



**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

**HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT**

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No. 1 — January 14, 2019

## **BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

Hon. Mark Docherty, Chair  
Regina Coronation Park

Hon. Greg Brkich  
Arm River

Mr. Dan D'Autremont  
Cannington

Mr. David Forbes  
Saskatoon Centre

Hon. Jeremy Harrison  
Meadow Lake

Hon. Paul Merriman  
Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland

Ms. Nicole Sarauer  
Regina Douglas Park

[The board met at 08:32.]

Chief Electoral Officer

**The Chair:** — Okay. Well welcome, everyone, to the Board of Internal Economy meeting for January the 14th, 2019. We've got a full agenda. And again, welcome all the officers. Thanks for being here.

So to start with, I need . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, the members that are here, yes. Paul Merriman, Minister Merriman; Greg Brkich; David Forbes; and Nicole Sarauer are here. And at my table we've got Sheila and Hayley. And yes, we're good to go.

All right, so I need . . . We've got the proposed agenda. I need somebody to move approval of the agenda. Nicole. Secunder? Mr. Merriman.

I need a motion to approve the minutes from April of 2018. Mr. Brkich and seunder, Ms. Sarauer.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Just one change. My name is spelled wrong.

**The Chair:** — Name is spelled wrong? Oh, from the previous minutes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Yes. That's not a problem.

**The Chair:** — We're terribly sorry.

Okay, I've got six items to table, six reports, and then we'll get going. So item no. 1, tabling of the Legislative Assembly Service *Mid-Year Report on Progress* for the period of April 1st to September 30th, 2018.

Item no. 2, tabling of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's third quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2018-2019.

Item no. 3, tabling of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Registrar of Lobbyists' third quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2018-2019.

Item no. 4, tabling of the Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's third quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2018-2019.

Item no. 5, tabling of audit letter for the Board of Internal Economy from the Provincial Auditor.

And item no. 6, tabling of letter of response to Provincial Auditor from the Board of Internal Economy.

It's nice to join us, Mr. D'Autremont and Minister Harrison.

All right. So we're at item no. 7. So we're going to review the 2019-2020 budget and motion to approve statutory estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

With us we've got Mr. Boda, the Chief Electoral Officer. Welcome sir, and if you could introduce who's with you.

**Mr. Boda:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, for inviting us here today to discuss Elections Saskatchewan's 2019-2020 budget estimates with board members. I have with me today Jeff Kress who's our deputy chief electoral officer for operations and Jennifer Colin who's our deputy chief electoral officer in charge of corporate services and electoral finance.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to take about 15 minutes to offer a brief review of our budget estimate document and some highlights for our plans for the next year, and then following that we'd be happy to take some questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — That's exactly what we're looking for, so thanks so much for that. Anywhere up to 20 minutes of discussion and then 10 minutes of questions is what we've allotted. But 15 minutes is great, and I'll leave it to you. Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Boda:** — Well we'll see where this takes us. For several years now, board members have heard me speak about the need to modernize our election system. And to be clear, I'm not referring to Saskatchewan's first past the post electoral system or to the process by which votes are translated into seats within this building, but I'm referring to the administrative and operational processes by which citizens cast their ballots and the way that our election management body engages with key stakeholders including candidates, registered political parties, and elected MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

Because I have been talking about modernization for some time, I do want to let you know that in early December we needed to rewrite a substantial portion of the budget submission you have before you. Ordinarily we don't like to redo work, but we were pleased to do so because Bill 166, *The Election Amendment Act, 2018* was introduced and passed in the Legislative Assembly on December the 5th, with support from both sides of the aisle. The passage of this legislation follows the direction set out in volume 4 of my report on the last general election, providing Elections Saskatchewan with confirmation that it could institute phase 1, involving a modernized advance voting process, in many constituencies for the 2020 election.

This modernized process will see the use of electronic poll books, ballot tabulators, as well as electronic sharing of information traditionally provided to parties and candidates by scrutineers. Given the scope and scale of these changes for Elections Saskatchewan, we have been planning and preparing for modernization for some time now, but the passage of this legislation is allowing us to bring many discussions from the hypothetical into the real world.

So while we have had to do some rewriting and rework, I want to say how much I appreciate the collaboration that has gone on between those of you in this room and in the Assembly in recent months, and how proud I am to be working with our key stakeholders and our team at Elections Saskatchewan to begin a process of modernizing and fundamentally modernizing the way that we have participated in our democratic process since 1905. The kind of collaboration that we're seeing is an example of how democracy should work. Our system of governance involves a competition between candidates, parties, and ideas, but at the

same time the rules of the competition have to be agreed to in advance by participants. I would argue that there's little more important in democracy than that. So thank you, on both sides, as we move forward together.

Modernization is of course one of our key priorities in the coming year and is in fact a part of our organization's strategic imperative, but there's also the matter of the general election, pending the passage of bills 133 and 134, scheduled for October 26, 2020. Now October 2020 may seem far away, but if we jump forward to the end of the budget year that we're discussing today, March 2020, we will be roughly six months from issuing the writs of the election for that event. And when you're preparing to deliver an election, six months is really no time at all. Ultimately fiscal year 2019-2020 is a critical year in our preparations for delivering Saskatchewan's 29th general election.

Now the two ideas that I've touched on — modernization and preparing for the election — are the core focus of our budget submission. And I'm going to ask Jeff Kress to expand on these ideas and introduce a few of our key priorities for the coming fiscal year.

**Mr. Kress:** — All right. Thank you, Michael. Yes, our budget this year focuses on two priorities with a number of smaller sub-priorities beneath them. Michael's offered some initial comments on advance voting services modernization, focusing primarily on the importance of collaborative efforts to finalize legislation, enabling phase I of electoral modernization.

This was a very important first step. We knew that if legislation allowing us to move forward wasn't introduced, at some point in time we would need to begin planning for a strictly traditional advance voting process.

Given new legislation, we can continue with our planning, specifically that of modernizing. First, it means we'll be using electronic poll books or e-poll books. Second, we are introducing ballot tabulators. Many of you have seen tabulators in use during municipal elections here in the province.

All of this of course requires a tremendous amount of work to implement. We need to develop and create new processes, manuals, policies, and so on. And these are not just new process and plans for the polling location. Advance voting modernization will have ripple effects from the polling location to the returning office and through into our head office.

In addition to innovating with respect to advance voting, we will also continue our work to find a long-term replacement for our election management system, known as ESPREE. [Elections Saskatchewan permanent register of eligible electors]. This has been a priority for some time now and the specifics of our plans in this area will be covered in more detail by Jennifer Colin when she provides an update and overview of the numbers associated with our budget in a few minutes' time.

The budget also prioritizes a number of IT [information technology]-related activities, an updated schedule to take place over the coming year. First, the online and political party financial reporting tool, something we refer to as ELMS [Electoral Management System], will be updated with increased

functionality and capability.

Second, we will be looking in more detail at the issue of cybersecurity. Cybersecurity is a very newsworthy topic in the context of elections these days, and seeing how we can improve our own data and information security is important to us. As part of this, we expect to be communicating and working closely with our partners in the province's six registered political parties, who may have similar concerns to varying degrees.

We're also watching what our partner EMBs [election management body] across the country are doing. Elections New Brunswick had some interesting efforts to combat what we call fake news during their recent election.

Recruiting and hiring our field leadership team will remain a key priority for us in fiscal year 2019-2020. The team consists of returning officers, election clerks. These are the people who administer elections in the province's 61 consistencies, as well as a number of supervisory returning officers who liaise between the field and our head office team. By the end of the coming fiscal year, we will have a field leadership team of more than 120 members in place. Most of our work in this area in the coming year will focus on adding election clerks throughout the province.

Another key priority for the coming year will involve onboarding and training our field leadership team members. We know once we hire the right people we need to train them on their position, and that'll be a major focus of the next year.

One of the approaches that we took in the last election cycle was bringing together large groups of field team members for training and orientation in Regina and Saskatoon, and that could still happen this time around. But we are really exploring and planning to conduct some smaller training and orientation sessions throughout the province.

An example of this would be our plans to review and, where needed, update polling division boundaries. Meeting in smaller, geographically similar groups would allow us to devote more attention and resources to specific challenges and situations.

[08:45]

Another priority focuses on work we are doing to prepare to establish returning offices next year. There's a substantial procurement process, including securing office furniture, computers, multi-function printers, and related equipment. Acquiring these items requires public procurement processes that can take many months to complete. This will be followed by contract negotiations to make sure that we are getting a reasonable price and to ensure that the provider can meet our needs and expectations.

Adding to this complexity for this election is the modernization initiative that we previously spoke about. For the first time we'll be shipping out tabulators and computers, not only to returning offices but also to individual advance polling locations. This is another layer of complexity that we have to plan and manage for moving forward.

A final item I'll highlight today focuses on our work we are doing to build and strengthen our relationships with key stakeholders

throughout the province. The list of people, organizations that an elections management body relies on leading up to a general election is staggering. It includes, for example, the health region but also the chief medical health officer and his team who keep us apprised of things like flu outbreaks and potential health risks. It includes hospitals and their liaison staff who we need to work with us to offer voting to anyone who happens to be in the hospital during an electoral event. And it even includes personal care homes, both registered ones and smaller ones which simply may have only a few residents. We need to be able to offer voting services to each and every one of these individuals.

Organizations within the health sector are just one sector in which we must collaborate. There are many more that we could touch on today, but we have limited time.

In conclusion, I hope that this has provided a sense of what we are working towards in fiscal year 2019-2020, and we'd be happy to discuss any of these plans further during the question-and-answer portion of the meeting.

**Mr. Boda:** — Thank you, Jeff. At this point I'd like to ask Jennifer Colin to offer some insight on the numbers associated with this submission.

**Ms. Colin:** — Thank you, Michael. Consistent with how Elections Saskatchewan has presented recent submissions, we continue to break down our costs into two categories. The first is our ongoing administrative costs. That includes rent, salaries, and other costs associated with our core operations. The second is event-related costs. These are the costs associated with preparing for and delivering scheduled electoral events.

For the coming year, our administrative costs are projected at \$2.82 million, an increase of about \$13,000 over last year. For most of the year we had been planning for a status quo administrative budget, but the proposed changes to the provincial and municipal election dates have created a pressure for us that we cannot absorb.

For the last several years, Elections Saskatchewan and the city of Regina's election team have shared warehouse space here in the city. This has worked very well, allowing us to more fully utilize warehouse space, because provincial and municipal elections took place in different years, so we were not in the warehouse during their peak times and they were not in the warehouse during our peak time. However, given the proposed changes and only two weeks between provincial and municipal election dates, it simply won't be possible for us to share a space in 2020.

For the short term, we have negotiated what we're calling a 12-month lease holiday, beginning in January 2020, during which Elections Saskatchewan will become responsible for the entire cost of the warehouse. The impact on our 2019-2020 budget is approximately \$13,000, the amount of the increase that we have requested.

Next year, in fiscal 2020-2021, there will be an impact of about \$39,000, after which we will need to work with the city of Regina to come up with a long-term plan. It may be possible that we can continue to share during the off years, but it may be possible that this relationship will no longer be sustainable and we'll have to go our separate ways.

The remainder of the administrative budget was relatively static, with increases in some areas and decreases in others. One decrease that I would like to draw your attention to is that we have not budgeted for a cost-of-living increase for staff during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. We had included a COLA [cost-of-living adjustment] increase for our staff last year, which did not happen. Should a cost-of-living increase be awarded during the coming fiscal year, it would become a pressure for the organization that would need to be managed.

Moving now to event-related costs, these are set at \$2.53 million for the coming fiscal year. As with our entire budget submission, these costs are primarily related to two areas: modernization, and getting ready for the coming general election. And Jeff mentioned that I would offer a bit more detail on our efforts to replace our election management system, or our EMS.

In last year's budget, Elections Saskatchewan asked for and was allocated approximately \$635,000 in capital funding to procure a replacement for our EMS. As we completed our procurement, we realized that it would not be possible to finalize this work in advance of the next general election, and attempting to do so would have resulted in substantial operational risk. With this in mind, we've indicated in our quarterly forecast to the board and to the Ministry of Finance, that the majority of the capital funding will not be spent this year, and we're currently forecasting to be underspent by approximately \$500,000.

Moving forward, we have selected a commercial application that will, over time, provide the core EMS functionality that we need but over a longer period of time than we had originally planned. Over the coming year our focus will be on developing the functionality required to support modernization. The use of e-poll books and an online portal to allow for real-time access to strike off data will be developed. Then immediately following the 2020 general election, we'll begin the configuration and development of all other functionality required. To accomplish this, many of the term staff who are brought on to assist with the delivery of the 2020 general election will be retained through the 2021-2022 fiscal year to assist with the testing and implementation of our new EMS. Michael.

**Mr. Boda:** — Thank you, Jennifer. Before moving on to the Q & A [question and answer], I want to be clear that we've been mindful of costs and the province's overall economic condition when developing this budget and in determining the priorities we're talking about today. Our split warehouse with the city of Regina, for the past several years, is an excellent example of this. By partnering with the city we were able to reduce costs both for the province and for the municipality while also ensuring we both had professional, secure warehouse space. While I'm disappointed in this particular result, we will continue to seek collaborative efforts like this one that will allow us to be even more cost-efficient while helping to build capacity for running elections in the province at all levels of governance.

To conclude, I simply want to state for the record how historic Saskatchewan's next general election will be, as we enter into phase 1 of three planned phases of modernization. For the first time we'll have technology in polling locations and some of our advance polls, the first major change to our election system in more than a hundred years. With the possible exception of the permanent register of voters, this is the most significant change

to the act of voting in the province in decades. And I am personally very excited about the long-term benefits for our voters who will, over the next three election cycles, have greater opportunities to vote in the manner, time, and place that makes sense to them; to our registered political parties and candidates who begin to have real-time access to an online portal that'll show who has voted; and finally to our workers. Some of our advance poll teams were counting upwards of 800 ballots on election night, a time-consuming, repetitive task of the highest importance. With tabulators it is possible that these advance polls will become the very first, and not the very last, to report.

This past summer I had the opportunity to see the technology at work first-hand in Ontario's general election, and I am excited to see it happen here. Now Ontario opted to roll everything out province-wide in one election cycle. Here in Saskatchewan I have proposed a more measured and methodical approach that will see full-scale modernization take place over the next three elections. This phased-in approach will allow us to learn and implement improvements during each subsequent election.

Our budget request for 2019-2020 represents our ongoing commitment to providing accessible electoral events with the highest level of integrity and to advancing the idea of electoral excellence at the most reasonable cost possible. So I would ask the Board of Internal Economy recommend to government that the allocation of \$5,353,634 to Elections Saskatchewan be approved for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

And I'd like to thank once again the members of the board for the work you've done to help the province move forward with respect to electoral modernization. I'd also like to thank all board members for your support over the past year and moving forward. Mr. Speaker, at this point we'd be happy to take some questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you so much for your presentation. I will open it up for questions. Mr. Brkich.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you for your presentation. I'm just going over your budget. I've got a couple of, I'll start with just two questions. You can answer them. And one of them I could have found out myself; I just didn't check. But do you have what Manitoba's annual budget is for their election office? They're fairly compatible to us in size and population.

**Mr. Boda:** — I do not.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Okay. Sorry about that. I should have looked that up myself. I was busy on the weekend.

But the other question was the warehouse. You touched on it, just saying that you can't use at the same time. The elections are too close. Can you give me some more reasons other than just they were just too close. Can you specify why?

**Mr. Kress:** — All right. A very good question. There's a few different things at play. One actually is with the city of Regina. Even during the period running up to their election with their tabulators, they need to have that a very secured area to make sure that nobody gets access to the tabulators, the programming, the memory cards, things they're doing. So they had actually asked for a period where we would not even access the

warehouse even though we had access to it.

The second big challenge is actually related to space. And I wish I had some pictures here that I could show you. But we have about 200 Canada Post monotainers, and those are great big, huge, steel fold-down containers that are about 4 feet by 4 feet square that are stacked, not just on every one of our shelving units, but down every single row.

We have staff in those front offices, and those are the front offices actually that the city uses to conduct voting. That is sort of their main returning office area. So based on the space that we have out there, we are extremely cramped even for ourselves to run it. To have the city use all of the front offices and want access to the back packing area simply isn't logistically feasible during that period.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Just one quick . . . Who owns that building, the city?

**Mr. Boda:** — No. Well we lease the warehouse, yes.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — You lease from like . . .

**Mr. Boda:** — From Colliers. We lease from Colliers.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — And so does the city lease from them too also?

**Mr. Boda:** — [Inaudible] . . . lease to us, yes. So we are the primary leaseholder.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Sarauer.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. You mentioned the pressure with the warehouse space as a result of the proximity of the two elections. Are there any other pressures that your office is anticipating with the electoral dates being so close together?

**Mr. Boda:** — Well you will recall that I did write a paper on the question of the two elections overlapping. And that was in April of 2017, I believe, that I had written that paper outlining a couple of issues. But the issues really had to do with the system and the importance of separating out the two elections.

So there is a pressure on the system that continues to be there. I would refer you to that paper. And while there have been changes to the election dates which I think will work — we are planning of course to conduct the election in October of 2020 and the municipal elections will follow — one of the fundamental problems was the overlap of the advance voting period. And so that has been alleviated and that's not the case any longer. But with respect to the system itself, there will be many issues related to the elections being so close together. And really in four years' time, that problem won't be solved.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — To bring the comments you had put in that paper back to this budget, the only budgetary implications you're anticipating are with respect to the warehouse.

**Mr. Boda:** — That's correct.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Forbes.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you. Thank you for your report. And just to make sure I understand the numbers right, and I'm looking at page 20 of the presentation that you gave us today. And under event-related budget, the contract services go up from 645,000 to 1.1 million, and as well supply and services takes a big leap from 45 to 626. So I'm assuming the contract services are bringing people on. They are the hiring of the returning officers, that type of thing. Or if you could speak specifically about what that is and what specifically the supply and services are, that those two numbers jump up so much.

[09:00]

**Mr. Boda:** — Contract services is always a question and it's nuanced, so I'm going to let Jennifer refer to that.

**Ms. Colin:** — You are correct. The returning officers, election clerk, and supervisory returning officers' salaries, including the annual stipend, are included in contractual services. It also includes the work associated with our EMS and the other small system development projects that Jeff had spoken to, as well as the work related to modernization, has all been classified as contractual services.

The supplies and services are to procure a lot of the materials and forms that we ship out to returning offices, so that includes any of the forms, training guides for poll clerks and other election officials. It includes poll signage posters that we are required to hang up in polling places, as well as office supplies that we ship out to the polls, ballot boxes, and voter screens, as well as ballot paper.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you. So next year when we're back here doing this again, these things will be . . . I'm sure there'll be new expenses as we are gearing up for the final six months, but some of these things will have been paid for and ready to go, and there'll be others that are in the next steps for leading up to the general election.

**Ms. Colin:** — That's correct. We do have plans to have a lot of the material delivered to our warehouse before the end of March, and then in April and May, a lot of that sorting and packing and collating for the shipping that Jeff referred to takes place so that we're ready to ship and pack those monotainers in the summertime.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So do you have a sense of how much of the election will be paid for this year? The general election in 2020 will be paid for in this . . . Will it be a half? A quarter?

**Ms. Colin:** — It's difficult to say. We did spend a considerable amount of time going through our list of supplies to figure out what could be purchased in advance. We like to have things on hand because that allows us to be proactive in the packing. However with modernization and some other process changes, it's difficult to say which forms will still be under development. And we do have some forms that are in the forms regulations and so there's an approval process for that. So it's very difficult to say.

**Mr. Boda:** — Just a final thought, comment on spending over

the course of the cycle. We have included on an ongoing basis within the budget submission sort of a description of how we have changed our understanding of how elections run in the province.

Prior to 2012 it was very much focused on year four of the cycle, and that was when much of the spending took place. And over the course of the last electoral cycle we transitioned to a cycle approach to elections, which means that we do spend . . . We don't spend consistently the same amount over the course of each of the four years, but we do spend more in years one, two, three, and four than before so that we can spend less in year four of the cycle.

So it's best practice. It's the way that election management bodies operate increasingly, not just across Canada but around the world.

**Mr. Forbes:** — And if I could make a bit of an observation — and thank you for that — different than last time, last election, when the election was April 4th and we were sort of straddling two fiscal years. That made it kind of an interesting thing.

**Mr. Boda:** — I must say it was a challenge because we had the overlap of the federal and the provincial elections, and as a result we had to push off the election. We began and began spending on that first election, and then we had to pull back and then begin to prepare for that second election.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Merriman.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for your presentation. A couple of questions I've got. One is you mentioned Ontario and how they had transitioned into this in one fell swoop in one election. Can you tell me how that went when you were there observing?

**Mr. Boda:** — Sure. We were there and were able to observe the Ontario election. We admittedly were holding our breath a little bit. Because of the fact that Ontario had taken the all-at-once approach, there were higher risks. Certainly Elections Ontario is a professional election management body that does not take unwarranted risks. They're very professional in their approach. We were very impressed with the work that they did, and ultimately we were very . . . I'm glad to report that the process, that evolution went very well and they learned a great deal.

We will benefit from what they learned during that process. On a regular basis both Jeff, Jennifer, and myself are in touch with the leadership at Elections Ontario in order to not only talk with them about how things unfolded for them, but as you know from the submission, our anticipation is that we will be leasing their equipment in 2020 at a greatly reduced cost here to us in Saskatchewan. Does that answer . . .

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Yes. My other question would be, if we're going to phase in this technology over the next three election cycles, and I think that's what you said, are we going to be chasing this forever? Because 12 years from now, we have very limited knowledge of what the technology's going to look like, no different than we did 12 years ago. Is this going to just be in perpetuity forever if we're chasing things over a three . . . By the time you get to the second election cycle, we're going to

have new technology. We're going to have new ways of doing things. And then we're going to have to do it again over another two or three years.

And is this just going to keep going? Or is there an approach where we can look at doing it in a shorter time frame so we don't have to be continually resetting similar to what, you know, do similar to what Ontario did versus over 12 years? I mean we don't know what the technology's going to be like.

**Mr. Boda:** — It's a good question. The hope is that we will continue to work with Elections Ontario in terms of our lease program. And so we would be making use of the same technology that they would be making use of. On the electronic poll side, we are essentially leasing from them poll books, which are laptops. And so they would be replaced regardless of the fact. The tabulators, I don't anticipate that the technology will change drastically. They're using Dominion Voting's equipment. They have purchased that equipment, and they anticipate that it'll be used over the three cycles.

Now volume 4 of the report that I offer, offers insight into how we are transitioning over the course of the three cycles. And I think it's important to understand that really what we're doing is we're addressing the advance polling problem that we had during the last cycle. That is, we had many more people participate during the advance polls, and so as a result we're introducing the technology in a place that we need to address a problem. In the second cycle, that's at the point when we will begin to use the technology for both advance polls and for election day polls.

It's really the third cycle where we anticipate using the vote-anywhere approach. But if you have another look at volume 4, what you'll realize is that phase 1 is very . . . It's set. And we have determined how we will move forward in phase 1. Phase 2 and 3 are up for discussion, and after we learn what we learn during the '20 election, we want to come back and propose how we would move forward in phase 2 and phase 3. So there's nothing established in stone for phase 2 and phase 3, so we could move more quickly, possibly, on the vote-anywhere approach.

The other thing to keep in mind though, and we have kept in mind throughout this entire process, is that we are not Ontario. Surprise, surprise. But Ontario is very urban and many of the constituencies are close together in the Toronto region, which makes it much easier to use the technology. We're simply not Ontario in that regard. It's an equal urban-rural split, and as a result we've taken a different approach. We want to make sure that we don't take too many risks — not too many risks — that we reduce our risks so that we do this properly because we want to maintain the confidence of all of our stakeholders as we go forward.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and appreciate the presentation, Dr. Boda. This was good work and very much appreciated your work on volume 4 report which, you know, formed the basis of the statute that we introduced in the House and passed with all-party support. And we appreciate the support of the opposition on that as well.

Follow-up to a degree to the point Minister Merriman made with regard to the implementation of all three phases of that volume 4 report: appreciate the answer about the reduction of risk going forward, also the Ontario experience and how it is different. I guess, you know, I would just ask that you keep in mind or consider subsequent to this election event the moving forward of the part 2 and 3, phase 2 and 3 of that report subsequent to that next election and, you know, if that's possible, that Elections Saskatchewan would give a serious look at how that could possibly work, given experience in Ontario. We'll have another general election in Ontario prior to our 30th election as well so that may, you know, play some role in informing that experience too.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. I'd like to welcome the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff here. I'd like to follow on some questions that Mr. Forbes asked. On page 20 under contract services, I believe you said that you were returning half a million dollars to the public treasury because it went unspent last year. Is that the case?

**Ms. Colin:** — The money for our election management system last year was included in capital, so the money that's being refunded will be out of that 635 that's listed separately for capital.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. Under communications and supplies and services, you're looking there at almost a million dollars. What in the main will that million dollars supply? Will that be the paper supplies for the election? Or is it the hiring of contractors to do the electronic work and provide, especially on the communications side, electronic communications? Advertising?

**Ms. Colin:** — So under supplies and services, that includes primarily printing for forms, guides, posters, as well as the production and supply of ballot boxes, voter screens, and ballot paper for the non-technology polls.

Under communications . . . Was that your other question? The majority of that money in communications for next year is actually for advertising costs related to the completion of the recruitment for returning officers and election clerks. We advertise around the province. We take advantage of a number of different forms of advertising. And our experience this past fiscal year with the returning officer recruitment is that there have been some constituencies in which the recruitment is very, very challenging, and we've had to advertise several times, not just once.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I think one of the challenges you will face this time around in rural Saskatchewan is to do advertising locally, because a lot of the local newspapers no longer exist. So you're going to have to be able to reach out in some other manner to reach people in those areas.

**Ms. Colin:** — And our communications group has been very creative. They have connected with a lot of local groups that exist within different communities. They have also put circulars in some community's utility bills — there's some smaller communities that will allow us to do that — as well as the little coffee newspapers that you find in local coffee shops. So if



there's something out there, I believe we've tried it.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — On the modernization issue, the tabulations, how much will that speed up the voter counts?

[09:15]

**Mr. Boda:** — I think I referenced it earlier. I believe that it will have a dramatic influence on speeding up that voter count. What we have found, during the last by-elections in particular, we have found that we could really make use of the tabulators. They would speed up the process in particular. To give you some specific examples I think, Jeff, you can offer that. Is that right?

**Mr. Kress:** — Sure, absolutely. So the by-elections, generally our advance poll information comes in somewhere around 10 o'clock. If it's a higher volume — depending on the constituency and there's a lot more ballots they need to count — 10:30. Again the candidates' representatives have an impact on that in terms of the processes gone through that night, but that's a pretty good time frame.

What we saw in Ontario — and I think there was actually even some reference to it in the news because the results were reported so quickly — was that well before 8:30, in some cases it was 5, 10 after 8 that the results were already coming back into the office. So I think in advance polls, particularly large ones in the urban centres, you're going to see a significant increase. And as Michael mentioned earlier in his presentation, instead of advance polls in these urban locations being the last polls to report and people waiting to find out about the election, I think you're going to see the advance polls will probably be as early as any of the polls to get reported.

**Mr. Boda:** — In instances where you're seeing election day results, where you have a polling division which has not more than 300 people in a polling division, and because there are advance votes that have already been recorded, that number is actually much lower, you're seeing those polling divisions coming in very quickly. And then we see the advance polls, those numbers are much higher and they're 800 and above, so it just simply takes more time to do. So the tabulators will absolutely improve that process, speed it up.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — What's the accuracy standard of the tabulators? We're not having hanging chads, are we?

**Mr. Boda:** — We don't have chads, so you can feel assured of that. But the literature shows that there is a very high accuracy when it relates to the tabulators. And there have been comparisons between working with people who are counting after 14 hours and the mistakes that are simply made because of the amount of time that they have been on the job as opposed to the tabulators, which of course are machines. And so what we have found from the literature is that the accuracy is actually better than with individuals.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — And how about the security of the system, which is one of the questions that is being asked particularly in the US [United States] at the current time?

**Mr. Boda:** — Yes, security is something that is at the forefront of our mind. And while we referenced in our submission,

cybersecurity, we haven't really talked about it a great deal. But there are three areas of consideration when it comes to cybersecurity. One relates to fake news, which I believe Jeff referenced with respect to the traditional news and new media. The second has to do with working with our registered political parties and ensuring that they have secure systems moving forward. And then the third has to do with election management bodies and the election systems that we use.

Now with respect to our political parties, I would just like to mention that we have a project under way in which we are working on cybersecurity. I'm not going to go into the details here. If you would like at some point to have a private briefing, I would be happy to talk to you about that. But we will be working with our registered political parties with respect to security of their systems, more in the sense of helping them to build the capacity that they need, understanding what has unfolded in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

And then with respect to the security of our systems, yes, the tabulators, that is an important component that we will be focused on, learning from what Ontario has learned, but also learning from other jurisdictions in the country. Actually New Brunswick is a leader in this area. They have been using tabulators on the provincial level for some time, and so we're also working together with them. But we're also working internally with respect to our PRV, our permanent register of voters, and other systems that we use to ensure that they are secure. And we currently have a project under way which is addressing these very issues.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — How do you deal with non-standard ballots with the tabulators? That's one of the areas that slows down the count, is when the returning officers and the scrutineers have to evaluate each ballot that may not be standard.

**Mr. Kress:** — All right, great question. And if you mean by non-standard that a ballot isn't quite marked correctly, maybe they didn't use a heavy enough pen or an X, so this is a real issue in the existing manual voting process. And the technology actually helps to solve a real problem. So what happens is the tabulators are programmed to read how much of a marking is inside that box. So for example, you know, what they'll have is they'll have a threshold of if it's above a certain amount, the ballot is deemed valid and it'll be allowed into the machine. If it's in a grey area, or it's below, the tabulators can be programmed so that the tabulators will actually tell the voter at the time that they're voting that there's something with their ballot that didn't work effectively.

And I actually saw this in work a couple of years back in New Brunswick. And what they had was they had a plan where everyone who marked their ballot had to use a Sharpie. And a Sharpie of course, for the autographs, is big and it's thick so it marks a larger amount of the area. And when teams actually went out to personal care homes, some of the workers actually used pencils at one personal care home. What happened in this particular case of course, the machine wouldn't read the ballots.

But at our poll locations with advance polls, the beauty is if somebody doesn't quite mark a ballot — and maybe they just put a little mark into that circle and they take it up into the machine and they think that they cast their ballot effectively for the party

that they intended to cast it for and for the candidate — if it isn't going to be read by the machine, the ballot will be pulled back out and then they'll have an opportunity to recast their ballot. So that's what the technology gives the ability to do. How that's programmed and how that's going to be set up and how that will be used in Saskatchewan is still part of the processes to be determined.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — On paper ballots, the system we are currently using or have been using, if there are marks outside of the designated area, somebody writes a message, those are typically rejected. What will happen in the case of the tabulators?

**Mr. Kress:** — I don't believe that Dominion Voting Systems, which is the company that did Ontario and worked in Saskatchewan, I don't think that their tabulators read any information on the spaces outside of the ballot areas. So if somebody did have a mark, even if it was non-intentional, that was outside, I don't believe the technology has the ability to read that.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay. You mentioned that you'll be tracking who has voted and who has not with this system, your EMS system. Will this information be available in real time to the political parties?

**Mr. Boda:** — The current system allows for us, through our bingo sheet system which you're probably well aware of, to offer insight to our registered political parties with respect to who has voted and who has not. One of the advantages of the electronic poll books is that it does allow us to provide that data to those registered political parties who are interested in real time. So the answer is yes, and that is a real benefit to the system.

I am confident that our system segregates who has voted from how they voted and so, as a result, it helps to improve the campaign process. And that is why I have moved in this direction, along with other jurisdictions. But I am also confident that the information on how someone has voted remains secret, and that is extremely important to us as election administrators.

**The Chair:** — Very good. Well I'd like to thank you for your presentation, Chief Electoral Officer and staff, and we'll deliberate as a board later today. So thank you.

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

**The Chair:** — Okay we're at item no. 8, which is going to be a review of the 2019-2020 budget and motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates for the Office of the Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

Welcome, Ombudsman McFadyen, and if you could introduce who you've got with you for staff.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Andrea Smandych is here with me today. She's our manager of administration. And I'd like to thank Andrea, take a moment to thank her for all the work she's done. And she's kept us on the right track since I've been here for the last five years. She is a great asset to the office. So I will begin now.

**An Hon. Member:** — Does that come with a raise?

**Ms. McFadyen:** — I will mark that down.

Good morning, Mr. Chair, members of the board. We're pleased to be here to present our 2019-20 budget submission for the board's consideration and approval. In preparing our submission today, we were mindful of the directions that have been given to executive branch and of the commitment to achieve a balanced budget this fiscal year.

We are not requesting any additional funding for economic increases, program growth, or service provider costs; however we are requesting an additional amount based on our proposal to relocate our Regina office to more suitable space.

Our submission provides some detail of our roles and our 2018 accomplishments. We have two legislated mandates. As Ombudsman we take complaints from people who feel they have been treated unfairly by an administrative action, process, or decision of a provincial government ministry, agency, or a municipality. We can also take complaints about a municipal council member's conduct, including allegations of a conflict of interest.

As Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, we investigate disclosures of wrongdoing and complaints of reprisal from provincial public sector employees who wish to come forward and make disclosures about alleged wrongdoings in their workplace without fear of retaliation.

This past year the number of complaints we dealt with on the Ombudsman side remains steady. Once we've determined we have jurisdiction over a complaint, we try to resolve or deal with the matter informally if that is appropriate. Most of the complaints we receive are dealt with in that manner without the need of a full investigation. If we do investigate and we conclude that the complaint is founded, we make recommendations to fix the issues we uncover and to improve the government organization's administrative decision-making processes. Ultimately our role is to ensure that government organizations are carrying out the duties given to them by the Legislative Assembly in a way that is fair and reasonable and according to law.

Our mandate increased a couple of years ago and we were given the authority to take complaints about municipalities and council members. We've conducted quite a few investigations into council member conduct. We've made the results of many of these investigations public, as we feel it will help other council members understand the responsibilities under municipal legislation so that they can carry out their public duties in the best interests of the communities. Our activities and investigations will be reported out in our 2018 annual report, which will be tabled with the Legislative Assembly in April.

As Ombudsman we also have the role to provide public education about our work and what fairness means. We want the public to know about our office and that they can come to us if they feel they have not been treated fairly when dealing with a government organization. Every year we look for opportunities to serve other areas of the province, not just Regina and Saskatoon. In 2018 we went to La Loche and Swift Current. We provided public

information sessions and set up temporary offices for the day to meet directly with residents.

In La Loche we also provided our fair practice training for local provincial public servants. Our fair practice training is offered to provincial and municipal employees and officials. In this training we explain what the Ombudsman does and we help officials understand what administrative fairness is and how they can better communicate with and respond to the public when carrying out their duties.

We also focused our outreach this year on municipalities. We met with various municipal organizations. We created a checklist for municipal officials with questions that can help them decide if they have a conflict of interest in a matter before council and if they should take steps to recuse themselves from the matter.

[09:30]

When the Legislative Assembly made amendments to municipal legislation to improve conflict-of-interest rules for municipal governments, it required that all municipalities must adopt a code of ethics for council members. Those changes require that all municipalities must have a process in place to deal with code-of-ethics complaints made against their council members. Many municipalities have contacted us, not knowing what this means or what they are required to do. So this year we published a guide and hosted webinars for municipal officials on how to set up a complaint review process so that they could address these code of ethics complaints in a procedurally fair manner.

As for our submission, we have a strong track record of being fiscally responsible and managing within our appropriation, and are returning money to the General Revenue Fund.

In October last year I advised the board that we had explored the possibility of new space in Regina and that we had found appropriate accommodations which we felt we would be able to obtain at a reasonable cost, given the current real estate market. At that time the board said it would like to consider this request as part of our budget submission, so here I am again.

In summary, as I mentioned in October, we have been in the same space in Regina since 1994. Our requirements have increased significantly since then and we have for years now outgrown our current space. Our caseload has increased and our mandate has expanded. In 2012 we were given the commissioner's role under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*. About the same time, the Ombudsman's health sector jurisdiction was expanded to include publicly funded health entities such as, for example, special care homes or ambulance services, and more recently at the end of 2015, it was expanded to include the municipal sector. So with this increase in workload we have more staff than we did in 1994.

We have made do with the spaces that we have by installing cubicles into offices designed for one person. Our work requires us to have confidential conversation with complainants, and doing so in a less-than-private setting, when your officemate is trying to concentrate and analyze a case and write a report, is less than ideal. We also lack interview space and meeting space.

Central Services has identified space in its inventory that it has currently under lease until 2024. That space, combined with the

vacant space next to it on the same floor, would meet our requirements. With few immediate changes we could move into the new space and work through the renovations. That way we would avoid paying rent in two places at the same time and can spread the costs of the renovations over a longer period.

The increase in our budget request for 2019-20 is limited to the increase in rent costs that we would incur going forward if we moved. As set out on page 14 of our submission, we can fund the one-time costs associated with the move within our existing funding. The rent cost per square metre of the space Central Services has under lease is less than what we are now paying per square metre in our current location. We're hopeful that we'll be able to negotiate a similar rate on the empty adjacent space. However our annual rent costs in total will go up because we will be acquiring more metres of space, and we've estimated that to be \$168,000.

So given our history of staying in place for a significant length of time, we feel this proposal will meet our needs for many years into the future.

So in closing we're requesting that the Board of Internal Economy supports our proposal to relocate our Regina office, and for the upcoming 2019 fiscal year we are requesting the amount as set out on page 16 of our submission. And I thank you for your consideration of these two requests and I'm happy to answer any questions.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much for your presentation. I open the floor to some questions. Minister Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you very much for the presentation. Just a question with regard to the move which I think is fine, and we've spoken about that in this venue prior. Trade and Export are in there right now. I think we can be out and vacated by May 1st and I know we've been all working together on this. Is that something that you would . . .

**Ms. McFadyen:** — The space right now is vacant around it and so we are . . . If we get support for this, our intention is we could — we're on a month-to-month lease now — we would move in there and work through renovations and then once that other space was empty we would take that over as well.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Okay.

**The Chair:** — Thank you. I just had one question myself. If this all goes, if this is all approved, by 2024 you had already done renovations into the new space. By 2024, is there thoughts in regards to the fact that you might have done renovations and now it's only four years down the line and you might have to move again or . . .

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Well we were hoping that this space should be good for us for the next while. We were in the last space for 25 years so we intend to stay put. Yes.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thanks. Mr. Forbes.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Just a couple of questions about the chart on page 8. I find it interesting but this . . . your complaints received and when you received them. You know, the ones that you're

getting from different parts of the province like east central, 348 complaints there, versus 395 in Regina. But the population isn't nearly the same. But I would assume part of that, a large part of that is because you're doing now local governance complaints and that's driving that.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — That's probably a good point. Yes, it's similar to . . . Last year we had 352 from east central, 348 this year, so the numbers are substantially the same as last year. And you're right, it probably makes a difference because we get . . . It's our number three now, municipal complaints, since we have started.

**Mr. Forbes:** — It would be interesting to know how many complaints you get per capita or something, or region. Because you have Regina and Saskatoon, you know, that's about 1,000 and you get 3,000 complaints. Of course out of the jails you get a fair number. But it seems that you're getting a fair number out of rural Saskatchewan, a significant number of rural . . .

**Ms. McFadyen:** — That's interesting. Since I came I've decided to report by region just to give an idea but maybe this year we can do . . . because we've just started doing our annual report for this past year, we can look at it per capita as well.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes and, you know, what is an ombudsman in the old traditional sense, I guess, and their new assignments. Yes, it's an interesting number though because you're all over the place.

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Yes, per capita and per municipal complaints from each section maybe.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Maybe you should get an office in Yorkton or . . . No. Anyways, thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I think that last comment might get a complaint from the member from Yorkton. The complaints, you know, if you're looking at population, the population of the provincial correctional centres is not that high in comparison to the rest of the province and yet they generate the largest volume of complaints. What is the typical complaint from the correctional centres? Or is there a pattern to their complaints?

**Ms. McFadyen:** — Well our top complaints of course are from Corrections and Social Services. And it's because those programs affect your day-to-day lives if you're in receipt of programs in a correctional centre or from Central Services. They vary from . . . If they have complaints about their treatment in the correctional centre, like a disciplinary hearing or . . . I mean they can vary from anything.

But there is a process that they have to follow first before they come to us, before we'll take their complaint, that the complaint is dealt with within the correction services before. And then once we look at it, we'll look at it and we look at matters of delay or if the inmate's been treated fairly when his complaint has been reviewed and those type of matters. It's disciplinary panels, food services, lack of programs, those are the types of things.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** — Anybody else? Well again I'd like to thank you for your presentation, and we will be deliberating as a board some time in the rest of the day, but thanks so much.

Are we good to keep going here? All right.

### Advocate for Children and Youth

**The Chair:** — So we're at item no. 9, review of the 2019-2020 budget and motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates for the Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth. Welcome, Advocate O'Soup. And if you could introduce who you've got with you for staff.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the board for this opportunity to present our 2019-2020 budget proposal on behalf of the Advocate for Children and Youth office. I have with me my associate deputy advocate, Leeann Palmer, back there. And also I have accompanying me here is Bernie Rodier. Did I say that right?

**Ms. Rodier:** — Yes.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Okay. It's French. I'm not French. Our director of administration. She's been here with us for 23, 24 . . .

**Ms. Rodier:** — 21 years.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — 21 years. So she's way better at this than me, so I'm going to turn it over to her. No, I'm just kidding. I'm just teasing you, Bernie.

Also I'd like to mention that it is our 25th anniversary this year for the Advocate for Children and Youth office, so it's something we're very proud of, to be serving the children and youth of this province for 25 years this year. And I'm hoping that we get to serve for the next 25 years as well.

I'd also like to acknowledge all the dedicated staff of my office and their commitment to our strategic plan and vision at the office that we've had for the last . . . I guess it's been over two years now since I've been in the role. And I'm very thankful to have a group of staff that have caught the vision, that have been fighting for the rights of children and youth for the last two and a half years and beyond, since before I came.

And I want to thank the members of the Legislative Assembly and the Board of Internal Economy for your ongoing support of our office and your commitment to children and youth in this province. It does not go unnoticed within our office.

When I was appointed in 2016, I did set out a new vision for the office and a new strategic plan. And my number one goal was to work with our partners and stakeholders to reduce the number of children and youth in care in this province, particularly the number of indigenous children and youth in this province, which was quite staggering to me, to see the number of indigenous children and youth that we have going through our systems.

And as you know, we have over 5,000 children and youth in some form of care with our province, and the numbers are . . . Approximately 70 per cent of those are indigenous children and youth, and I think it's pretty clear to everyone that those numbers

need to change.

And I was very pleased to hear the government's recent apology for the Sixties Scoop. It was important that this was done. And I believe that it had to be done and it was time that it was done. But more importantly than the apology is what happens next.

And I believe that we need to use this moment in time to take the opportunity to make sure that we don't repeat the mistakes of our past here in Saskatchewan and across Canada, and we need to take this moment in time to make change, to make meaningful change for our children and youth in this province.

And how do we do that? I believe we do that by investing in our children and youth and their families. And this investment needs to happen early and often to change the cycle. We know the cycles that our kids are caught up in. It's drugs, alcohol, violence, abuse, gangs. We see it in the news. We see it in our constituents. We see it all across the province. And I believe the way that we're going to break those cycles is through investing in our children and our families.

The focus in our office has been on prevention. It's solutions-focused measures. We work with our partners and our stakeholders to make sure that we become a part of the solution within our office. In the past you will have seen our office, you know, see our reports are focused on when a child dies or when a child is critically injured. When tragedy happens, our office is there and it will continue to be there. But in the last couple of years we've decided that we needed to be a part of the solution. We needed to use the profile of the office to take our office in a different direction and to become a part of that solution with our stakeholders. So we continue to do that and we continue to focus on that.

Now I think the best way that we can do, and reduce these numbers of children in care, and the way we can reduce and break the cycles that our kids are in, is to invest in our kids, particularly before they end up in care. And I think that's the piece that we need to really focus on. Now this will take an investment at all levels, not just in social services, but in education and health, in early years, particularly focusing on prevention measures.

And I truly believe that education, as a former teacher — and once a teacher always a teacher, they say — I believe that education is the key for our children and youth moving forward. And I have said this before. We can invest in doctors and nurses and counsellors and all of those different types of investments that we make, but really at the end of the day we are investing in band-aid solutions, I would say. Because those are the issues that . . . Those people are dealing with the issues once our children and youth have come through the system and are facing problems. But if we truly want to get to the root of the problems and we truly want to fix the issues, I believe we need to invest in our children, particularly in education.

[09:45]

Now education has been used in the past in our indigenous peoples to hold us down, but I believe that education is the key for us moving forward and it is the key that's going to help us break those cycles. And what I tell our children and youth often is that unless you cross that stage and get that little piece of paper

that says you've graduated, that says you've achieved something, someone else is going to be making the choices for you for the rest of your life.

And what I mean by that, when I tell the kids that, is that if you don't get that piece of paper, someone else is going to be telling you how much money you get per month. Someone else is going to be telling you what kind of house you can live in. Someone else is going to tell you where you shop for your groceries and where you shop for your clothes. But if you cross that stage and you get that piece of paper, then the whole world of opportunities opens up for you. Now you can decide whether you want to go on to post-secondary, whether you want to go on to Sask Polytech or university, or whether you want to take that grade 12 and go work at Walmart or Tim Hortons. We need all of those positions. But unless you cross that stage and get that piece of paper, someone else is deciding your future for you.

So this takes an investment in all different types of levels, like education. So the new resources I'm requesting in this budget are required to enhance our preventative work with children, youth, their families, communities, and stakeholders. And I believe the advocate's office can play a key role in the change that needs to happen, and I believe we've been playing that role. Through the lens of an independent office, we can enhance our collaboration with government and child existing agencies where common frameworks exist. The advocate can act as a catalyst for change in collaborative discussions to develop long-term provincial strategies that cut across boundaries and mandates to enhance the well-being of children and youth. So that means to me that we can break down . . . And we can be one of the organizations. And I feel like we can be that umbrella organization that breaks down silos between ministries, that we can bring together different child-serving ministries, and we can bring solutions to the table like we've done in the past.

Now developing long-term solutions will reduce the number of indigenous children in care and produce better outcomes for them in the future. Now this is an investment in children and youth and in the future of this province. And I believe that the children of this province are not only the future, they are our present. And I will show you later on how they are our present and how they are being leaders today.

A big part of the investment needs to be in education and mental health services, particularly for indigenous children and youth. These are two of our main priorities moving forward. We know that children and youth do not succeed unless they have the foundation of a good education and when they are mentally healthy. Currently there is an epidemic of mental health issues among our young population, and our systems need to be better to support them. I believe that mental health among our young people is the number one issue facing our children and youth in this province. And I would say in Canada and I would say globally that this is the number one issue facing our children. And we see the results of that. The results of a mental health issue is the most tragic of results for our children and youth, and that results in death. That's as plainly as I can say it. And you can see the numbers when we talk about our suicide rates and our suicide reports.

In mental health there are gaps in our current system, particularly in our northern and remote communities where there are a lack

of adequate services and suicide rates are approximately double that of the Canadian population. And we take into account the number of indigenous children and youth. Our young indigenous boys between the ages of 10 and 18 are nine times more likely to die by suicide than non-indigenous boys in this province. And if you take our young indigenous girls, they are actually 29 times more likely to die by suicide in Saskatchewan than non-indigenous boys and girls.

These numbers, unfortunately they are leading the country. And actually I've taken these numbers to different parts of the world, and many times we are leading the world in those negative statistics. And it's something that we need to focus on and that we need to invest in. Many times when we're at some conferences and there's people from around the world, they can't believe that in a country like Canada we have those types of rates. But I believe we have the solutions right here in Saskatchewan, and the solutions come directly from our young people.

Now it's timely that . . . We need timely services that support a child or youth's overall health. In the past year, our office collaborated with the ministries of Health, Education in bringing a model for mental health capacity building in schools. I believe that's going to be one of the game changers for our children and youth.

Now I'm pleased that the government has recently, in their previous budget, announced funding for pilots, and I believe that's starting at the second semester of our schools here in five schools across the province. And I don't like to toot our own horn, but I don't believe that that particular program would've come about if it wasn't for our office. We visited Alberta. We advocated for probably almost a year at many different levels within many different ministries to bring that program here to Saskatchewan. And then our ministries sent folks down there to investigate it, and they've actually found that it was a really good program. And we've actually invested in it here in Saskatchewan. And I believe that through that investment we're going to start making a difference in the mental health of our children and youth.

But much more needs to be done, and we need to ensure that children and youth are heard and their needs are incorporated into mental health programs and services that are developed for them. That's why we're asking for a one-time resource, resources for a youth-led conference on mental health in 2019. This is being planned as a cost recovery event. So what that means is that we will be charging registration fees and the \$65,000 that we are requesting will be paid back in full to the government and back to the General Revenue Fund through the registrations. So it will be no cost to you once we receive all the registrations.

The conference will be a forum for Saskatchewan youth to speak to adult stakeholders about youth mental health issues. And the way that I like to explain this conference is that we go to many conferences, many of us at different times. And if there happens to be a young person speaking at that conference and we fill out our evaluation form at the end of the day and we are asked, well what was the best part of the conference. I would say 90 per cent of the time the responses are, well it was when that young person got up and spoke. They really inspired me; they really made me think.

So the whole idea behind this conference is that it's going to be youth led. It's planned by youth. It's put on by youth. All of the speakers at this conference will be between the ages of 16 and 21, and the participants in the conference will be adults. So this is an opportunity for adults — from front-line workers, professionals, up to government officials, to ministers to elected MLAs. As well we will be inviting professionals like private businesses to come and take the opportunity to listen and learn — particularly when they're making decisions and when you're making decisions about investing in children and youth — what it's like to be a young person here in Saskatchewan today.

And when the children and the youth were picking the title of the conference, their title was quite interesting. Now when we talk as adults, we talk about, we say well, you know back in my day I had to walk five miles backwards up a hill both ways in a blizzard just to get to school. You know, I've heard that many times, and I have five kids of my own and I tell them about how difficult it was when I was a kid. But it's totally different being a kid now. And these kids have chosen a title that says, now back in my day or back in my day, and they've crossed out the "back" and they've said, now in my day, our vision, our future.

So really it's our opportunity to listen to them, to hear what it's like to be a young person in this province. So it's vitally important that our youth be heard first-hand as to what they are experiencing and participate in formulating solutions with the adult participants. We just need to sit back and listen. Now I will challenge our organizations at that time to take back what they've learned back to their organizations, back to their decision-making tables, and to consider what the youth have to say as they are doing that.

Now the learnings from this youth-led mental health conference will also be incorporated into a more fulsome review and report on youth mental health that we've already begun. The model for the upcoming report is our recent special report on the youth suicide crisis in northern Saskatchewan where youth voice was the primary source for our findings and recommendations. This youth suicide report has been widely received and it's being used as a resource to others. If I could refer you to this page in your package here, I think you might have gotten that one. It's *Shhh . . . LISTEN!! We Have Something To Say!* This is our one-year sort of update on the impact that youth voice has had across Saskatchewan, across Canada, and across the world.

So we released the report in December of 2017. Literally crashed our website the first night that it was open; we did not have enough bandwidth to actually handle all of the requests, particularly for the downloads. There's been over 10,000 paper copies released. If it was on Amazon, it would be one of their bestsellers. We've done over 33,000 full downloads from our website to other computers. There's been over 402,000 click and read that report online. 402,000 people have clicked and read that report online — that number is just staggering — from over 50 countries across the world. And I truly believe the reason is because children and youth voice was at the centre of that. Many reports have been done on the topic of youth suicide, but not too many have been fully given over to our young people to have a say in what's being done in their lives.

So hopefully you have the opportunity to read this in a little more fulsome manner, and you'll see that that is what we are actually,

I guess, building the foundation for our mental health report on.

Now this youth suicide . . . This is an effective model, but it's a resource-intensive process. As you know, the province is wide and tall, and it takes a lot of resources to travel this entire province. We made the decision not to ask people just to come to Regina or Saskatoon to come and speak to us. We made the decision early on to go into our communities and to seek them out, and I believe that was very important for us. We're doing the review and report within our existing resources. I anticipate this public report on youth mental health systems in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

In addition to the activities I'm highlighting, our individual advocacy and investigations casework continues. Every day our advocates and investigators work with children, youth, their families, grandparents, caregivers, and service providers to ensure children and youth are safe and protected.

There have been a few increases within our advocacy files. The total number of advocacy files have increased by 15 per cent this year. Our public education files have increased by 25 per cent, which I believe is because many of the organizations that are contacting us and the people that are contacting us are seeing us as a solution-based organization. So they request us as professionals to come and speak to their groups and to come and provide solutions to them, and we continue to do that. Our advocacy files have seen a 13 per cent increase, with an 83 per cent increase within our education system. We are going into schools in a way that we have not gone into before. We've been invited by our boards; we have been invited onto First Nations education authorities where we haven't gone before. And the number of professionals actually contacting our office has increased by 27 per cent as well.

So in conclusion, for 2019-20 I am asking for some additional resources for staffing and one-time funds for the youth-led conference on mental health, asking for these resources as an investment in children and youth and their families. The written submission outlines the details of the request. And 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, \$2.968 million for 2019-20. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much for your presentation. I will now open it up to the board for questions. Mr. Forbes.

**Mr. Forbes:** — All right. Thank you. Yes, and thank you for your presentation. And you seem to know the file, so that's good. You can keep giving the presentations, eh? But the conference sounds like that would be very interesting, and I'm sure the planning is well under hand, if it's coming in May.

I am curious about the two new FTEs [full-time equivalent]. And so what would be their roles, and how many FTEs do you have right now? This is a big part of the increase, really. So could you tell us a little bit more about those.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — I believe that the increase would be there to help us work towards preventions and solution-based. So they'd be travelling the province alongside our advocates and alongside our investigators. Part of the process that we've gone through

with our prevention work is to increase our role within the education system. And as you can see, there's an 83 per cent increase in the education system in our work there.

But also part of the role that we've been doing is we've been travelling the province and we've been looking for solutions and how we can reduce a number of different areas. So the number of kids in care, we're looking for solutions for that. We're looking to increase the number of kids that are graduating from school. So we are also looking to reduce the waiting list within our child psychiatry units. We're looking for those solutions, and those solutions are here in Saskatchewan. And if you look at even our annual report from last year, you'll see that it has changed and it has been focused on those solutions. So part of that is to do the research, to do the investigations and, as well, to go into those places where we've never gone before to seek out those solutions and to provide the children and youth with an opportunity to be a part of those solutions.

[10:00]

And we can't, we can't be in all of the schools. We can't be in all of the places, and the children are. We currently have five advocates that travel the entire province trying to get into all of our schools, trying to get into all of the places where our children and youth are. And right now, at the rate with having five advocates, we won't get there in my term and we probably wouldn't get there in the term of future advocates. So I think this is just an increase to help us reduce those numbers in the future.

**Mr. Forbes:** — I'm just wondering now, you know, I think it's been up for quite a while, but the mental health issues you talk about with young people, are your people trained in dealing with mental health issues if kids present in a way in the conversations that they can deal with them well? Or you know, I'm thinking in the past it might be that advocates, they were more trained in social services or, you know, educational things, that type of thing. You know, you're a teacher, I'm a teacher. We're not trained as well in the mental health, suicide prevention aspect. Are your people trained for helping kids if they present right away to one of your employees?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Absolutely. I would say that within all of the areas of our focus we've offered our employees, in many times mandatory training, specifically around mental health, mental health first aid, but it goes with all of our different priorities. So when it comes to indigenous folks and indigenous children and youth, not everybody has the same understanding, so we've offered that. When it comes to going into our schools, not all of our advocates have that ability, so we've offered them that training.

So as these different priorities have come up, we've offered that specific training. And it's ongoing so that if you are trained as a teacher, you will have additional training around mental health around indigenous folks. If you're trained as a youth justice worker, you will get that additional training as well. And that's been things that we've been doing, and it's also things that we will continue to do in the future so that our staff are prepared to deal with those issues. But at the end of the day we are not the professionals, and we do refer to professionals within those systems wherever we are because they will be the ongoing support. But we definitely have asked our staff to be trained on

that.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thanks.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — We didn't answer your question about the number of term, permanent we have right now. So we have 20.4 FTEs right now.

**The Chair:** — 20.4?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — 20.4 . . . [inaudible].

**The Chair:** — Okay, well we'll hear it then. Okay, Mr. Brkich.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you for your presentation. It was very good. It's a little bit along Mr. Forbes's line, is the two extra workers. You know I won't argue that you need them but yet we only have one pot of money. Front-line services, social services, education, mental health in Health will all be asking for extra front-line workers and we need them. As a member, you know, we have to decide where is the extra money better directed, on some front-line services or yourself? You both all do excellent work. We're dealing with the children of our future, but they say there is only one pot of money. As you're asking for two extra, you know, that's one of the considerations as a member I have to take.

But I'll ask on the 65,000. You say that will be returned to general revenue. What do you need it upfront for? What are the costs associated that you would need it upfront if it's on the cost recovery, because most conferences are usually the speakers and venues paid after the registration has come in.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — I'll let Bernie answer that.

**Ms. Rodier:** — We've been in consultation with Legislative Assembly financial services in terms of the best way to process taking in money, which we don't typically do, and how to pay expenditures with the money we've taken in, essentially. And the money coming in will be over two fiscal years, so we're going to already be taking in money this year and there's no ability to sort of save it for next year's paying out of expenses. So it's purely a financial transactional reason for the money. And Legislative Assembly Services talked to Finance as well about how best to do this, and that was their recommendation.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you. That's all the questions I have.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Ms. Sarauer.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you. I have a few questions about the conference as well. Being that the conference is scheduled for this spring, I'm assuming the venue and speakers have already been booked. Can you speak a little bit as to what has already been planned with respect to the conference?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Well we have a youth planning committee, so they've been planning for the last about two to three months, so the venue has been booked. It's booked at the Radisson. There's nothing that we can't . . . that we haven't gone too far that we could not get out of. Speakers have been discussed, title's been discussed, all of that has been discussed. And once we were to receive the blessing from the Legislative Assembly, we were

going to start contacting speakers and we were going to start making those types of bookings as well.

So it's pretty far along. We were just waiting for the day to come and then it was going to be running 100 per cent from day . . . Like we were going to open registrations tomorrow if things went as well as we were hoping they were going to go today.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — In order to break even you must have . . . or for cost recovery you must have already done some work in anticipating or deciding what, first of all, the conference registration fee is going to be and how many registrants you need to be able to come out even in the wash. Can you give us those numbers?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — We are anticipating a \$200 registration fee and anticipating approximately 300 participants for a cost recovery of 60,000 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . 65. Yes.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Do you expect largely those registrants would be, you had mentioned ministry staff from various ministries, front-line workers, perhaps MLAs. Anyone else that I'm missing?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Yes, pretty much anybody that works with children and youth, so not just government staff. It would be community-based organizations. It would as well be the private business and enterprise. So we are inviting all presidents, CEOs [chief executive officer], all the people that work within that industry because we know that they invest a lot of money in our province. And we're going to be asking them to invest in our children and youth as they make their decisions as well.

So pretty much anybody that has an interest in working with children and youth or has an interest in investing in children and youth — right from front-line workers right to the Premier himself — we'll be inviting. And then as well as anybody within our communities that work with children and youth. Parents are invited as well. We'll be having a special parent night just for them to come and listen to what it's like to be a child or a youth in the province today. So yes, it's pretty wide and broad.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Just one more comment before I allow other people to ask questions. I struggled a bit when I was reading your proposal, just in terms of the detail in the budget that was provided. I pulled most of it, and you can pull most of it from the written part prior to the actual physical budget. And I understand the budget, the numbers that you provided just to simply show the difference between the funding allocated last year and the funding being requested this year. But it's a little bit easier, for me at least, if I see the numbers sort of how you see it in some of the other officers' proposals. Just for next year if possible. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Merriman.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of questions again, and I know we seem to all be focusing in on the conference here. I'm just curious as to how you're going to . . . Who's going to pay the \$200 fees? Is this just other agencies of government that are going to pay this? Because when we say it's a cost recovery to the General Revenue Fund, and we have Education and we have Social Services, I mean that's all coming



out of the General Revenue Fund. So at the end of the day, it's going to be a wash with the Children's Advocate's office. Is it going to be a wash to government?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — I think it all depends on who ends up attending. I think there'll be a number from the government. We're anticipating that. And I guess that will be up to each ministry and to each employee as to where they want to spend their professional development money and different things like that. But it won't just be . . . I don't anticipate it just being government dollars being invested back into our children and youth. I anticipate a lot of private people that will be there, as well a lot of community organizations will be there. Teachers, social workers, they're all going to be invited. And I think it really depends on which conferences they will decide to attend this year. I'm really hoping that they decide to attend this one.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Yes, when you say teachers and . . . It's all still health workers. It's all still government. Even community-based organizations, the majority of them are funded by the government. So a net to the Children's Advocate, yes.

My other concern is what material are you going to be handing out? Is there anything that's going to be going back with the individuals when they leave the conference? And how much pre-information have you? You're having this in the spring of this year, and you're anticipating on selling 300 tickets to this thing. What's your time frame on getting that up and running? It seems like the door is kind of closing pretty quick.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Everything is ready to go tomorrow, and the dates would be May 9th and 10th. So we still have a few months to just finish it up right now.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Okay. And is there any material going home with the . . .

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Yes. All of our speakers will have the opportunity to leave materials with the participants, as well as we are going to be having a trade show within the conference as well. So other organizations will be able to set up within the conference as well. So there will be a number of different materials going home. A lot of the presenters we are anticipating will be presenting on solutions that they found. So some of our youth are going to be presenting on apps that they've created based on mental health, based on bullying. Some of the youth will be talking about other things that they've participated in and bringing those solutions to the table. So there will be a number of different materials that will be handed out for the participants to take back home with them.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — And I know you've done this at some of your other conferences. Is everybody going to get a copy of the Gord Downie book?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Not everybody, no.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — It's a concern. I mean, at 300 people that's, you know, it's 4 or \$5,000 minimum to be able to do that. And that's a large expense for government to be purchasing these specific books. That's one of my concerns.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — No, we're not going to be handing out books to

everybody.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. O'Soup, again on the conference, I'm interested in the youth that will be speaking there, doing the presentations. How will they be selected, and will part of that selection be a demographic representation?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Yes, we are anticipating to have demographics. Boys, girls, northern youth, southern youth — all different types of youth are going to be presenting.

Now the way that they are being selected is that we've had a number of calls go out for youth speakers and they are being presented to our youth committee panel. The youth panel has selected a number of different topics that they would like to be spoken about, and then from those topics there were a number of youth speakers that were targeted. And we'll bring those speakers back to the committee and the committee will be choosing which speakers will be coming to present. And it'll be on a wide array of topics, so LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning]. It'll be apps, like I mentioned. It'll be mental health. It'll be bullying. The topics are going to be all across the board and it'll be fully represented.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I have a concern, like Mr. Merriman had, about the time frame. You know, you're really only four months from today basically, to do all this and get it organized. And you mentioned people will choose to attend this conference or attend other conferences. And I know with our experience with the Social Studies Teachers' Institute, they need a longer time frame than that to make that decision within their own budgets and choice of the options that they have. And I would be somewhat concerned that the short time frame that you're trying to deal with here and getting professionals that may only have the option of one or two conferences a year and may well have chosen something already.

[10:15]

**The Chair:** — Thanks. I've got a couple of questions myself. Okay, so the speakers are youth, all going to be youth. Is there going to be, are you going to provide them . . . I looked at the budget and similar conferences that I've put on or attended. Are you going to pay the speakers?

**Mr. O'Soup:** — Yes, they'll all be provided with appropriate honorarium just like any other speaker would. So we treat them very professionally as we would treat any other speaker that would come along and present at any conference.

**The Chair:** — Okay. And what are you going to do with the information? So the outcome of a conference is you've got a number of, basically, subject matter experts. You've got youth that have lived this — the issue of and the challenges of mental health. So what would be the outcomes? What are the next steps? What do you anticipate? All of this information, here it is. They've talked to a number of adults. Adults are sitting there; they're asking questions, right? And they're walking away going, I'm informed now.

**Mr. O'Soup:** — There are a few different things that we want to accomplish with the conference. I think the number one thing that we want to do — well, 1 and 1(a) — would be that we want to take the information that the youth provide us and we want to roll it up and we want to make it a part of our larger mental health investigation report and that will provide a big segment of that. So whatever the youth have to say, it's going to impact that report moving forward.

The other piece is that we really want the decision makers in the room, the front-line workers in the room to take back what they've learned, back to their organizations and use what they've learned to impact their decision making at their tables. Whether you're a front-line worker or whether you're deciding on the billions of dollars in the province, we want the youth to have a say in how those dollars are being spent and how they're being implemented.

You know it's part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children and youth have the right to have a voice in decisions that are being made about them. So we're just giving them that opportunity to have a voice in these decisions that are being made about them. So those would be the two main things. So as part of that we will be . . . As we put it into our mental health investigative report, there will be a write-up that goes along with that.

**The Chair:** — Yes, thank you for that. Because we'd all be aware of the fact that addictions go hand in hand with the mental health issues, and that traumatized youth would require detox and treatment and then deal with the mental health issues. So I mean it's part and parcel; it's chicken or the egg; it's both of those pieces. But no, I appreciate where you're going.

I only had one last question and it's in regard to the two front-line workers at \$207,000. So correct me if I'm wrong. Is that \$103,500 each? Is it split completely . . . That \$103,000 for a front-line worker is my question. I've been out of the business for a bit, but it seems a little high, that's all.

**Ms. Rodier:** — That's for out-of-scope level 7 front-line . . .

**The Chair:** — MCP [management classification and compensation plan] level 7's?

**Ms. Rodier:** — Right.

**The Chair:** — And what is the classification for your other FTEs?

**Ms. Rodier:** — So our investigators and advocates are professional level 7's as well, out of scope.

**The Chair:** — They're all MCP 7's? And you've got no in-scope. They're all out of scope?

**Ms. Rodier:** — We have a few in-scope, which are administrative support staff. But our front-line staff are all out of scope.

**The Chair:** — They're all MCP 7's?

**Ms. Rodier:** — Yes.

**The Chair:** — Okay. Thank you for that. Okay. Well thank you so much for your presentation. We will be deliberating later in the day. Thank you.

Yes, that gives us an opportunity . . . We've got a scheduled break at this point. Is it the pleasure of the board to have 15 minutes? 10? 15? 10. Well I'll tell you what. When we're all back, we'll reconvene. We'll aim for 10 minutes. All right. So we will reconvene at 10:30ish.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

[10:30]

### Information and Privacy Commissioner

**The Chair:** — Okay. We have returned from our break. In our agenda, we are at item no. 10, the review of the 2019-2020 budget and motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I'd like to welcome Ron Kruzeniski, the Information and Privacy Commissioner. And if you could take a moment to introduce the staff that you've got with you, and we look forward to your presentation.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank you and members of the board for hearing us today. And let me take this chance to wish all of you a very Happy New Year and may all your dreams come true. I do want to thank you, all of you here and members in the legislature, for approving my reappointment to the position. The last four and a half years have been an exciting, mentally challenging, and very much a fun time. I also would like to thank you for supporting the various pieces of legislation that go through the House that have, if not . . . well either directly or indirectly, privacy or access considerations, and thank you. I will be touching on a few of those as we talk today.

With me today, to my left is Pam Scott who is the director of operations and certainly responsible for keeping us on budget during the year and developing the document you have in front of you. To my right is Diane Aldridge who is director of compliance and responsible for keeping our investigations and reviews on track and attempting to deliver them within our targets.

We've submitted our request for estimates, and for the next year we're requesting the dollar amount of \$1,927,000. I want to briefly review some of the things in the document you have and pick out a few highlights. Starting at page 2 we have vision and mission and statement of the four main strategic directions we have.

And the first strategic direction is education and awareness, and that starts at the top of page 3. And some of the key actions . . . And I just want to flag a number of them.

The first one I wanted to flag is that we want to work to expand, clarify, develop our exemptions guide. When I got appointed, one of the requests I heard from people is we want to know what you expect. How are you going to analyze appeals or investigations? And this exemptions guide has done that but there's a need for further clarification. Of course there's amendments, there's cases

of the Court of Queen's Bench, and all of those things. That needs to be expanded.

We also want to work on resources for towns, villages, and municipalities. I will come back to that one a little later. And in that one we want to work with Government Relations, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], administrator associations to ensure that all of those rural entities out there, villages and municipalities, have access to resources.

Our second strategic direction is navigating in a digital world — and that starts at the top of page 4 — and clearly we are all in that digital world. The shift for all of us from paper to electronics is significant and sometimes overwhelming. And bringing that home to government, we want to promote and work with the Ministry of Central Services to develop a new archive system for emails.

Now you might say that's rather mundane, but it does affect citizens in our province. And from time to time, people ask for old emails going back to whatever and found out that they're recorded on tapes that are now out of date and there's large fees for retrieving it. And sometimes it has to be sent to Toronto and charged \$150 an hour and then citizens get a fee of 2,000, 4,000, or 69,000 and they just feel that the system is totally against them. So we're advocating there for a modern, up-to-date archiving system that basically — I don't want to oversimplify it — would provide access to those relevant archived emails by the pressing of a button.

Related to that is we want to promote and do work on the elimination of backup tapes. Again a mundane issue, but it affects citizens in many senses. Backup tapes were intended to help restore computers when the electricity went down. And there are backup tapes stored way back into like 2004, and the media is deteriorating. The equipment to restore it, as I've just indicated, is not that available anymore, and you get into large costs just to restore information on there. And the practical result is recognizing what these were for and promote systems that basically sidestep, in a sense, a bad result that's occurring when fees are just much too high for what the person is asking for.

The next strategic direction is advocating for improvements in the system. Some time ago all of you would have seen amendments for the freedom of information — and we call it short form the FOIP [*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*], and the local authorities, LAFOIP [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*] — go through the House. And we've done education during this last year and I'll touch on that a little later. But at the time it was sort of agreed that these were some of the amendments, and to bring our legislation fully into the digital age it's probably time to start on what I call FOIP round two. Now that's probably a two-year process in the making but some of that work needs to start this year.

We need to promote amendments to *The Health Information Protection Act*, HIPA, and its regulations. And this legislation was introduced in 2003 and certainly the whole advent of databases and how information is stored changes a lot of the dynamics there.

We need to work with Justice on regulations re: the data matching legislation. I'll touch on that a little bit later. That was passed in the spring of 2018.

Clare's Law is in front of all of you in the House right now and, assuming it will pass when the House reconvenes, we really need to develop regulations there. It'll be referred to as a protocol and I'll come back to touch on that a little bit later.

Our fourth strategic direction is efficient while effective, and that's at the top of page 6. We have some targets that we try to implement and we try to get a review done in 105 calendar days, which is three and a half months, and an investigation done in 91 days, which is basically three months. We also try to get our consultations, most of them that fall on Diane's desk, within 30 days.

When people ask questions or provide us with documents or agreements, we try to give them a preliminary reaction — not an advance ruling, but a reaction as to how this could be reworked. And we also try to, in an early resolution model, resolve matters in 20 days. So rather than us doing a full-blown report, if we can get the public body and citizen to agree on what they're asking for and how to get it, it all helps.

So to briefly summarize, those are some of the things that we need to be working on in addition to all the things that come automatically which is the review of people's appeals and complaints when they're not totally happy with dealing with public bodies.

Now turning to the financial matters, and this starts at about the top of page 7, again we're requesting 1,927,000. And some of the reasons for that, last year, and I thank the board again, they provided funding to us for a term position because of the workloads we had a year ago last December, January, when we appeared in front of this board. Again I thank you for approving that and basically that money is already in the budget, but we request that it be retained and that we turn this into a permanent position.

We provided some charts just to show you the increases that are occurring to us. And the first one talks about files opened, and in 2016 there was 313. In 2017 there's 351, and last year, which is 2018, there was 301. Now if you compare that to 2013, basically our file load has doubled and that has caused some of which I'm going to share with you today, but is the justification for maintaining that term position that you approved last year. As a result of that, as more files come in, it ends up that files end up being open longer and in the next chart you can see that we've ended up ending 2018 with 184 files in the pipeline so to speak and there to work on in 2019.

At the top of page 9 we have a chart. I, when coming to the office and discussing with Pam and Diane, we sort of set a benchmark that every analyst should have 15 files to be working on. Now you might say well, why 15? But I mean as they close one they get another and we think if we can keep it at 15, citizens will get a reasonably good response, you know, within or less than that three or three and a half months we've taken. But if you look at the chart there, their final load has practically doubled which almost guarantees that we're not going to meet our targets and get answers back to people as quickly as we would want, they

would want, and I would suggest to you, the public bodies want. Like analyze this, give us your answer, and let's not keep this file open for a long time.

So all of this increased activity really affects our performance and I believe citizens deserve pretty good service. Can we provide stuff in one month or two? No. But I would really like to see us performing that they do get it within the benchmarks that we have set for ourselves.

[10:45]

So there's two charts. The one is the reviews, the target of 105 days. And you can see there at one point we were below and were doing quite well, but with the increased load we're above that. And secondly the one about investigations of 91 days, kind of a similar experience.

So all of that sort of supports that we've just generally had a caseload. From time to time I've been asked why. I won't go into the reasons there but it's kind of discussions about and the publicity about privacy throughout the world that I think has affected it.

We're also requesting in the coming year — and I guess this is an increase situation — funds for a term position for the coming year, and that starts at page 10. And I wanted to outline a few reasons why we're asking for that. Again it's partly due to the workload pressures I've just talked about, but there's some other things happening. But on the workload side, I expect in the coming year we will have another 300-plus files, which again is double the 2013.

So some of the reasons, in addition to plain old workload, is as I mentioned we had some amendments to FOIP and LAFOIP. 2018 has been an education year and basically we've updated our resources so that people can get information on it. We include it in our speeches and presentations. And you know, it takes some time for the public to learn about their rights and then pursue them, so we're expecting some of the amendments will kick in, in terms of files opened.

One of the really important ones is the obligation of breach notification. And what that requires is . . . A public body where they have a breach, they have to notify those people affected. So if you have a breach affecting 50 people, you notify the 50. If it's 100, you notify the 100. Now clearly when 50 or 100 people are notified, some of those people will contact our office and will file a complaint, feeling that the public body didn't do enough, didn't act fast enough, didn't do whatever to protect their personal information. And their personal information out there on the web or printed on paper or whatever, just created the greater risks of identity theft and people creating identities from this information. So we expect that there will be increased activity because of breach notifications that occur in this year.

Police forces are now under the legislation and we have worked with police forces and their access and privacy offices and met with the Saskatchewan chiefs of police association and have a good relationship. But it's resulting in a fair number of calls as they learn how to apply the legislation. And what also will be happening, people will be making access requests of police forces, and then a certain percentage of those, they won't be

satisfied with the answer and then they appeal to our office.

So to give you an idea, the Regina police force had 150 access requests last year. We don't have Saskatoon's number, but I anticipate it would be about the same or higher. And last year when I talked to you, I talked about other information and privacy commissioners. Fifteen per cent of their work came from complaints about police giving information. So I think in 2019 we will see some increased pressure there.

In addition, other issues will come up with the police that do attract media attention. And the example here in Regina was the naming of homicide victims, and that has taken a fair amount of time on Diane's part and my part just dealing with that issue. Don't know what they are, but I expect in 2019 there will be other police-related issues that capture public attention or media attention.

Solicitor-client privilege. In May of 2018 the Court of Appeal rendered a ruling which required us to change our practices and procedures. Basically from a situation where people would claim solicitor-client privilege and just provide us with the documents, we've gone to a situation where many will refuse to provide us with the documents. They will provide us with an affidavit and a schedule that will list the documents over which they're claiming the privilege. This will operate much like the court system does when you have a civil lawsuit these days.

Now you might think first blush that that would take less time. I think we've found, Diane, that it in fact is taking more time because it was so easy in the past just to look at the page and say yes, this is from a lawyer to a client, and move on. And it's not quite so easy anymore. So we're working on that process, an education process going along with it there.

*The Data Matching Agreements Act*, the House passed that in 2018 in the spring and regulations need to be worked on to go along with it. Public bodies will be able to access various databases provided they state the purpose and follow the rules. So it's going to be a considerable amount of time working on those regulations with the Ministry of Justice and other stakeholders. And as an oversight body I expect we'll be into fielding phone calls, education, and occasionally saying, no, we recommend you don't do that, or whatever.

Clare's Law is currently before the House. This is framework legislation, and what I mean by that is that the legislation sets out the framework. The details to make it all work for the police, for citizens, for shelters and that sort of thing is in the regulations. The Act refers to a protocol but in effect it is passed by regulation. We hope to be involved with the committee that develops those regulations, and really there is some who, what, when, why questions that will need to be worked out because again the legislation itself is very framework in nature.

Before the House is some amendments to *The Workers' Compensation Act* and there is one provision that impacts us here, and that is that workers will have another avenue in some instances to ask for a review when they feel they haven't got all the documents from the board or whatever the case may be, again expecting to increase the caseload.

I requested some changes where some organizations be added as

government institutions or local authorities. I believe in fairness that if you receive taxpayer dollars, you should have some policies and rules around access to information and, just as importantly, protecting the personal information you have. One example that I have here is care homes. At the moment . . . There's different licensing regimes for care homes, and at the moment some care homes are covered. They're treated as a government institution and local authority, and some are not. And we basically have asked that some of the . . . so that all care homes are in the same position. And care homes, just because of their nature, have a lot of information about their residents, whether it's personal information, financial information, or actually health information, taking people to the doctor.

And finally, and I touched on this in the beginning, we've issued 13 reports regarding the village of Pinehouse. And a good number of those reports is they just weren't responding to our office. It has resulted in Neil Robertson being appointed as an inspector to go out there and look at things.

But we have some 780 small entities — villages, towns, districts, and municipalities and northern municipalities — and they don't necessarily get a lot of access requests individually. But you know, if you only get one or two a year, frankly you really don't know what to do. And we've kind of said we're going to do everything we can, work with Government Relations, work with SARM and SUMA and administrators, and just make sure that they get as much help as the system can provide them.

So if you're an administrator for a small village and you work, you know, Tuesday mornings and Thursday mornings, there's no way you're going to be up on LAFOIP and the access and privacy legislation. You do need some good written or electronic resources to study yourself, but you also need somebody that you can phone and get some answers because you're just not going to see them that often. So we're seeing that is a need out there, to really assist people so citizens dealing with their local authorities can get the information and the administrators don't become totally frustrated with the process.

So thus the workload and the things that are currently in the Legislative Assembly and the other areas where there will be increased demand, we've asked that the board provide us with some funding this year for a term position. We're estimating about \$80,000.

So in summary, our request is again for \$1.927 million. It's an increase over last year of 80,000 for a term employee, in-range movements for current staff. We follow the PSC [Public Service Commission] guidelines, but we're anticipating over and above last year, about 5,400. And Central Services, who manages our lease for us, in accommodations we're anticipating about 12,600 increased charges there. The total increase over last year is \$98,000. I certainly ask the board to consider our budget request. I thank you for listening, and I'm really pleased to throw it open to questions to myself, to Diane, or Pam. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Thank you so much for your presentation. I will open it up for questions from the board. Mr. Brkich.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. You just mentioned from Central Services you expected a \$12,000 increase this year. Can you give a little

background information on that?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Basically last year when we had a term position, we had to take a bit of extra space. And in taking that space, you know, we work through Central Services and they sort of do the calculations as to what it will cost, and it has ended up that it's 12,600 more. The good thing about it is if you approve the additional term position I've asked for, we have the office and the space to put that person in.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Okay, thank you. The \$80,000 you're requesting for the additional staff position, you already have that staff person working, do you not? Were they not a temporary last year?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Well it is a two-pronged request, Mr. D'Autremont. The term position that we asked for last year, that person is working and is there, and what we're basically saying based on our workload, we need to make that one permanent. In addition to that, we're asking for a term position for this year. So the 80,000 is an increase in effect for the new term position.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — While the person in the position may not be the same, you're asking then that the term position be continued and an additional full-time — I don't use permanent — full-time employee be provided.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — It's a continuation of the person that's there, plus another term position.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Because none of us are permanent.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I know, Mr. D'Autremont, from the past I have to very carefully use that word.

**The Chair:** — Ms. Sarauer.

[11:00]

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. I just have one quick question. I know our office utilizes your resources quite often, so I did want to check to see if there were any concerns about the timelines in terms of requests made and responses received from the folks who are utilizing your office.

And one particular concern — and I'm curious to know if this new position will help alleviate that workload as well as the other file loads you've talked about — that I've heard of in particular is the time it takes for your office to review the FOI [freedom of information] responses that's been received when government has responded to an FOI request, that there is some concerns about the response that's received.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — So I'm sort of having a bit of a hard time hearing you. So the bottom line on your question . . .

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Sorry. I'm asking in particular if there are concerns about, right now more so, a point in time file load or wait time between when a response is received from government after a FOI request. And there's some concerns about the FOI

response that government has made, so then a request is made to your office to review that response. So I'm curious to know if there is some pressures in terms of file load there right now and if the additional term position will help alleviate that pressure, as well as the other pressures you've already spoken about.

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — I am certainly hoping so, and I guess that is why I put it on the table. And I know I asked for a term last year and I'm asking for a term this year. When we look at the charts around pages 8 and 9, I am concerned. The file load has doubled and that instantly dictates that it gets . . . they're slower in the system unless we have more staff working on them. I'm concerned about one time we were meeting the response times and now we're not. And again that's another reason why I put it in this request.

How do I put this? I think when people make an access request, they would really like their answer right away. I think in any system that isn't ever possible. You know, they might say they want it within 30 days, but the public body has, you know, 30 days to react. When we get involved, we ask the public body to get back to us in 14 days, and sometimes that works and sometimes they just take longer. You know, if I could get it under three and a half months I'd really like to, but because you're working with other people in the system, I think it would be tough. I mean I would be absolutely delighted if it could be done in two months, but again because you're working with other people, it just seems really tough to ever get there.

But we were doing better, and we are now doing poorer because there're just more files in the pipeline.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Okay, I've got just one question, myself, and it's in relation to your active file count per analyst. Your benchmark is 15 files per analyst. Analyst 1's got 22 and analyst 6 has got 42. So who is . . . Okay, just explain the delineation and who's awesome no. 6?

**Mr. Kruzeniski:** — Well there's a particular reason for that, that we try to group together files that have either the same public body or exactly the same issue. And yes, analyst no. 6, you know, it looks like it is really, really bad. And this is a senior analyst and is doing a good job on that grouping of files that are all related to one issue. But you know, take some of that away, she would still be in that group of pretty well double, and I guess in this sense it's almost triple, but it's because some of these files are not identical but similar.

Diane, any comments on that?

**Ms. Aldridge:** — Yes. And the 22 is the new analyst, who even though is experienced in access and privacy, coming to our office, is still learning how we do things the Saskatchewan way.

**The Chair:** — Great. Thank you for that. Any other questions?

With that, we'd like to thank you for your presentation. And we will, as a board, be deliberating later in the day, but thanks so much.

### Conflict of Interest Commissioner Registrar of Lobbyists

**The Chair:** — We can move forward in our agenda to item no. 11, review of the 2019-2020 budget and motion to approve budgetary expenditure estimates for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the office of the lobbyists registrar. So I'd invite you to take your seats.

**Mr. Barclay:** — Good morning.

**The Chair:** — Good morning. Welcome. Mr. Barclay, could you take an opportunity to introduce who's with you.

**Mr. Barclay:** — Thanks, Mr. Chair, and members of the Board of Internal Economy, it's really a privilege for me again to acknowledge Sandra Arberry who is my deputy and really is running the lobbyist registry and is really doing an amazing job. And she, as of last year, is the executive operations officer for the conflict of interest office. As many of you aware, Sandra has her master's in business administration. And I might be telling tales out of school, but she's writing the LSAT [law school admission test] test this month, so maybe she'll be running the conflict of interest office pretty soon. But her assistance is very invaluable to me.

As I've said previously, we run a pretty tight ship and, notwithstanding all our responsibilities, we operate without a secretary. If we have to do a written opinion, then Sandra will type it. And I've mentioned, and you're tired of hearing about my Scottish heritage, but I don't like spending government money.

Now I'd like to say a few words about the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and what we do. And I'm going to touch on two. We have suggested amendments to both the lobbyist legislation and the members' Act, and hopefully that they will be introduced in the House this session. And I'm just going to touch on that in a moment.

But my mandate is to coordinate the assets held by members, provide advice on conflict-of-interest issues, conduct inquiries, and provide opinions on compliance with the Act if requested by a member, the President of the Executive Council or the Legislative Assembly. I remember, I think I'd been in this job for about two weeks and there was a resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly for me to do an inquiry in respect to Serge LeClerc, one of the members of the Saskatchewan Party. So it was a big challenge, but those are some of the mandates that are the responsibility of my office.

And it's critical that my office is independent of the government. And I would like to say publicly, in all the years — I think I'm in my ninth year as Commissioner — that independence has been respected on both sides of the House. And I couldn't operate without it to carry out the statutory requirements detailed in the Act.

Now my primary role is to advise members of the Legislative Assembly, and I think if members come to me before they do a certain act, I think that we would be in a position that there would be very few conflicts. They seek my advice and recommendations about their obligations and I receive requests for many opinions from individual members, on occasion by the

Legislative Assembly, and on occasion by the Premier.

Now each year members must file an annual disclosure statement with the commissioner and after that I meet personally with all the members and from these disclosure statements I prepare public disclosure statements and file them with the Clerk. And those are all online and they're public. Now the issues raised and opinions requested over the past year continue to be challenging for our office and many of the complex issues that were raised become public in nature. And any feedback on the decisions we made generally were very positive.

I wish to express my appreciation for Ron Samways who assists me in the respect to my duties as commissioner and in particular my responsibilities to the filing by members of their private disclosure statements. He also arranges with meetings with the members and his contributions, as you all know, are immense. And any achievements that we have made couldn't be possible without his assistance.

Very briefly in respect to the lobbyist registrar, *The Lobbyist Act* provides that, section 2, that I serve as Registrar of the Lobbyists for the province and it's a good fit. I find being Registrar of Lobbyists and being Conflict of Interest Commissioner, if I discuss it with my colleagues across Canada, those that are responsible for both the lobbyist registry and the conflicts, it makes it a lot easier because many of the problems are the same. And as you know, *The Lobbyist Act* was passed back in May of 2014 and that's when it received assent and that's when I became the registrar.

And I think it's important to focus, just for a moment, that I feel very strongly that the important aspect of the democratic process is lobbying. Individuals, associations, and corporations have a right to communicate with elected or appointed government officials and you can go right back to the Bill of Rights. And *The Lobbyist Act*, the whole purpose of it is to enhance the integrity and accountability of government by fostering openness and transparency about who is influencing decisions made by public office holders.

Our website, it was launched in June of 2016, and the main focus on the website is education and information. We have three stakeholders — citizens, public office holders, and lobbyists. And this year we're planning to update the website and in light of our . . . It's going to depend a lot on the legislative recommendations. We will undertake some preliminary drafting on topics such as gifts, the 100-hour threshold. I feel rather strongly about that, that that has to change. If I'm a consultant lobbyist and I'm paid for my duties, I have to register immediately, but if you're not a consultant lobbyist then you've got 100 hours before you have to register. And if you've got somebody that to me is influential with the government, they never, never go through the 100 hours. It's 100 hours a year. They may spend 5 hours or 10 hours and that's not very transparent. And I'm cautiously optimistic from my discussions with the government, hopefully, that a bill will be introduced this spring. And we also have amendments dealing with charities where the big charities should be registered.

Also we continue to work with our service provider who developed the original website and he's done a tremendous job. We'd have picked him out of about 16 applicants all over Canada

and North America — Nick Hayduk of ECE engineering and consulting — and it's worked. We're very proud of him and we're proud of the registry system.

Now lastly before I get on to our budget. On our website, the resource library section, there's a registry reports button, and in that section there are a number of reports that are linked to the registry and provide real-time data on a number of sections on which lobbyists are required to report. You'll be able to know the ministers and the MLAs that have been lobbied, the government institutions, and subject matters, as well as the number of active registrations and lobbyists. We have now 603 active lobbyists and we also ascertained that the most lobbied subject is economic development. I see Mr. Harrison's nodding. We continue to receive calls from the media lobbying for clarification and information on the data post in the registry.

[11:15]

Now let's go to our budget. As you can see from our presentation, we're not requesting funds for any new or expanded service at this time. It's a status quo budget and we're rather proud of that. The only applicable increase is the conference that I'm holding as Conflict of Interest Commissioner in Regina in September, and that's the annual conflict-of-interest conference. I have colleagues right across Canada that hold the same position in the provinces, in the territories, in the federal government, and also in the Senate. And over the years I've got a lot out of that association. This is my last year as Conflict of Interest Commissioner and I'm rather proud to hold the conference in Regina. We're trying to keep the expenses as low as possible.

Last year I was in Newfoundland and it just shows the importance of this conference. It was comprised of the various ethics and conflict of interest commissioners across the country, federal, provincial, and territorial levels of government, and we meet annually to discuss issues of common interest. Quite often if I've got a serious problem, I'll either by email or a telephone conference call, I'll discuss it with my colleagues on a confidential basis. And these meetings are very beneficial as there are many Canadians who carry out the same responsibilities to the 61 members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I find it helpful to learn at the annual conferences how my colleagues deal with issues that are common or unique.

Now the budget dealing with the conference is \$10,000, and I'm trying to keep it as low as possible. Last year I hosted the lobbyist conference and we held it, thanks to the opposition, in their boardroom. I appreciate that. And this year we want to hold all the meetings in the legislature. The House is not sitting. We've been very fortunate to use Government House for one big banquet. And one of the big costs really is the banquet the final night of the conference, and I'm hopeful that I can get the Lieutenant Governor to sponsor the event, to help host it, and that'll cut down the expenses.

Now last year our cost . . . What was the cost for the lobbyists? Was it 12,000? It was \$12,000 and that seems awfully high. And maybe I don't understand completely the finance rules, but we collected most of that money from the attendees. I think we got close to 8 or \$9,000 but I made the mistake of putting it in the treasury without telling anybody. And I gather now that for some archaic reason I can't get credit for it. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, you

can help me, but it seems kind of simple that we could get credit for it. But this year I'm going to put it in a . . .

**The Chair:** — [Inaudible] . . . with you right now. Good job.

**Mr. Barclay:** — This year, hopefully, it'll be less than 10,000 if we can work something out with the attendees' fees.

We've got Madam Justice Georgina Jackson from the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, is probably the leading expert in conflicts in North America. She's lectured all over the world and she's agreed to lecture to my colleagues. We have Senator Raynell Andreychuk, who is leaving the Senate this spring after a very distinguished career. And we're very proud of her as a Saskatchewan native. After she was High Commissioner to Kenya and ambassador to Portugal, she went to the Senate and she's in charge of ethics there. And I can imagine that was quite a responsibility at certain times. And she's speaking. I'm going to ask my colleague in Ontario who is right now has got an investigation involving the Premier.

So I think it'll be rather an interesting conference, but unfortunately it's not open to the public. And well I think we can keep the costs down, but that's the reason that my budget is just a little higher than I wanted it.

Even with the figures that I have, our total request is only \$556,930 and it's an increase of 2.4 per cent. That's attributable to the in-range salary progression with my colleague to my right and hosting the conference. And if I can keep those costs down and get credit for the registration fees, we may be equal.

I'd like just to talk a moment about my amendments and they're in my annual report. And in the 2016 and 2017 recommendations, I talked about removing the 100-hour threshold for in-house lobbyists. And in BC [British Columbia] recently, there is no threshold at all. It's zero. There are just new amendments. And I've been told by the government that they're going to introduce that bill. I was hoping it would be introduced last fall but it wasn't. And we've got also a provision dealing with the large charities that should have to be registered. But my amendments dealing with the members' Act are contained in my last annual report, and I'll just touch on them for a moment.

I had six suggested amendments. One dealt with the private and public disclosure statements that numbered companies, that we should disclose where those assets came from. And everybody's doing that now. I've asked the members on both sides of the House and everybody's co-operating, but I thought just to have legislation available, it would in the future . . . that like in other jurisdictions that if you have a numbered company, you have to disclose what the assets are.

I found it very difficult, for example, to give advice to former members. They phone and said, what about the cooling-off period? And technically under the legislation, I can't give them any advice. And it seems to be a simple matter that I should be able to do that because it's important that they get advice when you're dealing with the cooling-off period, whether it's 12 months or 6 months. I try to help them but I'd like the Act amended in respect to former members. For departing members I feel strongly that when they leave, within a few months they should file a statement about what their assets are and whether

there's any conflicts.

I thought that the Act should be renamed and I'll just go to that just for a minute. And what I said in my annual report:

With this [new] statutory focus on ethics and integrity it follows that the name of the Act and Commissioner should be updated to reflect a focus on ethics and integrity generally. One solution would be to rename the Act The Members' Ethics and Conflict of Interest Act, and designate the commissioner as the "Ethics and Conflict of Interest Commissioner".

And I'm getting, right across Canada I think, that that title has been used in a lot of other provinces. And I don't really see any problems with any of these amendments; it's just a question of getting them in the House and getting them passed.

I also made reference to extending the term. And the only reason I put that in, a lot of the other provinces . . . Right now there's only two five-year terms for the commissioner. And I'm just giving an example. I could be or whoever's the commissioner could be sitting on an inquiry thinking that they'd finish it easily in the year before they retire, and somebody gets sick and it's going to be adjourned until after the commissioner retires. Then if you want to continue with the inquiry, you have to start all over again. So it would give the legislature power in certain situations to extend the term beyond the 10 years. And right now it's two five-year terms and I think that makes a lot of sense and a lot of the other provinces have the same legislation.

And we know that the media are quite interested in the amendments, and any feedback I get, any of these amendments aren't really an issue. Just a question of getting them in the House. And I'm hoping that that will happen.

That basically is my presentation and Saundra and I are ready to answer any questions you have.

**The Chair:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Barclay. Yes, appreciate your work. So I open it up for some questions. Wow. None.

**Mr. Barclay:** — I found when I was a judge things went a lot faster if the lawyers didn't say anything.

**The Chair:** — Now you have your wish again. But I thank you for your presentation and, as I said, we are deliberating as a board coming up this afternoon. But no, appreciate the time. Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Barclay:** — Hopefully we can get those amendments that I don't think anything are really controversial. If we could get them in the House, I have no control over that.

**The Chair:** — I just wait for them myself. Thank you, sir.

So board members, we are a little ahead of schedule. What is your wish? Do you want to keep going? We've got . . . Okay so we'll delay lunch, but let's keep going? Okay.

### Legislative Assembly

**The Chair:** — So that takes us to item no. 12, which is the review



of the 2019-2020 budget for the Legislative Assembly. There are two decision items, A and B. Item A would be a motion to approve expenditure from the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund for projects. Item B would be the decision item motion to approve budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates and revenue estimates.

And with that I'd like to welcome Clerk Greg Putz. And if you could introduce the staff that you have with you, and we'll go from there.

**Mr. Putz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're a little ahead of time so I just have to look back to see actually who is here with me. So I'll introduce those who are here and I'll begin in no particular order of importance, but Ken Ring, our Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; Iris Lang, our Principal Clerk; next to me is Dawn Court, our executive director of member and corporate services; and to my left is Cindy Hingley, our director of financial services. We have Mike Halayka, director of member services, sitting behind me; and with him is Ginette Michaluk, director of human resources; and last but not least is Melissa Bennett, our Legislative Librarian. Oh and Darcy — sorry, Darcy escaped my view there — Darcy Hislop, our chief technology officer.

So I just want to begin by noting that this is Cindy's first budget since her promotion as director of finance on June 1st, but as most of you know here, this is not her first trip to the rodeo. She's been involved in the process in helping us build our budget for a number of years now. So I just want to point this out because this is . . . It was Cindy and her assistant, Theo, who was going to join us here but isn't here. And thank you, Paul. He came over to us from Social Services on October 1st. He and Cindy were the ones that put together the document that you have before you.

[11:30]

So I'd like to begin with a few introductory remarks regarding our budget and then I will turn it over to Cindy to take you through the details. So the budget that we're presenting to you here today is vote 021. And as you know, vote 021 is framed by the Assembly Act and includes members of the Legislative Assembly, and that principally is payments and allowances to members, Office of the Speaker and the Board of Internal Economy, caucus operations, and of course the Legislative Assembly Service.

The LAS [Legislative Assembly Service], as you also know, provides approximately 80 specific core services, and we support approximately 400 individuals to one degree or another. That includes MLAs, your CAs [constituency assistant], caucuses, and many of the officers of the Assembly in various capacities, the Speaker and his office, and as well as the corporate services to LAS itself.

Just as a reminder, those service commitments to you are outlined in our *Guide to Members Services*, and that can be found on the members' portal. And I think we've got a few more joining us here: Terry Quinn, who needs no introduction, our Sergeant-at-Arms; but also Sarah Wood, our new director of visitor services who replaced Lorraine deMontigny who all of you know, who was a long-standing employee who retired last winter.

So where was I here . . . So the budget document begins as always with our strategic goals and key actions we plan to accomplish in 2019-20 to support the Assembly's various functions. The plan takes into consideration both the support and improvement of present services, which we hope is also positioning us for the future.

So as such, our action plan is key to continuing initiatives on records management, which is of course a government-wide endeavour at the moment; succession planning, based on our workforce plan; business interruption planning, and we intend to replace the existing plan with one that better meets our requirements, the organization, and quite frankly satisfies the Provincial Auditor; and upgrading the Assembly's broadcast infrastructure, which is a replacement of our obsolescent broadcast infrastructure; and of course leveraging our in-house expertise while we can.

And to answer one of Paul's initial questions about the cameras, yes, they are new. They were installed last week, but that was part of the funding that the board provided to us last year as replacing that obsolescent equipment, which is a two-year plan.

So I don't propose to go through all of the actions in detail. They're there for you to read. You're very familiar with the services that we provide to you and your caucuses and to your constituency offices. Suffice it to say that our goal is to provide you and the people of Saskatchewan with a support system that runs smoothly and reliably. And as always, we'd be happy to answer any specific service and support questions you might have for us today, and any day of the year for that matter.

So the LAS budget request takes into consideration of course the province's financial position and our need to manage our resources prudently. Overall we're asking for an increase of 61,000 or 0.2 per cent of the funding for the Legislative Assembly Service operations. And that increase is shown on page 16 and it relates to in-range progressions which are consistent with the public service policy on that subject and the succession plan for our broadcast unit. Otherwise, for all intents and purposes we've been able to offset our core LAS operational pressures for this upcoming year.

I do want to highlight our asset replacement plan which, as I mentioned, you as a board approved last year. A year ago the board approved a two-year project to address obsolescent and critical broadcast and IT infrastructure. For 2019-20 the request for RARF [Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund] funding is to complete the replacement of that equipment and the migration of the Assembly's broadcast systems from standard to high definition format.

One final point on the LAS portion of the budget. As some of the other officers have indicated, at this point in time we've not assumed a cost-of-living allowance or COLA salary adjustment for LAS employees because, as you're also aware, the public service and SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] collective bargaining process continues. In the event there is an agreement on a COLA salary adjustment factor for the public service in 2019-20, the LAS would return to the board if it affects our budget. As you're also aware, employees of the LAS and those of the officers are entitled under legislation to the same benefits as provided to executive

government employees.

So before leaving the budgetary side of the ledger, a \$36,000, or 0.13 per cent increase is proposed for interparliamentary associations. This increase is principally for full membership in the Midwestern Legislative Conference as recommended by the executive committee of the Saskatchewan branch of the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association].

Administration of the Board of Internal Economy directives and statutory entitlements for members naturally comprises the largest portion of the Assembly budget. The board will recall that the approved 2018-19 budget reflected the CPI [consumer price index] freeze to the annual indemnity allowance. That provision was set to expire and is not included as part of this 2019-20 budget submission. We have budgeted based on the terms set out in the board directives. So overall the members' and the Office of the Speaker portion of the budget shows an increase of \$235,000 or a 0.84 per cent increase. And the total for vote 021 budget proposal is an overall increase of \$332,000 or 1.19 per cent from last year.

So with those introductory remarks, I'm going to ask Cindy then to take you through some of the detail in the budget development assumptions.

**Ms. Hingley:** — Thank you, Greg. Good morning, Mr. Chair, and board members. To begin, I'd like to spend a minute on our budget development principles and assumptions that we used to develop the LAS's '19-20 budget. The details can be found on page 10 of your budget book.

Our principles included: developing a budget that is fiscally responsible and mindful of the information provided to the Board of Internal Economy by the Minister of Finance confirming his cabinet's commitment to achieving a balanced budget by '19-20; the use of an estimated growth factor of 1.8 per cent in the consumer price index to increase members' indemnity and additional duties, allowances, travel and living allowances, caucus resources, and constituency service expenses for '19-20; identification of savings within Legislative Assembly Service operations to offset the majority of financial pressures required to maintain core service delivery levels to members. Base funding has been incorporated to provide for zero per cent cost-of-living salary adjustments for all LAS staff, and in-range progression salary adjustments for eligible employees.

As Greg has already mentioned, our '19-20 budget submission provides for an overall increase of LAS expenditures of \$332,000.

Our '19-20 funding request for members and Office of the Speaker outlines an increase of \$235,000 or 0.84 per cent. Our funding request for Legislative Assembly Service core operations provides for an increase of 61,000 or 0.22 per cent. For the past several years, Legislative Assembly Service operations has absorbed salary pressures to the degree that it's now started to impact core service delivery levels to members.

Our funding request for interparliamentary association provides for an increase of 36,000 or 0.13 per cent. As Greg mentioned, this increase relates to costs associated with upgrading the Midwestern Legislative Conference membership from affiliate to

full status.

If I could ask you to turn to page 15 and 16, we'll focus on the details of the budget request. On page 15 you will find members and Office of the Speaker recommendations, which break down as follows: our offsets of 171,000 reflect 116,000 for a reduction in budgeted transitional allowances paid to former members who retired in '18-19; \$20,000 for a partial return of anti-harassment training funding; \$15,000 for a partial return of anti-harassment framework development funding; \$15,000 related to the 10,000 term provision to reflect anticipated usage; and 5,000 to return funding obtained in '18-19 for SSTI's [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] 20th anniversary.

Increases include 201,000 for aggregate consumer price index increases as outlined in the directives; 162,000 related to MLA travel and living expenses resulting from an increase in National Joint Council mileage rates; 35,000 to support the Board of Internal Economy and the competition and recruitment process for an officer of the Legislative Assembly; and \$8,000 to reflect an increase to other leave benefits for constituency assistants.

On page 16 you'll find Legislative Assembly Service operations, Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, and interparliamentary association recommendations which breakdown as follows: for Legislative Assembly Service operations, we have salary savings and return of one-time funding of 76,000 to absorb salary pressures. Our increases for '19-20 include \$111,000 related to in-range progression and reclassifications and 26,000 related primarily to broadcast succession planning.

For the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund, our budget remains at 250,000. In '18-19 the board approved a two-year project to address obsolete and critical broadcast and IT infrastructure. For '19-20 the request for RARF funding is to complete the migration of the Assembly's broadcast systems from standard to a high-definition format. Page 19 speaks more about the update on our '18-19 funding and what we are proposing in the final phase.

For interparliamentary associations, our budget reflects an increase of \$28,000 due to the Midwestern Legislative Conference membership fee increasing from affiliate to full status, as Greg mentioned. There's also an \$8,000 increase to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association grant.

Page 18 identifies our revenue estimates as \$10,000 for the upcoming year. This amount remains unchanged from last year.

I would like to thank the board for their time and consideration of our '19-20 budget submission and invite any questions you may have at this time. Thank you.

**The Chair:** — Okay, thank you so much for your presentation, and I invite the board to ask some questions. I recognize Mr. Brkich.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. I just want to touch a bit on the Midwestern. What do we pay now as affiliate?

**Mr. Putz:** — Right now we pay as an affiliate basically not much at all. It's 13,000.

**Ms. Hingley:** — It's 13,300, and to increase it to full is 42,000.

**Mr. Putz:** — Right. And just to elaborate on that a little bit, right now the amount that we pay, the reason I said it isn't that much at all is because it's basically a cost sharing with the provincial government. And the increase then also would be cost shared with the provincial government as well.

**The Chair:** — Go ahead, Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, maybe I can speak to that cost-sharing provision that you referenced, Greg. Executive government, my ministry, Trade and Export, will be paying for half of the fee. So we're paying 13,000 right now, and is that paid exclusively from CPA, or is that portion cost shared as well with executive government right now?

**Ms. Hingley:** — Yes. Out of our contractual services, yes.

**Mr. Putz:** — Your ministry is billed separately from the Assembly. So I'm presuming it's about the same, but I can't say for sure.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — I'm just . . . [inaudible] . . . I've attended it lots and the conferences are good. The states though probably use it a lot different than we use it. Like they actually use it to help them draft bills, which we don't here. You know, do we need . . . like I know it's nice to maybe be a member, but in the same instance, we don't use their offices the way the states do down there. Like a state senator uses them to help draft bills; that's their legal end of it. Where here, we never, ever, other than going to listen to the speakers and the interaction, we don't use their offices down there at the same rate that the other states would use it.

And I haven't been going to it for 20 years. I understand that it's a good thing to belong to. I've gathered a lot of information. The extra cost is, you know, as the previous one here, I'm not Scotch, but I hate to spend a nickel when it comes to anything if I don't have to.

And the other 8,000, what was that for?

[11:45]

**Ms. Hingley:** — That's an increase to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association grant. That's the grant portion.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — For what?

**Ms. Hingley:** — That just to fund the CPA program, like the budget.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Are you going anywhere in particular or what was the 8,000? Just short 8,000, or was it for the dinner? What was the 8,000 used for?

**Mr. Putz:** — It's all of the above, Mr. Brkich. It's the funding that's used to support all of the professional development initiatives for the CPA, and that's to support members'

attendance at conferences, for the Assembly to host conferences, that dinner you talked about, a whole host of things. And that is the budget in essence, that's approved by the CPA executive.

This isn't LAS driven nor is LAS advocating one way or the other. We're neutral on the membership, the full membership in MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference]. Members obviously saw some value in promoting the step up to the full membership and, as I said in my comments, this was based on the decision of the CPA executive.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — So this is 8,000, just being clear, this is just the registration fee to belong to the CPA?

**Mr. Putz:** — That's a separate licensing for that. That's separate. What you're talking about is the annual grant to the CPA, to the Saskatchewan branch.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — [Inaudible] . . . Saskatchewan branch, not to national then.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you. Perhaps I can answer some of the questions that Mr. Brkich had. We originally joined MLC in 1999 as associate membership. That was a new category for MLC. We were the very first associate members because we were not an American state. The American state fees are based on population, and there is actually no fee for them for MLC. They pay their fees to what's called CSG, the Council of State Governments, of which MLC is a part of. There are four conferences, I believe, four or five conferences.

And so the associate membership was new at that time, and so we will be the first to actually, if we accept this, become members of MLC but not members of CSG because that's where they develop their legislation and assistance and research for all that. So that's what the American legislators are paying for, when they pay their membership fees to the association, is for those kind of services through CSG.

So we're not paying for that. We're paying an upgraded fee to belong to MLC as a full member, which gives us voting rights, the ability to present motions to the main floor and have them debated and participate in the vote. Because up until now we cannot participate in the final votes on the floor. We can participate at committee but not in the final deliberations. So this will give us the ability to do that. Why is that important? Well we have seen the various difficulties we have in trading with the US and a lot of the discussion takes place at what's called the sub-national level — so provinces in Canada, states in the US — where we can have considerable influence in helping to direct the decision-making process of the American legislators as we provide them with information.

And as we all know, a lot of this is personal contact. Somebody has a question, they pick up the phone and they phone a representative, an elected official in some other jurisdiction to find out what's happening and what it means and what the impact is. And this will give us the ability to actually have influence on the floor of these decision-making bodies, which we do not have now.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Forbes.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Good. Well that's helpful. So just to be clear, when we're talking about the 28,000, that's an increase from what our share was before. That cheque was sent, I assume it was sent from legislative services for \$13,300, of which this department paid back six thousand, a hundred and fifty dollars. No? So, okay.

**Mr. Putz:** — Presuming that Jeremy's ministry paid probably about 13,000 as well.

**Mr. Forbes:** — So 13,000. All right.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — We'll figure out exactly how that worked.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — I think the exact arrangements are somewhat opaque right now.

**Mr. Putz:** — Yes, like I said this is the amount that the CPA has approved for our associate membership. We send the money to the MLC organization and they invoice the government for that portion separately. So I don't know exactly what that amount might be or who's actually paying it.

**Mr. Forbes:** — [Inaudible] . . . the numbers in here because when we start talking about sharing, I'm not sure if it's half or not. But when you say that it's an increase of \$28,000 — is that right? — that will go to pay for what we think is a membership in the MLC. That's what we're paying for out of here. And we hope . . . But you guys get invoiced and that makes it all good. But ours is 28,000, right? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay, good.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes. Just to this point, I'll find out the specific answer as to how Trade and Export is involved on the financial side. But I would just support Dan's comments around the value of the organization. That's why I'm prepared to, you know, from Trade and Export, pay more to be a part of this because I think there's value in members from both sides. And Nicole and I had a good chat about this the other day, but members from both sides engaging at the sub-national level with US legislators because it really, it does make a difference. It really does. We saw that in the USMCA [United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement] negotiation. It made a big difference.

**Mr. Forbes:** — We'll have more discussion later on. But I just have another couple of questions. One is around the anti-harassment. I just want to thank legislative services for the great year and even longer, from doing the resolution, going through the training, and getting a good person to do that work. It's been great. And then saving \$20,000 when we had set aside . . . How much did we set aside?

**Ms. Hingley:** — 25,000.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Twenty-five, so in the end we spent five. And so now the work before us is the framework which is meant to identify any gaps that we have, and I understand it's coming

along really well and should be in a good place. Now we're not setting aside any funding for that going forward into next year, and maybe we don't need any funding. I don't know. I don't have any idea. But is it your anticipation that we don't need any funding, that most of the work can be done in-house?

**Mr. Putz:** — Yes, we're retaining 10 for continuing the framework piece and five in case there's any other training.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Okay, good work. And I'm just curious, how much was the legislative internship program costing us? We are obviously aren't moving ahead with that, so that's not in here, but what was the annual cost of that?

**Mr. Putz:** — Just over 90,000.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thanks.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Harrison.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of questions. So on the directive 3.1, adjustment on travel and living expenses on page 15, that's primarily driven by the increase in the National Joint Council mileage rate. But I think we know that fluctuates significantly at different points of the year and it's predicated on the price of energy globally, you know, at which point right now we have 89 cent gasoline out there right now. So I haven't seen this sort of variation in the, you know, 10 or 12 budgets we've gone through before here, predicated on a change in mileage rates which would have an impact on the 3.1 allocation. So I'm wondering why that's changed.

**Mr. Halayka:** — So it's just in the last budget cycle, I mean, the National Joint Council rate was 46 cents a kilometre. We're now up to 51 cents a kilometre and, I mean, if everything stays the same, we're drawing pretty thin with our travel budget right now. Just in the past, we've done a number of experienced drawdowns and if that continues to stay, we could potentially be forecasting to be overspent in the travel budget this fiscal year.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, it's just highly unusual. I mean we have done drawdowns on the 3.1 allocation predicated on use in the past, but we've never adjusted it on the basis of a forward-looking projection on, you know, something like this which is highly variable. And I understand it was 46 to 51. You're going to see an adjustment though, going from 51 back down. It's not that this only goes up. It's based on a formula that has to do with gas prices. So I'm a bit reluctant to budget an increase in the 3.1 budget based on that.

**Mr. Halayka:** — So let me add something in there that wasn't budgeted for as well. And we had a last-minute change last year to the budget where we changed the per diem rates for the National Joint Council from 75 per cent to 100 per cent. That's a 25 per cent increase in meals and that's also impacting our travel amount.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well look, I'm not averse to having a degree of adjustment or even perhaps if we were to come back if there were to be an overspend. I mean it is a projection based on, primarily, mileage rates. So you know, if we needed to look at a supplementary, that would be something I think that we would be open to doing, based on . . . You'll know after Q2 [second

quarter] probably where we're going to land on the thing, so if we wanted to take another look at it then. It's just unusual that we would do it this way.

It's to a degree into the next question, and I asked Greg the other day and I thank him for his quick response as to what we would do if we were to look at an increase in the RARF, which has been a really valuable way that we have been able to use as a board and as a legislature to address some pressing issues, the IT infrastructure and broadcast infrastructure being the latest. But we've done some really important stuff — preservation of records, these sort of things — over the years that otherwise would not have happened but for the fact that we've had an allocation to the RARF fund, which hasn't moved in . . . I don't think at least 10 years.

So you know, we can talk about this in a bit more detail as we go forward, but I guess I would ask for the record, if we were to have an increase of 50 or \$100,000 on the RARF, what the priorities would be recommended from the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Putz:** — Mr. Harrison, you're right. The amount hasn't changed appreciably over the whole time that RARF has been in place. There was one occasion when the board, in consideration of a three-year project we had for the refurbishment of the library space at Walter Scott — and Dan, you might've been the Speaker during that time — the board decided let's do it in two years and increased our fund in one of those years. But other than that we had one occasion where it was actually reduced because of other austerity measures.

So yes, you had asked me that late last week and we haven't had an awful lot of time to consider it, because we had anticipated not having an increase in the amount. But if we were to have an increase, as I mentioned to you, one of the areas we'd be looking at is in our security area. And Terry is here and he can elaborate maybe if you wish.

But one of the issues we're having right now is with our X-ray scanner at the delivery entrance, the back entrance of the Assembly. That machine is causing us all sorts of problems and that would be one thing that . . . We're looking at actions now to possibly fix it but it doesn't look like we're going to be able to fix it, so that is probably about a \$50,000 expenditure. So that would be a priority for us because we do need to scan items coming into this building.

And if we are able to fix the machine, then other areas we'd be looking at, security would like to do something about having some scanning at the Prince of Wales entrance with an X-ray scanner or a metal detector there as well. And that would probably be about \$60,000 Terry tells me. Right now somebody either has to come down and hand-wand somebody or they have to come upstairs to go through our existing security procedures. So those would be the two areas off the cuff that I would put forward.

**The Chair:** — He's first. Mr. Forbes.

[12:00]

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you. Just a quick one on the housing and travel allowance. Have you done any modelling around . . . You

know, we have \$50 a day and it used to be pretty easy to figure out it was \$1,500 a month. But now with the actual expenses I don't know how many people will actually get up to the 1,500. Some may get close and some may actually be, you know, at \$1,000 and because they're actuals, there's not much you can do about that. So have you done any modelling of the savings that might be there, or what's happening with that?

**Mr. Halayka:** — Probably in the next few months we'll be able to do that, but we just don't have enough information, being the first month that it's been in effect, to come to any kind of conclusion on that.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Good, thanks.

**The Chair:** — Mr. Brkich.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you. Just getting back to, you'd mentioned . . . I understand the X-ray machine. I understand that. That needs work. But you talked about expanding the Prince . . . the other entrance. Any buildings I've been at, legislative buildings, usually have one point of entrance for security, not one or two. I don't know if I'd be all right with expanding another point of entrance for security reasons. Other legislation buildings I've been at are actually funnelling, going now toward just one point, making it more secure that way.

Another thing if we're doing more security, I'd like to see a little more security just outside the building, on the steps and parking and around in there. I mean we've had a few different instances out front where, you know, basically it'd be nice to have a security officer out there and about when there was either events going on or just people trying to speak on the front of the steps of the legislature or just security. The parking lot late at night when you leave here some nights at 10:30 after committee, 11 in the summertime.

**Mr. Putz:** — If I was smiling, it wasn't smiling at you, Greg. It was smiling because the person sitting next to you, the former Speaker, was smiling and he knows that when he was Speaker we had a major initiative for a single point of entry to the building. And that was at the tail end of Pat Shaw's tenure as Sergeant-at-Arms, and then Terry came on stream after that. But it was considered a costly endeavour and it would mean converting the art gallery into the place where people were screened. That would've been our single point of entry. So that proposal was not accepted by the board, the funding for it, so what we have now is what funding was made available.

So as it happens we do have two public points of entry to the building right now, and the Prince of Wales is our barrier-free entrance. That's where people who are not as mobile enter the building and that's where we have the issue, or if they're to be screened like all other people coming into the building, either somebody has to come down and do it or they're sent up to do it. So what we do with the co-operation of Central Services is build into that entrance the same scanning procedures that we have at the main entrance as you come into the building up the staircase.

**The Chair:** — Any more questions? Yes, Minister Harrison, go ahead.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Just to clarify, on the MLC fee, the rate

is \$12,567 US right now for the associate membership, and it's paid half Legislative Assembly and Trade and Export, \$7,900 Canadian per organization. So the overall cost of MLC membership would be split in the same way, just for the full fee under the proposal we have in front of us.

But with regard to the interparliamentary association budget, so was this budget voted on by the CPA executive committee, the overall? So this is the recommendation from the CPA committee?

**Mr. Putz:** — Yes, it is.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Okay, so we have to, you know, approve that, I guess, as a part of the overall submission here from the Legislative Assembly. But as a part of that submission, what were the allocations for interparliamentary exchanges or, you know, other sort of meetings or anything of that nature? Because I'm not sure. I'd heard some discussion around what was going to be included in that or not included in that. But my understanding had been that we would fund some of . . . not necessarily all of the MLC fee, but at least a portion of the MLC fee out of the existing budget, that it wouldn't be an over-and-above ask.

**Mr. Putz:** — The way it works is that on the grant side, that's where the members of the CPA executive look at all of the various professional development events and opportunities and make decisions, and they set the number of delegates and that sort of thing to attend. And then they propose a number for inclusion in this budget as part of that grant.

The second part is the actual cost to belong to those memberships. For whatever reason that has to be coded separately and it's a separate line item in our budget. And on the MLC part, there was a discussion about having this full membership — and Mr. Forbes is a member of that executive — and it was agreed in principle that we pursue this. It was somewhat contingent on the government continuing on in that kind of cost-sharing mode, and so the number for that was estimated at \$84,000 in total. So when you take our half of it minus what we've been paying, that's the number that we're putting forward to you here today. Does that answer your question?

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Yes, it does.

**Mr. Putz:** — I don't have a list of the various conferences. I didn't bring that with me, but certainly we can provide it to you, if you so desire, or one of your representatives on the CPA executive.

**The Chair:** — Okay, well thank you for the presentation. And in that we are about to have lunch . . . We're going to break for an hourish, but we'll certainly decide. Maybe we'll come back earlier. It's fine. But I'll tell you what. We'll have a break and then we'll reconvene at the pleasure of myself and all of the members, 12:30ish or thereabouts. And again, thanks everybody. We'll be back.

[The board recessed from 12:07 until 12:54.]

**The Chair:** — Okay, it now being 12:54, the board will

reconvene. It was an excellent lunch and we will now go officially in camera. I need a motion to go in camera. Minister Merriman and seconded by David Forbes. Okay.

[The board continued in camera from 12:55 until 14:17.]

**The Chair:** — It now being 2:17 p.m. the board will return out of camera. So we have a number of motions and approvals to consider. So agenda item no. 7:

That the 2019-20 expenditure estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer be approved in the amount of \$5,354,000 as follows, which is statutory, \$5,354,000; and further, that these estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I need somebody to move that motion. Minister Harrison. I need somebody to second it. Mr. Forbes. Thank you. You're doing something. You're not sitting there. You have to participate. Okay, make sure we're on the record.

Agenda item no. 8:

That the 2019-20 expenditure estimates for vote 056, the Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner be approved in the amount of \$4,149,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$3,921,000; statutory, \$228,000; and further, that these estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I so move.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont moves it. I need a seconder. Ms. Sarauer. Thank you.

Item no. 9:

That the 2019-20 expenditure estimate for vote 076, Advocate for Children and Youth be approved in the amount as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$2,568,000 . . .

Statutory must be 228. I didn't write it down. Yes, statutory 228 . . . Yes, there's a provision of \$100,000. So instead of . . . Yes, there's \$100,000 change. Okay. Actually it's more than that. \$172,000 change . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . \$100,000 for the employees, so \$2,568,000. The grand total of \$2,796,000.

Okay. I need somebody to move that motion. Mr. Brkich. Need a seconder. Mr. Forbes. Thank you.

We are now on agenda item no. 10:

That the 2019-20 expenditure estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$1,927,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$1,699,000; statutory, \$228,000; and further that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have somebody move that? Minister Merriman. Somebody to second? Ms. Sarauer.

Agenda item 11:

That the 2019-20 expenditure estimates for vote 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner and Registrar of Lobbyists, be approved in the amount of \$557,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$557,000; and further that the estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Can I have somebody to move that motion? Minister Harrison. Second? Ms. Sarauer.

We are now at agenda item 12(a):

That the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund effective April 1st, 2019 be increased to \$350,000 per fiscal year and that for the 2019-20 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved: obsolete and critical broadcast-related infrastructure, \$250,000; additional projects to be developed and brought back to the Board of Internal Economy for approval of \$100,000; for a total amount of \$350,000.

Looking for someone to move that motion.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I will.

**The Chair:** — Mr. D'Autremont. And I need someone to second it. Mr. Forbes.

Agenda item 12(b):

That the 2019-20 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$28,208,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$9,869,000; statutory, \$18,339,000; revenue to be voted, \$10,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I ask for someone to move that motion. Mr. Brkich. Someone to second it. Second, Mr. Forbes.

I believe at this point our business is finished, so I thank everyone for their time and efforts for the Board of Internal Economy. It is now 2:26 p.m., Monday, January the 14th, 2019. This board committee stands adjourned until the call of the Chair. Thank you all.

[The board adjourned at 14:26.]