item no. 10, decision item, review of the 2017-2018 budget and motion to approve budgetary expenditures, estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Thank you, Ron, for joining us. I would like you to please introduce your staff and then begin your presentation.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the board. With me today, to my right, is Diane Aldridge who is director of operations, and is responsible for overseeing the reviews and investigations that our office does. To my left is Pam Scott who is director of operations, responsible for human resources and financial matters, and has assisted me in the budget presentation that you've received.

Mr. Speaker, our request today is for the amount of 1,679,000, as outlined in our submission to you. That does involve an increase, and we are very aware of these times in our economy, the price of oil, the impact of resource revenue on government revenues. Basically, our request is what I would call a status quo budget with one exception. And I'm going to give you the reasons for that exception. It really centres around a workload increase that developed in 2016, and it involves the number of files.

We appeared before you in October of this year and made a request to the board for approval of some supplementary funding to hire a temporary analyst to help us with our increased workload. And thank you to the board for approving that request which really involved an amount for five months of this fiscal year. At that time, we indicated we would come back and report to you at this time and make a request regarding the upcoming fiscal year. So this is the opportunity to sort of update you as to where we are on that.

[14:00]

The best summary or visualization of our file increase is contained in the bar chart that is in your materials. And in brief, in 2015 this had been the highest file count that the office had had since its beginning, and that was at 236 files. Currently, this year, we're at 279 files and expecting by the end of December that we will be over 300 files. That is, in effect, a 30 per cent

increase over 2015, which was the highest year we had.

It does centre around one issue which I refer to as the land acquisition issue, and on that matter we have opened some 86 files. Currently we've issued five reports and closed six other files, and currently have about 75 files to open. So we have a ways to go in terms of processing and completing our reviews and investigations and closing those files.

There is absolutely no doubt that this will continue into the next fiscal year. And you may say, well how long? And that depends on a few things that I'll outline for you. First of all, it depends upon the size of the request for records. For example, our first report that we issued involved 658 pages of record. Currently have another file that staff are working on that involves 800 pages that constitute the record. We have another file that originally involved 25,000 pages of record with negotiations and back and forth in our office with Ms. Aldridge's staff. We've narrowed that to 12 to 15,000 pages of record, and we have a sample of that record in our office right now of 1,500 pages. So it really does depend. And the more pages, the implication is more time, more analysis, more work.

It also depends on the number of exemptions that a public body may claim, and they may claim an exemption for each page, depending on the nature of the request and the pages involved. And they can claim one exemption or they can claim multiple exemptions per page. So we could have three, four, or five, or possibly, theoretically, as many as seven exemptions claimed on pages. All of that takes analysis, takes time, and takes work.

Responsiveness of the public body is another important factor. It depends how quickly a public body gets back to the person that's requested the information, and later on in the process, how quickly that public body gets back to us, providing us with the record. And obviously the greater number of pages in the record, the more staff time it takes within a public body to process it and provide it. In some instances the public bodies are getting weighted down as this process goes, and that in itself causes a certain amount of delay of responding to the requests of our office.

Finally we don't know how many more requests we may get. And the numbers I'm going to give you are just a somewhat educated guess. In talking to people, I understand we may have as many as 50 more requests out there being processed currently with the public bodies. If information is provided, our office may never see them. On the other hand, my very rough estimate is that we may see reviews on half of them. So that would mean another 25 reviews in our office. So by the time we're finished, we may be up at somewhere around 110 files opened on this one particular issue. A very rough estimate, it will take, in the new fiscal year, our office at least — and I emphasize at least — eight months in the new fiscal year to complete these investigations, all of which is dependent on the factors I gave to you above.

In addition, we have some other pressures coming our way. Bills 30 and 31 are before the Legislative Assembly. They are moving through the process. Those bills have received first and second reading and have been referred to a committee. I am hopeful that both government and opposition can be supportive of those amendments and presume and hope that they would be

passed in the spring. It would take a couple of months after they're passed, you know, for regulation purposes before they're proclaimed, but you can certainly see by June, July, or August that our office will have some additional responsibilities.

What are some of those responsibilities? Very briefly, the bills contain a duty to assist citizens when they make requests; a duty to protect data, personal information that a public body has in its possession; a duty to notify citizens when a breach occurs. All of these three aspects will probably result in citizens not being happy with what has happened with some public bodies and requesting a review of us.

The freedom of information Act, part IV, is proposed to apply to MLAs' offices. That will involve questions by MLAs and by their constituency offices and certainly some need for information and workshops and webinars. Part IV of that same Act will apply to staff in ministers' offices, and in a similar way, there will be questions and a need for information sessions to sort of have that move forward properly. In addition, employees are being defined to include contractors and consultants. Again these additional provisions will, will/may result in some requests for review in our office as people sort of want to know exactly what their legislative rights are.

In addition, *The Workers' Compensation Act* review committee has recommended some changes to *The Workers' Compensation Act*, which would involve our office having some additional responsibilities there. We are currently working with the board to work out something that would be amenable to the board and to our office, but the end result is there will be, could be some requests for reviews that are made by workers in relation to the handling of their files in the office.

And finally Bill 31, the local authority freedom of information Act includes a provision that would bring police forces under the freedom of information regime. And Saskatchewan and Prince Albert are the final provinces to in fact have police forces covered by this legislation. Anticipating that this is coming, we have surveyed other information and privacy officers, and they've indicated that police-related reviews account for about 10 to 15 per cent of their workload. And when I estimate that in terms of ours, potentially that would be 30 or 45 files in a year.

So based on all of those estimates of the land acquisition issue and added responsibilities and knowing that this year we're at 300, my estimate is in the coming fiscal year we'll be at 350 files, give or take. Of course that is an estimate, and a year from now, in December or January, I can report back to you to see how accurate I was. And I noticed how accurate the Ombudsman was in terms of her estimates a year ago. I hope I can be as good as she has done.

So the end result, Mr. Speaker and board members, I'm asking that you consider temporary funding for the coming fiscal year to deal with the land acquisition and other expected workload increases. As I said, we will report back next year as to where we stand basically 12 months from now in terms of all of those issues.

Regarding other matters, we have not included any

cost-of-living increase in the estimates you have in front of you. We have included in-range movement increases in there, and I ask and I assume that we'd be treated as you treat all the independent offices in terms of what the board will recommend in terms of the treatment of salaries in the future.

So I think I'll end there, Mr. Chair, and thank you for this time to present to you, and I'm pleased to answer any questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Ron. The first question up? David.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much for your presentation and the good work you're doing. I'm curious about . . . So we've had two bills before us and they're in the process. Are there any recommendations that you see are pretty major recommendations that haven't, that you've made in the past, that haven't been met in these two bills?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Of course we started the process by making some proposals and the Ministry of Justice sort of took over, the Minister of Justice took over and presented the bills to the House, and of course, at the time as it was evolving, I certainly indicated that I was excited that legislation would be amended that hasn't been amended in some 24 years.

Two, that I would certainly would lobby government and opposition for, in the future, would be a five-year review. And to some extent, the reason for that speaks for itself in the sense that this legislation has not been significantly amended in 24 years, and some sort of trigger that would cause the whole system to reflect. And if you think of technology, we hardly knew, we didn't know what an iPhone was in 1992, and how the technology — texting and mobile devices and even the dependence on the Internet — has sort of changed our lives. So I think we probably need, in the future, to be a little more fleet of foot in terms of keeping our freedom of information and privacy legislation closer to wherever the technology is going or wherever it takes us.

The other one is in the legislation. There's a duty for a public body to report a breach to "the people that have been affected or impacted," and I'd like also to see the public body reporting that breach to us.

So I think those are the two things that if MLAs and legislators are interested, I'd still like to see in the legislation.

**Mr. Forbes:** — One other one that I don't think is addressed by the two bills is how privacy legislation impacts on workers in the private sector. And that's one that I know exists in other provinces — Alberta and British Columbia. I'm not sure about Manitoba. But have you studied that area at all?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — In our proposals we briefly mentioned it. I've always viewed that since in Alberta, you know, it's a separate piece of legislation, that it would probably have to be a separate project. And it still is on our list of goals and things to make proposals on. You know, there may be some other ways where this could be accommodated in ways. But observing what the other provinces have done, they've usually developed a completely new Act. So it is a bit of a bigger project.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Seeing no more questions, thank you once again for the presentation, Ron. It was much appreciated, your thoughtful review of the estimate. And thank your staff for coming down today as well.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Thank you very much.

[14:15]

### Advocate for Children and Youth

**The Chair:** — Moving along, we'll tackle item no. 11, decision item, review of the 2017-18 budget and motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditures estimates for the Advocate for Children and Youth. I'll ask Corey to please come on down, and I'll welcome Corey in his new role as Children's Advocate and ask him to introduce his staff that were able to make it today.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Board of Internal Economy for this opportunity to present the 2017-18 budget for the Advocate for Children on our behalf. Accompanying me today are Bernie Rodier, director of administration; and Dan Harder, human resources and admin consultant. Bernie's been here before. She told me this is her 19th year.

**Ms. Rodier:** — Yes.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — So she probably has more experience than all of us. I'm in good hands even though it is my first time here. So I appreciate the staff that are with me today.

I want to begin by thanking the members of the Legislative Assembly for their support in appointing me as Advocate for Children and Youth. It's something I'm truly proud of, and I'm truly proud to be the first First Nations children and youth advocate. I believe it's something that our First Nations and Métis people were looking for, and I really appreciate the government and the opposition for really meeting that need and meeting that request. In my first month I've noticed that it's been a lot of requests and there's been a lot of expectation, but there's also been a lot of optimism as well, so I'm looking forward to that.

First I want to start off with a little bit of my vision for what I see as our role, particularly our office. And this is what I've noticed over the last month is we do reports, you know. We react to crisis. It's a pretty negative, you know, output that we put out. You know, when we're doing reports we're reporting on deaths; we're reporting on critical injuries or different things like that or when something has gone wrong. So you know, we do that very well.

But what I'm hoping to do, and what I'm hoping part of my vision will be in the future is that we are a proactive body. That we don't just react to problems, but we're proactive and we're part of the solutions. And a couple of examples of that that I'd like to give you . . . There's a young girl named Maizie Bowkowsky. She came to our office and she asked for our assistance. And what Maizie's doing is, she's a 15-year-old girl from Martensville High School where my children attend high school, and in the past she's supported things like dog rescues.



She was a member of Dragon's Den. She won Dragon's Den at the age of 12 years old, donated over 400 dog beds to rescue shelters across the province. In the past couple of months she's been giving out tattoos for breast cancer awareness, and she's raised over \$800 for breast cancer awareness. She did, in November she did moustache tattoos all around the community in Saskatoon and Martensville and Warman.

And then her latest campaign is she's raising funds for inner city kids in Saskatoon and in the North. So she actually asked and came . . . if I would lend my support to her by playing Santa. So I agreed to play Santa for Maizie. But we've also gone out publicly and supported her. We've put out releases. And this is all about youth, empowering youth, because I believe the youth and the children in our communities and our province are going to be the ones that make change. They're going to be the change makers. They're going to be the ones in our communities that compel their peers to make change. You and I can get up there and we can talk and, you know, children will listen to us, in one ear and out the other. But if it's one of their peers getting up there and talking to them about a certain issue or a certain concern, they listen way more intently than when we're speaking.

So you know, things like that, lending our voice to the youth. Because what I've noticed is when our office speaks, particularly because it's about our children, our youth, people tend to listen. So I wanted to, you know give our voice back to the children and youth. So I think that's kind of part of what we're planning to do in the future and we've already started to do.

The other piece that I really want to focus on is education as being the key for our children and our youth moving forward, particularly for our First Nation and Métis youth. I come from that educational background and I'm of the firm belief that education is the key for First Nation and Métis people getting out of the situations that they're in, whether that's poverty, whether that's being overrepresented in our jail systems, in our child welfare systems, in many of our systems. And education doesn't just end at K to 12. That also is . . . Part of education is a lifelong learning piece, so working with our parents and grandparents as well.

So those are some of the things that we really want to focus on, bringing more of that proactive, you know, and working more closely with our Education ministry on how to improve things like our First Nation and Métis graduation rates, our attendance, our engagement levels in our school system, which will in the future I guess reduce all the pressures upon other levels of government.

So that will I guess in turn require some investment from our government, because there's a few reports out there lately that have come out. If we invest in education in our First Nation and Métis youth at this early stage in life, some of the early estimates are over \$90 billion in savings. So I think if we can be more proactive rather than reactive all the time, I think that that's one of the things that we can do.

So just a couple of little, you know, little tidbits of where I want to take the office in the future and where we're looking to be in the future moving forward. I've been in the position for just

over a month. During that time, I've travelled already throughout the North where some of the province's most vulnerable children and youth reside, who are in most need of our services. That was in direct result to the crises that we've had in the North around the northern suicides.

Accompanying me, I've had my dedicated staff who routinely travel across the province. What I've learned, we have five different regional advocates that go out across the province and work for the children and youth in those areas. Our advocates and investigators regularly consult with ministries and First Nation agencies in a spirit of co-operation and respect to achieve positive outcomes for all children and youth who access our services.

And we noticed in the last year that the number of youth and children accessing our services has actually gone up by 19 per cent, which I believe is a positive. Because it's really powerful for youth and children to be able to advocate on their own, and it's really good that our office has the ability to allow them to do that. And that's what I mean also by giving them our voice and lending them our voice as well.

My priorities for the coming year will be to focus on finding ways to reduce the disproportionately high number of First Nation and Métis youth in care, look at mental health services in Saskatchewan — particularly in the North — and release a special report on youth suicides. That was something that we did within the first week of my mandate. I know it was brought up in the House by both our Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, that that was something that they hoped that we would focus on. And I learned relatively quickly, in the first few days on the job, that that is something that we definitely have to focus on. So we made a commitment in, I think, day 3 on the job that we would release a special report on suicides in the North. So I kind of hit the ground running there.

I've prepared, and present to you today, the 2017-18 budget proposal on behalf of the Advocate for Children and Youth office that balances both fiscal responsibility while maintaining existing service delivery levels for children, youth, and their families in the province. The budget, as presented, is a zero-growth budget. And in order to make zero per cent, we have to manage efficiencies within this budget to . . . [inaudible] . . . current service levels.

As identified in our written submission, we have asked for in-range adjustments of up to 2 per cent for eligible staff in the absence of a collective agreement settlement. Any cost-of-living increases, if they occurred, were not factored into either. The projected cost of in-range adjustments being requested is \$28,000.

In addition to non-personnel services, efficiencies we continue to realize through sharing space, a server, and office equipment with the Ombudsman in Saskatoon. We were just recently advised by Central Services that our accommodation costs will increase by \$50,000 over 2016-2017 costs. As indicated in our budget proposal, these costs were unforeseen and exceptional.

For all other non-personnel costs projected to increase by \$3,800 using a CPI [consumer price index] factor of 1.2 per cent, we plan to absorb these amounts for 2016-2017. The

increase to accommodation cost being requested is \$50,000.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to the Legislative Assembly an appropriation for the Advocate for Children and Youth, vote 076, \$2,684,000 for 2017-2018, which reflects an overall increase of \$78,000 over the 2016-17 budget allocation. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Mr. O'Soup. I'll open the floor up to questions.

**Ms. Ross:** — I do have a question. So what was the rationale for the \$50,000 increase?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — The \$50,000 was an underestimate and consequently undercharged and underpaid. It was by Central Services, so they underestimated and we underpaid over the last two years.

**Ms. Ross:** — Is that a government-owned facility or is that a lease that they have negotiated on your behalf?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — It's a lease negotiated on our behalf.

**The Chair:** — Corey, so you're asking for a \$78,000 bump in the budget. To bring that down to zero, what would that look like?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — That would reduce the number . . . I guess, you know, what we're doing right now is, it's basically status quo. It's just those numbers are things that are out of our control, so that would probably be a staff person which, right now we can't . . . We're already backlogged in many of our case files and we've already seen . . . We've had to make some adjustments, particularly around public education, because of the number of calls that we're taking within our office. So I guess the worst-case scenario is it would be a staff member, but that would put us even further behind on responding to complaints, and already a backlog that we're already facing in a number of our files.

**The Chair:** — David.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you for your presentation. Do you think that you'll be able to . . . need or work with or do the things you need to do in terms of the northern crisis that the youth are facing within the budget you have? What is the impact? That's a huge, huge crisis that we have.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Yes. You know, those are things that we're looking at. Currently we're trying to manage those within our current budget but, as we all know, travelling and doing business in the North is a lot more expensive than doing business in the South. I spent a lot of time up in La Loche the last year, and travelling up there and even eating, grocery shopping, the time that it takes to get to those communities and to do things properly will be an added expense on our behalf. We're going to do our best to do it in the current allotment that we have, but it will be a stretch.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Corey, for the presentation today. Right now we're going to take a short

refreshment break and . . . when we return at 3:15 for item 12.

[The board recessed from 14:28 until 15:14.]

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

**The Chair:** — All right. I'll call the meeting to order here. We're going to move on to item 12, decision item, review of the 2017-18 budget and motion to approve budgetary expenditure estimates for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar. I'll let Ron introduce his staff and proceed with the procedure.

**Mr. Barclay:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. With me is Sandra Arberry who has been my deputy registrar for two years now. And she's really the soul of the lobbyist legislation. We do have a part-time secretary who's leaving us at the end of December, so this is the team. There's the two of us.

When I was in the Ombudsman's office, my dear friend Mary mentioned the office I was locating, and she forgot to mention that it formerly was her solicitor's office. But my budget at the time I was in the Ombudsman's office, other than nickels and dimes for rent, was basically my salary, so I think the public benefited a little bit from the austerity of my office.

[15:15]

I'd like to acknowledge in a big way the major assistance I received from Brad Gurash and his staff from LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] for their tremendous contributions not only in the preparation of our budget, but it's been a big year for the lobbyist registry, and we've had tremendous assistance from the LAS.

I wish to say a few words about my mandate as Conflict of Interest Commissioner and then as the Registrar of Lobbyists. The mandate of the Conflict of Interest office is to coordinate the disclosure of assets held by members, provide advice on conflict of interest issues, conduct enquiries, and provide opinions on compliance with the legislation if required by a member, the Premier, or the Legislative Assembly.

And probably the most important message that I would like to give you today, and I've done it in the past, that particularly with my office . . . I'm an officer of the Legislative Assembly and I respect that and it's independent of government. In my view, the complete independence granted by the commissioner is essential in the carrying out of my duties detailed in the legislation. I remember when I was appointed in 2010 by the Legislative Assembly, two weeks later a resolution was passed and I had to do a major inquiry involving one of the MLAs. And that independence if I don't have it, then I just can't be effective. And I can say unequivocally, it's been honoured by both sides of the House over the little over six years that I've been the commissioner.

I remember vividly as a very young lawyer, arguing a case in the Supreme Court of Canada. When it was over, the Chief Justice at that time, Chief Justice Dickson — he was a westerner; he grew up in Regina — invited me into his office.

And we talked about the judiciary and how he enjoyed the challenges. But he said, the most important aspect of a judge is that he only answers to the law and his conscience, and in my view that applies to my present position.

As commissioner, my primary role is to advise members of the Legislative Assembly, and this is critical I think. If the MLAs come to me for advice, it keeps a lot of people out of difficulty. Members seek my advice and recommendations about their obligations under the Act, and I'm authorized to provide advice in the form of general guidelines to all MLAs. And I also may receive requests for opinions from individual members of the Legislative Assembly by resolution or from the President of the Executive Council.

Each year members must file an annual disclosure statement — I think you're all familiar with that — with my office. And after filing, the member and, if required, the member's spouse, must meet with me to ensure that adequate disclosure has been made and may seek advice about the member's obligation under the legislation. From these disclosure statements, I prepare public disclosure statements. There is transparency, and they're filed with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and they're also available for public inspection by posting online.

I now want to take to deal with the role of the register of the lobbyists. And that's been a huge challenge for me in the last two years. Under the lobbyist legislation, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner also serves as the Registrar of Lobbyists for the province of Saskatchewan. On May the 14th, 2014, *The Lobbyists Act* received assent and I became the registrar.

Lobbying is a very important aspect of the democratic process. Individuals, associations, and corporations have a right to communicate with elected or appointed government officials. I know that from time to time you hear the comment about Tammany Hall, but I disagree. I think it's a really major part of our whole democratic process, and being a bit of a historian, it goes right back to the Magna Carta. And in my annual report I said this democratic tradition of lobbying is deeply rooted in the Magna Carta which confirmed the right of nobles to seek redress of grievances with the king, and the Bill of Rights in 1689 which declares it is the right of the subjects to petition the king.

Now the actual word, lobby, and there's a historical argument over the origin, but it really was the anteroom in the British House of Commons. And the Americans of course disagree. They are of the view that it all started in the Willard Hotel in Washington where Ulysses S. Grant, when he was the president, to get away from the pressures, would take a little walk and go to the hotel and sit in the lobby and clerks would bring him a cognac and a cigar and pretty soon all his friends came in and started lobbying. And that's their version of where the word came from. I like the British system better.

*The Lobbyists Act*, and I think this is really the heart of the legislation, is intended to enhance the integrity and accountability of government by fostering openness and transparency about who is influencing decisions made by public office-holders. Since the Act was passed . . . And I'm very proud that we've had, I think, a major success with the lobbyist legislation when the Act was passed, and when I say we,

Saundra and I performed various tasks to prepare for the launch which included consulting with other jurisdictions, managing . . . We had a whole series of RFPs [request for proposal] for a communications specialist, business consultants to advise on the choice of the company to build the registry, a vendor to build a made-in-Saskatchewan product. And we had 16 participants to develop a made-in registry from Saskatchewan and build and launch a website as well as developing best practice policies and guidelines to administer the legislation.

And our choice — and we took a chance — to develop the registry was a small Regina company, Engineered Code. Its owner and chief shareholder is Nick Hayduk, a consulting engineer and IT [information technology] expert. Our confidence in this organization was well placed as they completed the registry on time without any technical problems and on budget. The cost to develop was much less than the other five finalists and much less than in any other jurisdiction in Canada, and including the maintenance costs — we've entered into a contract with him — is far less than other jurisdictions.

We successfully launched the lobbyist registry on August the 23rd of this year, and we've been getting accolades right across Canada. And the reason I think it's been so successful is because of the lady sitting next to me. She's done an amazing job. And we had a call from Quebec the other day, from Montreal, two senior lobbyists and they said, we deal with lobbyists right across Canada and yours is second to none. And that's a great compliment for Saundra; she's been working day and night at it. And I'm very proud of the registry.

We also have a very successful . . . We had also hired Amplify Digital Marketing under the director to create a website. And if any of you have seen the website, we're all quite proud of it. And the main focus of the website is to provide education and information to the three main stakeholders affected by the Act: that's citizens, public officers, and lobbyists. Under each of these respective sections there is information that will be helpful in understanding the legislation and how it applies to each stakeholder group. Access to the complete text of the Act and the regulations is available from the website. And we hired young actors to perform those roles, and there was a large amount of feedback on the website, and it has all been very positive. The "Are you a lobbyist" quiz is a fun, interactive tool designed for information purposes, and it's been especially well received.

Since the registry was launched, there's been 126 active registrations which includes 427 lobbyists. And that's since August. And throughout, when we were getting ready to launch the lobbyist registry, as a matter of policy, I tried to give detailed progress reports. And I always made a point of not only giving it to the Attorney General who was the minister in charge of the legislation, I always gave a copy to the opposition. And I think it's been very helpful in having a successful launch.

So in summary, my deputy, Saundra, and I are very pleased with the progress that has been made. And repeat again, just these large number of accolades really is a great tribute to Saundra.

Now the good news. Let us examine our budget. Like I told you

earlier, I'm from Scottish heritage and I don't like spending government money. You will observe that our global budget is 23 per cent less than the previous year of 2016-17. The figures are as follows: in 2016-17, it was \$702,261; and this year the amount requested is \$538,435. So that's, I think, quite a deduction. But in fairness, the reduction is due to some extent to the cost saving arising from the successful completion of the registry. In other words, the ongoing expenses for developing the registry are no longer required. These expenses include the sum of 66,000 used to build the registry; i.e. a system development, and \$50,000 for software licences.

There is one minor increase in our budget but if you balance it with the lobbyist registry, we still have that huge deduction. And this is a good news story, and that is in respect to contractual services. The increase is \$30,000 and there's a very legitimate explanation for this increase.

After Ron Samways retired from the LAS, I was able to persuade him to work with my office on a part-time basis under contract. And all of you know Ron. And he's been a tremendous assistance to me over the last six years, and he's going to continue to assist me. And a major portion of this is Ron's income. He's going to really work for four months. And I thank the Speaker; we have an office for him in the legislature. I think it's — what? — 334B. Am I right? Right next to Lyle Stewart's office, so he can just keep the tabs on Mr. Stewart because he's just across the hall.

I hate talking about my salary, but I don't work full time. I work 90 per cent, and that's based on the average salary of all deputy ministers and which is the salary of the other independent officers. And this compensation is fixed by statute. And I'd like to work again for 90 per cent. The other 10 per cent, I want to follow the boys of summer and watch the Blue Jays and the odd day in Palm Springs. I see the Hon. Dustin Duncan shares my love for the Blue Jays.

And what I'm doing is consistent with the practice in the Office of the Ethics Commissioner in Alberta, which is also responsible for the lobbyist legislation there. And it's really a good fit. I mean I thought the government was very wise putting the lobbyist legislation under my mandate because we have a lot of similar problems.

[15:30]

Now I just have a few very brief comments with my budget. I think it speaks for itself. In 2016-17, that was last year, we budgeted 67,000 for contractors to assist with the development of the website and registry, as well as communications for him to assist with the launch. This year the total budget for contractors is 45,000, and that is broken down as follows: Ron Samways's income which I mentioned earlier, and we have a very tiny amount for administrative assistance. I think Sandra and I plan just to have the two of us unless we may need, from time to time, some administrative assistance if both of us are away or on a conference.

And the remaining portion of the 45,000 is to retain the IT specialist, Scott Emery, who is one of the stars in Ottawa who assisted us in developing the registry. His assistance during the development phase was greatly beneficial, as he continues to be

an invaluable source of experience and information during the initial registration period. And we're going to use him throughout this cycle that we're under now.

The second major difference in contractual services this year which contributes to the increase are two major items that last year were listed under the equipment and asset section. They've just been moved to another section. And this amount amounts to \$40,250.

There's a \$9,000 cumulative expense, 750 monthly, associated with the wide-area network connection — we call it WAN — and connections between our office and the Legislative Assembly. And we're getting a great deal of help from the IT services there, and it's there for security reasons.

And then we have a fee of 25,000 for ongoing registry maintenance, and that's under our contract with the builder, ECC [Engineered Code Consulting Inc.], and that's for five years, a five-year contract. And it's all a good news story. And although our registry and website has received wide acclaim from colleagues and stakeholders, we have received a few suggestions from lobbyists on ways to improve the user experience.

In addition, now that we are up and running, we are looking at creating reports to permit us to gather statistical information, and this will benefit for future budgeting process. In discussions with our registry developer, ECC, he feels that they are minor tweaks and this would be no more than \$6,000, and that's included in the 40,250.

So I'm coming back to a total request for our two offices is \$538,435. And we feel the estimate is fair, reasonable, and prudent, and I respectively request that the board approve the amount in its entirety. And if anybody has any questions?

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Ron. It's a pretty detailed presentation of the upcoming year. I'll open the floor up to any questions that might be had by members . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . For the record, Paul Merriman likes Ron's Scottish heritage.

And it's not lost about the decreases in budget, Ron. And understandably it's a different phase of work that you're going into and not all officers can have that sizeable reduction, but it is appreciated, especially in the year that we're facing. So I'd like to thank you for the good work that you do on behalf of everyone in the province. And with that I will move on to the next item of work on our agenda.

**Mr. Barclay:** — Thank you very much.

### Legislative Assembly

**The Chair:** — Item 13, decision item: review of the 2017-18 budget for the Legislative Assembly. There's two parts to this item: (a) is the decision item, motion to approve expenditures from the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund for projects, and decision item on a motion to approve budgetary statutory expenditure estimates and revenue estimates.

I'll turn the floor over to Greg to make his presentation and to

introduce his staff that's with us today.

**Mr. Putz:** — Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll introduce the folks that we have with me here, and it's quite a sizeable delegation, I see. But these are all the program managers that assist us in providing the many services that we provide to you and the public and to some of the officers.

So in no particular order of importance, but I will start with Ken — Ken Ring, our Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. We have Iris Lang, our Principal Clerk. Next to me to my left is Lynn Jacobson, our executive director of member and corporate services. We have Melissa Bennett who's our Legislative Librarian. And we have Brad Gurash, director of finance. And next to him is Mike Halayka, our director of member services. Did I get that right, Mike? I always criticize people for butchering my name, and here I'm doing it myself.

We have Ginette Michaluk, our director of human resources; Darcy Hislop, our chief technology officer; Lenni Frohman, director of parliamentary publications; Lorraine deMontigny, director of visitor services; Cindy Hingley who's Brad's assistant. She's our senior financial analyst, and she helped put our budget together this year. Kathy Burianyak who's our Senior Committee Clerk in charge of our committees branch; and Joelle Perras who's in our parliamentary publications unit. She's in charge of communications, in other words our website and members portal.

But last but not least, I also want to make special mention of Terry Quinn, the mighty Quinn, our new Sergeant-at-Arms. This is Terry's first budget presentation to the board, and as all of you know, Terry joined us at the end of June this year. Actually in June, he was here a few weeks before taking over formally his appointment as Sergeant-at-Arms. And Terry comes from us from executive government.

So now getting to the task at hand, I want to provide all of you with a few broad introductory remarks regarding our budget, then turn over the presentation to Brad to take you through with more of the details.

So as I mentioned, as always we have our program managers in attendance to answer any specific questions you might have on any of the services and support questions you might have for the LAS with respect to our many responsibilities.

I'd like to begin by noting that our budget development for this year follows the same approach that we began in 2012, which was based on monitoring expenditure trends and modelling our budget projections accordingly. And this budget of course continues that approach.

Within that framework, our 2017 funding request aims to maintain our core service delivery to the members as well as to the public. In broad terms, the LAS provides approximately 80 specific core services to you as members, and we support approximately 400-plus individuals, including all MLAs, your CAs [constituency assistant], caucuses, officers of the Assembly, the Speaker and his office, and of course the Legislative Assembly Service itself.

And I'd like to remind you all that every year at this time, those

service commitments we make to you as members are catalogued in the *Guide to Members Services*, and I've stopped bringing a paper copy of it because we're trying to encourage you to use the portal and there's an electronic version of that. And what it is is a description of all of the services and the names and contact information for our key staff which would be available to you 24-7 on the members' portal now, putting in a plug for Joelle and her portal.

So as you'd expect, the support for 61 members, both here and in the constituency, comprises the largest and most significant portion of the Assembly's annual expenditures. And as some of the other officers have expressed, we realize that 2017-18 fiscal year will be a challenging year for all us. So we've developed this budget by taking into consideration the current fiscal situation of the province, the government's commitment to its four-year financial plan as published in its 2016-17 budget, and that plan of course contemplated an expense growth for 2017-18 to be zero per cent.

So with that in mind, the budget that we've submitted here today fully offsets our requested program area resource increases while still reducing our overall expenditures. And I believe that that is reflected in our action plan, which is published in the preface to our budget document.

Now Brad will take you through the details of this year's request but I would like to highlight a few points for you. Our budget proposal represents an overall decrease of \$577,000 or 2.02 per cent from last year. And that decrease is comprised of a reduction of \$425,000 or 2.27 per cent in statutory funding based on members' actual use of the various allowances and expenditures under the board directives, as well as a return of the one-time, election-related funding provided in last year's approved budget request. And there's also a decrease of 152,000 or 1.56 per cent in our non-statutory funding, and I'll remind you that the non-statutory funding is basically for Assembly operations, which includes the Legislative Assembly Service.

So on that last point about the non-statutory funding, what I'd like to point out is that we have assumed a no cost of living or COLA [cost-of-living adjustment] salary adjustment factor for Assembly employees at this time. We've done this to be respectful of the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] public service collective bargaining process that is currently ongoing, which is in keeping with the past practices of this board. In the event that a decision is made on a COLA salary adjustment factor for the public service employees, that would impact our 2017-18 salary levels, and the LAS of course would seek the board's approval to provide a parallel economic adjustment. And this would be in accordance with the requirements of *The Legislative Assembly Act*.

So there are a couple of other final points I'd like to bring to your attention. The board will recall that the 2016-17 budget finalization was delayed until after the election. And consequently in April we met, and the statutory budget request was revised downward to reflect one-time caps placed on members' expenditures in the areas of travel and living expenses and constituency service expenses. The budget we've presented you reflects the expiration of these one-time caps, so that has been restored in this budget.

I'll also remind you that two years ago the board froze increases to MLAs and their constituency offices. In the past few weeks there's been some discussion in the media by some members of the board from both the government and the opposition — at least one of them is sitting in the room here now — and they talked about another MLA freeze. This budget was submitted before those comments were made and it does not, and I'll repeat, does not, include a freeze for MLAs and their offices.

So that concludes my introductory remarks. I'll turn it over to Brad to take you through the main points, how we arrived at our minus 2.02 per cent budget. And then of course our managers will look forward to addressing any questions you might have on our budget or the LAS operation. So, Brad.

**Mr. Gurash:** — Okay. Thank you, Greg. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and board members. I'd like to begin our presentation by highlighting that the foundation of our budget submission is the LAS strategic plan, and its three overarching goals of sustained and enhanced institution of parliament; purposeful services with accountable governance; and effective, responsive work environment.

For 2017-18, we have identified 17 key actions to guide us in achieving our goals for the coming year. These can be found on pages 5 through 7 of your budget submission document. Our primary focus for the coming year, following the completion of election-related activities this past spring and summer, will be on ensuring a smooth transition back to the regular running of the Assembly, and the maintenance of our core service activities for members. Page 8 of our submission includes examples of our regular service delivery and outcomes of the Legislative Assembly Service.

At this time, I'd also like to provide you with a brief overview of the principles and assumptions that were used to develop our 2017-18 budget submission. These details can be found on pages 9 and 10 of your document. As Greg mentioned, our budget was developed to be fiscally responsible and mindful of the information that the Board of Internal Economy was provided by the Minister of Finance, confirming cabinet's commitment to the four-year financial plan as published in the 2016-17 budget, with expense growth for 2017-18 targeted at zero per cent; a return of one-time statutory election-relating funding that was provided in 2016-17; and, as Greg mentioned, the expiry of the Board of Internal Economy-mandated expenditure caps on certain statutory member expense provisions in 2016-17.

[15:45]

As well we estimated, for those provisions that have had a CPI component mandated within the directives, we estimated a 1.3 per cent growth in the consumer price index, again as per Ministry of Finance guidance. And this impacts members' indemnity, additional duties allowances, a little bit in travel and living allowance, caucus resources, and constituency service resources.

Having looked at the CPI, where it's tracking this year, 1.3 per cent is a very accurate number at this juncture. We shouldn't see that moving much at all before the end of this month, I guess, December. And we also base our funding . . . Base

funding has been incorporated to provide, as Greg mentioned, zero per cent cost-of-living increase for all LAS staff, and we've absorbed in-range progression salary adjustments for eligible employees. And as well, our last assumption was the renewal of the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund.

In regards to our actual submission, we're pleased to be able to present a budget that reflects government's stated goal of zero per cent growth. Our 2017-18 budget submission provides for an overall decrease in LAS expenditures of 577,000 or 2.02 per cent. Our statutory funding request provides for a decrease of 425,000 or 2.27 per cent. The statutory portion of the budget includes CPI increases of 1.3 per cent as mandated by the directives, and increases in members' living and travel and constituency service expenses due to the expiry of the expenditure caps from '16-17. These increases have been more than fully offset by a return of election-related funding that was provided in the 2016-17 budget.

Our 2017-18 non-statutory funding request provides for a decrease of 152,000 or 1.56 per cent. Within the statutory and non-statutory portion of the budget, we've identified savings in a number of operational areas such as salaries, contractual services, communications, and supplies which more than fully offset the minimal increases being requested to maintain core service delivery levels.

If I can ask you now to turn to page 14, we will now focus on the details, the more detailed numbers of our budget request. Page 14 you will find our statutory recommendations which break down as follows. And typically on this page, what we do is we take you from last year's number that was approved for '16-17, and we show you how we got to this year's number that we're recommending and requesting for '17-18.

So we start off with our offsets. Our savings in the statutory side of the budget this year are 70,000 which relates to our unexperienced drawdown in telecommunications and related expenses. This gets back to what Greg was speaking about of how we will historically track our training analysis and spending patterns. And we saw even for this year, we're trending out about \$70,000 less there, so we felt we don't need to be asking for that money in 2016-17. It was a unique year last year as well because we're bringing on three new members, so we now have some historical data to tell us where we're trending at with the individual new members that are being brought on and the overall provision.

In MLA travel and living expenses, this is the net effect: we had a savings of \$131,000, and where this comes from is part of the calculation of all the members' travel expense provisions. One key component to that is the mileage rate as published by the National Joint Council that the members adopted as their rate for reimbursable expenses. That rate dropped this year, so we experienced our first drop in a couple of years on that. So it resulted in an overall cumulative savings of \$131,000.

Then we have the return of our one-time election funding which came primarily for . . . The bulk of it was the transition allowances both for the members and the constituency assistants. It was 932,000 in members' transition allowance and 140,000 for the constituency assistants' transition allowances. Given the unique timing of this past election, we have

completed one full . . . we will have completed one full fiscal year. So we get those entire savings and we aren't overlapping into another fiscal year as usually happens with a November election cycle. As well we have a savings of 61,000 which is one-time funding provided to caucuses for information technology resources.

The increases this year, the overall CPI increases for member expense provisions is 128,000. That's the net impact of CPI across the board both on member remuneration directives and telephone . . . not telephone, but travel and constituency services provisions.

Then we have the expiry of the mandated BOI [Board of Internal Economy] expenditure caps, so that then allows members to have access to those additional funds both within travel and constituency services. So that totalled an amount of \$710,000, broken down as 366,000 in MLA travel and living expenses. I believe each member was reduced by \$6,000 per member in travel. And then in constituency service it's \$344,000, and that includes the 10 K term provision which was eliminated for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

As well we have increases in caucus resources; 26,000 is related to the mandated consumer price index increase for both government and opposition caucuses. As well we also have an increase for funding for independent resources of an independent member that we did not have in last year's budget submission. There are no savings on that because that independent member was in cabinet, so it didn't impact the caucus resource calculation because cabinet members are excluded from that calculation each year.

If we turn to page 15, I'll now walk you through our non-statutory budget submission. And in our non-statutory budget submission our overall decrease of \$152,000 is made up of . . . We have savings that we've identified through salary adjustments and staffing changes within the LAS, a net savings of \$98,000 overall in our salaries. So we're not seeing any increases in salaries for 2017-18.

And contractual services, we have return of consultant funding that we used for human resource-related projects for the LAS. In communications, we had savings related to the competition for the Advocate for Children and Youth recruitment; the return of the composite photo funding that we incur each year during the election cycle, each election cycle; and then \$8,000 return of election funding related to . . . There was a thought that there could be two openings last year, so in our budget submission last year, we requested additional dollars for an additional opening day tea. And then in supplies and services, we have a return of \$20,000 related to library catalogue software implementation. And that is now fully implemented, and that was one-time funding so we're returning that. And then we also have a return of \$2,000 for the funding that's provided for the Speaker's apparel.

For increases, there are minimal increases there. We initially have \$42,000 there noted above for the hosting of the Canadian-American Clerks and Legislative Secretaries Conference. We're proposing a contractual services increase in security for bringing on potentially an additional commissionaire. And our Hansard operations, it's for upgrades

to the Hansard transcription software. And then some additional requirements in the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program, \$4,000 increase there. Some security equipment, \$10,000. And then enhancements to the vignette program, the History Alive! vignette program that has been very successful over the last two years.

And similar to last year's submission, page 16 of our submission identifies our LAS revenue estimates for the upcoming year. Our revenue estimate for 2017-18 is the same as it's been for the last five years of about \$4,200. We did have a bit of a bump last year due to the election because retiring members did purchase some assets. So we had more than 4,200 in '16-17, but we're estimating it will be back down. And a lot of this comes from, again personal reimbursements from members and staff for usage of telephone and stuff out of the library for the use of photocopiers, public use of photocopiers.

And the last component of our budget is the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, commonly referred to as RARF, which is located on page 17. And the current term of RARF expires at the end of the '16-17 fiscal year that we're in, and the LAS would be seeking to have RARF renewed for another five-year term. RARF was established in 2007 to provide resources to support improvements to the Legislative Assembly Service and the Legislative Assembly facilities, replacement of furnishings, non-capital equipment, and major capital asset acquisitions. RARF is incorporated within our LAS base budget allocation, and page 17 of our budget submission provides a list of the number of value-added projects that RARF has been utilized over the years to benefit both the Legislative Assembly Service and the members that would not otherwise have been funded within our regular core operational funding.

For 2017-18, the LAS has identified one major RARF project it would like to undertake: the continued renewal and enhancement of security for the Legislative Building and precinct, which will be spoken to in greater detail in a few minutes.

I'd like to thank the Board of Internal Economy for their time and consideration of our 2017-18 budget submission and will invite any questions board members may have at this time.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much. First question for you will be coming from Dustin.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thanks for the presentation. I do have a question about the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund; I'll maybe refer to it as that.

**Mr. Gurash:** — RARF?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — No, Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund is fine. So in the past, the five-year . . . So you're seeking another five-year term with a value of 250 per year. In the past has that been . . . Would the board have seen kind of what the five-year plan is a year at a time? Or kind of, this is the five-year plan in terms of what we're looking at or what we'd like to try to achieve over that five years? Or like I said before, is this more, next year we'd see what next year's plan is?

**Mr. Putz:** — Well if I could answer that, in some years, yes we do present. It's more or less project specific. So for instance some projects may be done over the span of three years, so we'd present to you a three-year plan for refurbishing that asset, you know.

Issues like that may have been the de-acidification of library books or the video archiving of proceedings of the Assembly. So a few years ago we presented a project. It was a three-year project to convert all those old magnetic tapes to digital just to preserve the historic record, because we have a statutory responsibility to permanently retain the record of the Legislative Assembly. So those would be a couple examples of that.

In other years we did present a multi-year budget for when the library stack area was refurbished in the Walter Scott Building. And the board felt that rather than do it over two years, they actually increased our funding by \$100,000 to get it all done in one year to take advantage of the Central Services refurbishment of the Walter Scott Building. So does that give you a sense of how the fund works?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Yes it does. I'm sorry, I'm not familiar, really familiar with a lot of the details in terms of the security review that was done, I guess '15-16. But the security renewal in this year that's being proposed, is it likely that future boards next year or two years from now, this board will be looking at additional security as kind of the main focus of where that money would go?

**Mr. Putz:** — I guess that's up to the board, because we presented a master plan to the board last year and that project involved an extensive security review which began after the attack in Ottawa on October 22nd, 2014. And a proposal was put to the board and that actually was going to be multi-year funding, and the total of that came to approximately \$1 million.

[16:00]

Now given the financial situation of the province, that project was reduced considerably and we proceeded, in this last fiscal year, with just the RARF funding of that. We would have come to ask for additional funding to bring that master plan to fruition, and that included a number of enhancements as far as the way people were received in this building, as well as the camera surveillance system which was quite old and antiquated. So realizing that the master plan is unlikely to happen in the next few years, we're trying to piecemeal this, and that's what we're doing with this RARF fund.

And actually Terry's here and, if you'd like, he can go through the actual project because it would be the second part of rejuvenating the camera surveillance system. And you'll recall it was even in the news a few years ago, that our system was so terrible that people were just blurry. And a lot was made of, we couldn't identify anybody, the ones that were urinating on the building and that sort of thing. So I mean that was a minor incident compared to the overall plan that was presented. But at the heart of it was replacing all of our cameras and then putting other camera locations to cover the parking lots and those areas where people didn't feel secure, especially at night.

But Terry's the expert on security and, if you're interested, Terry can walk you through the plan that we have for this year.

**The Chair:** — Any questions? David.

**Mr. Forbes:** — We can go to Terry first.

**The Chair:** — Sure.

**Mr. Quinn:** — So we had big plans for last year with our RARF fund of 250,000 and what we were going to accomplish. Unfortunately it didn't work out the way we thought. We were hoping to replace our existing cameras with . . . from analogue to high-definition IP [Internet protocol] cameras. We had hoped to add an additional six cameras along with the existing, but our tenders came back and we could just replace our 14 existing, plus upgrade our platform. And Darcy would know more about how that works. But so now with what's happening this year, we'll have a new platform that can, with the capabilities of adding many extra cameras.

So what we're trying to do this year is just get the basics so that we're covering our exits, our entrances, and our parking lots. As you're aware — I'm sure you are aware — it's become much busier out front and in the area around here, and we don't have the capability now to see anybody or identify anything. So that's what we're hoping to do for the safety. So to get all the entrances, plus the parking lots, is what we're looking for.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. David.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, I'm curious in terms of the telecommunications, how many out-of-town MLAs don't have landlines?

**Mr. Gurash:** — Don't have landlines?

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, well you can answer it, either these many have landlines, like we can . . . whichever. The reason I'm asking is, you know, I cancelled mine a couple of years ago and it's a savings of I think over \$1,000 or something a year, so it's significant.

**Mr. Gurash:** — MLAs do have a landline into their constituency office.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, but I mean in their . . . sorry, in their condos or whatever in Regina.

**Mr. Gurash:** — Oh in their condos and that?

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes.

**Mr. Gurash:** — Oh, that's . . . we would have to . . . I'd have to take another look at that. We would be able to get that number for the board quickly.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes.

**Mr. Gurash:** — But it's not something we regularly track.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well I think that might be worthwhile, because many have landlines that probably aren't being utilized at all,



where, after you've realize nobody's phoned after six months, why have it when everybody's using their cellphones. And related to that . . .

**Mr. Gurash:** — There are a number there we will . . . we do typically just contact them on their cellphone versus . . .

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes. Yes, I'm just talking about their condos in the city here, because we have that very good plan of having the phones in our condos.

But related to that, and I'm not sure where this is at and whose responsibility it is, but you know when you talk about revenue, that MLAs are supposed to, are encouraged to pay a certain percentage every year or every quarter. I know we had this discussion about a year ago and we were . . . I don't know where we left it, whether services were going to give us reminders. I don't know or I'm not sure whether we've done that, but maybe that's something we could have a conversation about afterwards because I know, I think, we may be behind on that. So I don't know where that's at.

**Mr. Gurash:** — I know typically prior to the fiscal year end we get quite an influx. Usually during the fiscal year, it's more of the honour system up to that point, but most members do catch up in that March . . . Like usually end of February, leading into March, we see a really big pickup on the reimbursements coming into the office.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I know on our side the caucus Chair sends out a reminder, because Cheryl sends me a reminder and so . . . It's all about reminders, and that's an important thing. I'm curious in terms of the constituency assistant transition allowance, how that played out in terms of the cost. You saved 140,000 where you were anticipating . . . so how much did it cost? How many . . .

**Mr. Gurash:** — It was like 140,000 due to the nature of the timing of the election. It was really . . . and for the most part a lot of non-returning members had declared at that juncture and that, so we had a really good idea of where that number was going to land given the number of members who elected not to seek re-election.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Oh okay. Well thank you. Those are just the questions I had. Thanks.

**The Chair:** — Any more? Well just a general comment. In this role I have to be impartial, but this is probably the best submission today.

**Mr. Putz:** — Can I put on the record, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Chair:** — The leadership of this department is outstanding. So thank you very much for preparation and for once again, on this one, coming with real dollars that are . . . have been decreased. And I appreciate the awareness of where we are in the cycle, and I'd like to thank everyone that had involvement in preparing this document. So thank you very much.

So we're going to carry on with a couple of motions. Paul, I believe you have some motions ready to be introduced, and if

you have any comments, opening comments about this section.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate all the presentations from all of the independent officers of the Legislative Assembly, and there seemed to be a theme carrying throughout them of they're also very aware of what the responsibilities of the government is and the fiscal restraints that we're facing with a \$1 billion shortfall in resource revenue.

We very much appreciate that all the independent officers are understanding of that and are prepared to work with the government to be able to make sure that we are fiscally responsible with the taxpayer dollars, because it is all taxpayer dollars that all of us are taking home and feeding our family with and putting a roof over our heads. So very much appreciate all of the work that you've done on the budgetary side to make sure that our taxpayer dollars are being spent in the most fiscally responsible way. So I just wanted to say that off the bat.

Did you want to say anything . . . [inaudible].

**Mr. McCall:** — I just want to hear the motion.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Oh okay. So in saying that, I do have a few motions to bring forward. Motion no. 13(b)2:

That directive 6, constituency assistant expenses, be amended by adding new sections (10) and (11) as follows:

(10) Notwithstanding section (8), the option to provide a lump sum bonus payment to a constituency assistant is suspended until March 31st, 2018.

(11) That the authority for a member to approve and increase the hourly rate to pay for a constituency assistant is suspended until March 31st, 2018.

And this amendment shall take effect today, December 6th, 2016.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Paul's moved the motion. We'll look for a seconder.

**Ms. Ross:** — I second that.

**The Chair:** — All those in favour? All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Motion passed.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll move the next motion, which is item 13(b)3:

That directive 7.2, caucus resources, be amended by adding a new section (9) as follows:

(9) Notwithstanding section (8), for the fiscal year 2017-2018, the annual change in the Consumer Price Index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the

rates for caucus funding as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1st, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31st, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Seconded by Laura. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Paul.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move agenda item 13(b)4:

That directive 10.1, resources for the office of an independent member, be amended by adding a new section (9) as follows:

“(9) Notwithstanding section (8), for fiscal year 2017-2018, the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for granting funding as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.”

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1st, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31st, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Look for a seconder.

**Ms. Ross:** — I second that.

**The Chair:** — Laura Ross. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Paul.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Agenda item 13(b)5:

That directive 11, grant to the office of the Leader of the Opposition, be amended by adding a new section (3) as follows:

“(3) Notwithstanding section (2), for fiscal year 2017-2018, that the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and that the rates for granting funding as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.”

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1st, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31st, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Seconder? Laura. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Paul.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move agenda item 13(b)6:

That directive 17.2, committee indemnity and expenses, be amended by adding the new section (9) as follows:

“(9) Notwithstanding section (8), for fiscal year 2017-2018, the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and that the rates per diem indemnity as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.”

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1st, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31st, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Seconder? Dustin. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — We have a question on one?

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes. How many of these are there?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I’ve got two more motions.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Okay. I just wanted to say I’ve not experienced this with money motions. And we’ve not had copies of these motions, so I don’t know what we’re doing here. For me, I want to have that on record that this is a bit of a surprise.

**Mr. McCall:** — I guess, if I could . . . further to this.

**The Chair:** — Yes.

**Mr. McCall:** — There’s been discussion certainly through the media in terms of MLAs forgoing the cost of living increase as per April 1st of this year. The rest of the parcel of motions has not been, discussion of that has not been had with the opposition.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Okay.

**Mr. McCall:** — Let alone the precise wording of the raft of motions that the members have presented here. So just to get that on the record.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Yes. And that’s fine, Mr. McCall. These are the ones that have, through the media and through other things, through other means that we have been able to work through this to make sure that there is a freeze across all government constituency expenses, as well as throughout to show our fiscal restraint.

**The Chair:** — Just on that note, Paul, as well, these were

drafted the same as two years ago when the decision was made to freeze the salaries across the board for MLAs and CAs. So the instruction I received was these were the same as what was done two years ago, and that was what was to be drafted up. So, and if . . . I'll kind of leave it at that.

**Mr. McCall:** — I guess if we're working here under two different understandings of what's on the table, I guess we'll just note that for future . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Sure.

**Mr. McCall:** — And proceed.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Okay. And I would say that typically what we've done with any of this is go in camera even for a few minutes, say, and then come back out of camera, so we're all on board.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — We can if that's your preference.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I wouldn't mind if we did that right now, even for five minutes.

**The Chair:** — Somebody needs to move . . .

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — I'll move that we move in camera.

**The Chair:** — Dustin has moved that we move in camera, seconded by Paul. We'll be in camera for 10 minutes.

[The board continued in camera from 16:15 until 16:29.]

**The Chair:** — I'll recognize Paul Merriman.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll reintroduce motion 13(b)6:

That directive 17.2, committee indemnity and expenses, be amended by adding a new section (9) as follows:

“(9) Notwithstanding section (8), for fiscal year 2017-2018, the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates per diem indemnity as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.”

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Secunder? Dustin. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Paul.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move agenda item 13(b)7:

That directive 19, Board of Internal Economy indemnity

and expenses, be amended by adding a new section (8) as follows:

“(8) Notwithstanding section (7) for the fiscal year 2017-2018, the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates per diem indemnity as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.”

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Seconded? Laura. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Paul.

[16:30]

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move agenda 13(b)8:

That directive 21, annual indemnity and allowances, be amended by adding a new section (9) as follows:

“(9) Notwithstanding section (8), for fiscal year 2017-2018, the annual change in the consumer price index for Saskatchewan is deemed to be zero and the rates for annual indemnity and allowances as captured within this directive shall remain unchanged.”

And that this amendment shall take effect on April 1, 2017 and shall lapse on March 31, 2018 unless extended by the Board of Internal Economy.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Seconded?

**Ms. Ross:** — I second that.

**The Chair:** — Laura. All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize Paul.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last item, agenda item no. 14 under other business. I move the following motion:

That notwithstanding the provisions of directive 2.1, telecommunications and related expenses, and upon request, the Board authorizes the widow of the late member for Saskatoon Meewasin to purchase her husband's cellphone in accordance with the requirements of the members' capital asset and disposal policy; and further,

That this order is made in deep sympathy to the unique circumstances of the sudden passing of the member and the wish of Mrs. Parent to retain the phone, and accordingly, shall not be considered a precedent applicable to any other circumstances.

I so move.

**The Chair:** — Seconded? Laura. All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

All right. Well I'd like to thank the members and the staff for being able to attend today. I appreciate all the work that has gone into this, and I'd like to just wish everyone a Merry Christmas and safe travels home. Dustin will make a motion of adjournment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — I will.

**The Chair:** — All those in favour say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[The board adjourned at 16:33.]