



Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HANSARD VERBATIM REPORT



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BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

Hon. Dan D'Autremont, Chair
Cannington

Hon. June Draude
Kelvington-Wadena

Ms. Doreen Eagles
Estevan

Mr. David Forbes
Saskatoon Centre

Mr. Jeremy Harrison
Meadow Lake

Mr. Warren McCall
Regina Elphinstone-Centre

Hon. Don Morgan
Saskatoon Southeast

[The board met at 13:17.]

The Chair: — It now being after the hour of 1:15 p.m., I would like to call this meeting of the Board of Internal Economy to order. In attendance we have Mr. Morgan, Mr. Harrison, Mr. McCall, and on the phone we have Ms. Eagles. I'd like to welcome everybody here today.

You'll see before you a proposed agenda for the meeting. It only has one item on it as well as the minutes of the previous meeting. So would somebody move that we adopt the agenda?

Mr. McCall: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall, seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favour? Carried.

We will move on then to the decision item, which is a request for a special warrant by the Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year 2012 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, we have to do the minutes first, sorry. Have people had a chance to look over the minutes of the meeting of no. 7/12? Are there any questions related to the minutes?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I will move approval.

The Chair: — It's been moved by Mr. Morgan that the minutes of meeting no. 7/12 be approved. Any discussion? All in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Ms. Sterling: — You need a seconder.

The Chair: — Oh, do we need a seconder?

Mr. McCall: — I'll second.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall. Okay, then we'll move on to item no. 1 since we're trying to rush here. The issue is a special warrant request for the Advocate for Children and Youth. The information is before you as to the rationale for the request. It deals with the change of venue for the offices for the Advocate for Children and Youth and the information from Central Services that they need \$22,000 at the present time to commence the planning for the move. Are there any questions? Would you like . . . we have Mr. Fenwick here today if we have any questions that need to be answered, and Mr. Pringle is on the phone as well. Mr. Morgan.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm prepared to make the motion so it's properly on the floor if nobody else has . . . I'm supportive of doing this. The concern that I have was the same one that we raised before, was I want to make sure that we're not back here for another approval, that this is complete and that we're not managing the project sort of step by step, approval by approval, that we've got an approval large enough to complete the move and the leasehold improvement.

Ms. Eagles: — I'm sorry, Dan, I couldn't hear what Don

Morgan said.

The Chair: — Don wanted to know that this would be the last time this request was coming forward for this particular move so that there would not be a need for a further special warrant this quarter before the fiscal year-end.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — Bob.

Mr. Pringle: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and board members. I appreciate this opportunity. This is the last time we will come forward with the request; I think we can safely assure that. And I do apologize for indicating in November that there would be no costs this year. This was an unforeseen expenditure that I feel badly about. We can absorb the increase in rent we're going to have after our lease expires at the end of January, in two weeks. For February and March we can absorb that cost, the rent increase cost of about \$1,400. But this will be the last . . .

But just to be clear, to clarify because when I met with you on behalf of the Ombudsman and myself, who was away at the time, and Mr. Dedman indicated this as well, that the one-time leasehold improvements would be \$500,000. And I just want to mention — which Mr. Fenwick and I have met with the Speaker on it — is for next year it's now \$650,000 rather than \$500,000. And so I know things have a way of going up, but in terms of this fiscal year, this is the last request.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm fine with that. You know, some things will always happen that are unexpected. This was what I was trying to avoid, and we appreciate the things that certainly the officers of the legislature don't have control over. So I'm certainly supportive of wanting to have the project be completed, and thank you for bringing it back. And we'll deal with where we need to be in the next budget and as we go forward if there is other issues after the end of the fiscal year, but thank you.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Mr. Morgan, you need to read that out.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I move:

That for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, a request for special warrant funding in the amount of \$22,000 be approved for vote 076 Children's Advocate and Youth, and that this request for special warrant funding be transmitted to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — Can we have a seconder of that motion?

Mr. McCall: — Agreed. I shall do.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall. Do you want me to read the question again? All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you, Bob, and thank you, Doreen.

Ms. Eagles: — You're welcome.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much. I had Bernie here for some tough questions, but I appreciate your sensitivity and your great support to our office. Thank you, members.

The Chair: — Thank you very much. That being the business of the day, would someone move adjournment.

Mr. Harrison: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Harrison. All in agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you, everyone.

[The board adjourned at 13:23.]

[The board met at 12:45.]

The Chair: — The hour now being 12:45, and according to my agenda it says that we will start at 12:45 sharp, so I'll call this meeting of the Board of Internal Economy to order. And I'd like to introduce the members that are here present today. We have Mr. Harrison, Ms. Eagles, Ms. Draude, Mr. McCall, and Mr. Forbes. We have the proposed agenda before you. If I could have someone move the agenda.

Mr. Harrison: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Harrison. Secunder? Mr. McCall. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Thank you.

We also have a copy for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, meeting no. 1/13. It's in your packages. Are there any questions related to the minutes of the previous meeting? If not, would someone move adoption of those meetings? Ms. Eagles, and seconded by Mr. McCall. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Okay, item no. 1, tabling and decision item on the Legislative Assembly third quarter report, expenditure report. There is no presentation for this. The information is in your package. If there are no questions, would someone move the adoption of the report? Mr. Harrison. Secunder please. Mr. Forbes. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

We'll let Sheila get caught up on the motions. Okay, we also have the item no. 2, the tabling and decision item for the approval of the Legislative Assembly's mid-year report. Again there is no presentation. It is in your package. Are there any questions related to the mid-year report? If not, would someone move adoption of the report.

Mr. McCall: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall. Secunder? Ms. Eagles. All those in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Well we went through our first couple of items rather quickly, so our next budgetary — moving on to the budget now at this point — budgetary item, the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, normally is dealt with by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman . . . We're not scheduled to actually start the Conflict of Interest until 1:15. So now we can get some

explanations on the numbers because Dawn is here and she prepared those, but we won't necessarily get the explanations. So we'll wait until 1 o'clock and then proceed from there.

[The board recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Before us is item no. 3: decision item, the budget and motion for approval, budgetary expenses estimates for the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Today we have before us Mr. Kevin Fenwick from the Office of the Ombudsman, assisting the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Mr. Fenwick.

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Mr. Fenwick: — A poor second choice compared to Mr. Barclay, Mr. Speaker, less knowledgeable and less experienced but equally eager. I don't have a lot to say on Ron's behalf. He's out of the province, and as we share space and share facilities, he has asked if I could sit in and answer any questions that board members might have.

I would just very briefly summarize his submission, which is a modest submission as he describes it. For the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the vast majority of his expenses are related to his statutory salary. We're fortunate that we're able to work with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and house him within the offices of Ombudsman Saskatchewan. We provide him with administrative support to a certain degree. The Legislative Assembly also provides him with support.

He is looking at essentially the same budget as last year with a couple of small increases to take into account cost of living, I think. And because there is some talk around some additional responsibilities for him, he is asking for a little bit more money to attend an additional conference this year. Otherwise it's pretty much stay the course. I'd be happy to answer any questions that board members might have.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Do any of the committee members have any questions related to . . . Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. I'm interested in the case tracker system. I see that the BCOO [British Columbia ombudsman office] used to send one bill, and now they are going to send two. Is that correct?

Mr. Fenwick: — With respect to the Conflict of Interest or with respect to our office at the ombudsman, you mean?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — No, I guess, this is one through the . . .

Mr. Fenwick: — I think you're probably looking at the ombudsman.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I'm on the wrong one. Okay. But I still have one question for you.

Mr. Fenwick: — Certainly.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — The contractual services for last year went from 14,000 to 24,000 from 2011-12 to '12-13. It went up

\$10,000, and I see that we're staying about there but can you explain that to me?

Mr. Fenwick: — I believe those contractual services both related to the same file, and my understanding is, is that they both related to the review that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner was asked to do with respect to a former member of the Assembly. And he contracted out for those services. Some of that work took place in one fiscal year, and some of it took place in the other fiscal year. And I think the 14 to 24 just happens to be how they broke down. I think that's the primary reason.

The other, what he has listed in contractual services is with respect to the share of the costs for his housing that we provide to him or that he shares with our offices. We are looking at a modest rental increase for that space for this year. But I believe that the largest percentage of the increase last year was with respect to the legal services that he contracted for with respect to the investigation. I can't be certain of that, however.

Is that right? Yes, I'm getting a nod from . . .

The Chair: — Those numbers, you've got to look at the first set of numbers was '11-12 and then it increased for '12-13. And the request for '13-14 is actually less than it was for last year.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Yes, and that was my question. So if this was for one specific case, it must mean that it hasn't, you haven't or he hasn't completed that case?

Mr. Fenwick: — Well I believe he has. When I'm looking at the numbers, what he did after that first year was he built in the sum of \$6,000 for last year for an ongoing provision for legal services, whether he would need it or not. If you look at the numbers that did not occur in '11 and '12, it was there for '12 and '13 and is again there for '13 and '14. So that would explain 6,000 of the increase for '13-14 compared to '11-12.

The other increase is contractual services general which went from nothing in '11-12 to 3,700 for '12-13, and he's carried that forward for '13-14. My apologies, but I don't have a specific answer for that part. The actual finances for Mr. Barclay's office are handled by staff at the Assembly. So if there's someone who can help me with that I'd appreciate it, but I don't know the answer. My apologies, but I don't know the specific answer.

The Chair: — One of the issues, because his office is being discussed as looking at becoming the ethics commissioner, he may be building some money into there to take that role on. But again, I'm not in his office so I don't know.

Mr. Fenwick: — That is why he's added the amount — I know because he and I talked about it — that's why he has added the amount for an additional conference is if he becomes the ethics commissioner, that's a separate conference that he would attend. But your question is a good one, that doesn't explain the difference from two years ago to this year.

The Chair: — Okay, additional piece of information that his increases in cost are related as well to the potential of becoming the lobby commissioner, that his office would be doing the

registration and tracking of the lobbyists if that carries forward. And if it doesn't, if the money is not utilized, then it is returned to the treasury. Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Harrison: — Yes, that's my understanding as well, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of the lobbying commissioner and the lobbying issue, the government's undertaking additional consultation on that file as we speak. And we'll be making a decision as to how to go forward in due course.

The Chair: — Thank you. Any further questions? It's been our practice in the past that we have held off on the final decisions on all of these budgets so that if there are any personnel questions involved, we can deal with them in camera. So if there are no further questions, we will move on then to the next item.

Mr. Fenwick: — I have offered and we certainly are able to get in contact with Mr. Barclay. So if it's important to answer that question, we can certainly undertake to do that.

The Chair: — It might be worthwhile to contact him and just confirm that that is what is happening here. Okay, thank you.

Okay. Item no. 4, Office of the Ombudsman. And, Mr. Fenwick, I wonder if you could introduce, do your presentation and introduce your staff.

Office of the Ombudsman

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I actually have three members of our staff here with me. Joining me at the table to my left is Andrea Smandych. Andrea is our new manager of administration, our finance guru within the office. We have two other members of our staff accompanying us here today as well, both seated in the back row: Renee Gavigan who is our manager of our intake services, an important role in our office because our front end people are the voice and the face of the office for probably 70 per cent of the people who come to us; and beside her is Aaron Orban. Aaron is one of the assistant ombudsmen in our office in Regina as well, and Aaron is also the person who is our go-to guy, as it were, with respect to public interest disclosure. So he joined us when we received responsibility under *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*, and we're fortunate that the skill set that he brings with him allows him to do ombudsman work as well as public interest disclosure work. So I am very happy to have them here with me today.

I don't propose to go through in great detail the entire written package that we've provided to you. What I would like to do is hit the highlights of some of what is in our submission and then answer any questions that you might have, but I would certainly welcome questions from board members as I go along. Feel free to interrupt and not have to wait till the end if it would be relevant for you to do so. And again I would certainly undertake, if there's any additional information you require that we don't have at our fingertips today, we'd be happy to provide it to you, either later today or as quickly as we can get it.

There's two or three things that I would like to talk about briefly, in terms of the work that we do and the way that we do our work, without going into as much detail as what is in the

information that's been provided to you. The first comment I would make is that we are here today operating under a different piece of legislation than we were when I appeared in front of you last year. Last year we were operating under what was called *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*, and the legislature saw fit to pass two new pieces of legislation this year that separated out the ombudsman Act from the advocate for children and youth, and so we now operate under *The Ombudsman Act, 2012*.

There were a number of welcome changes with that new legislation, many of them housekeeping in nature. But I don't say that in any dismissive way, but rather housekeeping in the sense that they allowed us to recognize the way that we now practise our work and to do things more efficiently than what we had done in the past. There were other changes that I'll comment on as we go along more briefly that expanded our jurisdiction in ways that do have some impact on our ability to deliver services.

[13:15]

Generally though, what I would suggest to you today is that with respect to our ongoing programming and ongoing funding, we're asking for dollars that do not include any new initiatives, dollars that would allow us to continue to do the work that we've done in the past years with increases for known increases that we will be facing and for a small cost of living adjustment, etc. We call it status quo programming, although it's not a status quo budget because it is an increase over last year's numbers.

We have three primary areas in which we do our work. The first are what we call public complaints, or complaints for the public. That is the core of our business, probably always will be. It's our first priority. Those are complaints that we receive from members of the public about some aspect of government services, and we deal with those complaints in the most appropriate way that we can. Sometimes that means we investigate them fully. Often it means that we do some coaching. Often it means that we facilitate some negotiations. Often it is that we point people in the right direction by referring them back to the government agency so that they can deal with the agency most directly and in the most efficient and quick way possible.

With respect to that aspect of our work, we had seen a number of years ago a decrease in absolute numbers of complaints that come to our office over the course of 2004, 2005, and 2006. And then for a period of four or five years, our numbers stabilized so that we were receiving between 2,100 and 2,200 complaints every year, pretty steady for four or five years. 2012 has seen an increase in those numbers, not an insignificant increase. We're looking at numbers, as we'll report in our next annual report, of about 15 per cent over 2011. So of course that has added some pressures to our ability to do our work.

Slightly offsetting that was a decrease in the complaints that came to us about matters outside our jurisdiction. The outside jurisdiction numbers are less impactful on us, of course, because they don't take as much work. On the other hand, they do take some work. And so we like the idea that the numbers have gone down with respect to the outside of jurisdiction

because we would rather concentrate our efforts on what we're actually responsible for. Having said that, when people call us about something that is outside our jurisdiction, we are very active as a referral agency and sometimes as a coach to put them on the right track. So those complaints do take resources.

Those numbers last year were down to 668 from 758 in the year before, but our within-jurisdiction numbers were up from 2,160 to 2,495. So the total number of complaints we received last year was 3,163.

Because the board saw fit to provide us with some significant additional funding a couple of years ago with respect to expanding our role within the health field, I thought I would just share some health numbers with you. We have seen an increase in our health complaints relative to last year, an increase of 27 complaints. Some of that however is as a result of our new Act. The new Act that came in expanded our jurisdiction in health. Specifically it gave us responsibility for health organizations for which we did not have responsibility previously.

We are now the only ombudsman jurisdiction in Canada that has some jurisdiction over private agencies. So ambulance services in the province, for example, receive their funding primarily from government or from regional health authorities, and so one of the concepts in the new Act is that our jurisdiction would follow the money, as it were, which I think is a good idea. If it's publicly funded dollars, I think that there's a good argument that can be made that the Ombudsman should have oversight over agencies delivering those dollars, whether they happen to be, for example, ambulance services owned by a health region or private ambulance services that are contracting with a health region.

I'll get back to those numbers a little bit more later, but with respect to that aspect of our work, that core business, complaints from the public, we are asking for funds to maintain the level of service that we have been able to deliver over the last year.

There are however a number of costs that we are aware of that will come into play in 2013-2014 that directly impact those costs of services. The vast majority of our funds are paid for salaries. We know that there are some increases we are facing with respect to existing staff and their salaries over the course of the next year.

We have three in-scope staff within our office. That's referred to I think on page 9 in the material that we provided to you. They are likely to receive an economic adjustment retroactive to last October. The cost is about \$800 to annualize that increase. They're likely to receive a collective agreement increase in October of '13. We're assuming that to be about 2 per cent, a cost to us of \$800 as well. And staff who are in scope receive increments based on their years of service, and for our staff we're calculating that amount to be \$2,400 for the next fiscal year.

Most of our staff are out of scope. They have some similarities in terms of their salary scale and some differences. We're looking at a 2 per cent economic increase for our out-of-scope staff. The cost to our office of that is \$45,400. We're looking at

a 2 per cent increase in the flexible benefit plan at a cost to our office of \$400. And we're looking at performance pay that will cost us about \$28,000 last year.

Board members in the past have had some questions around performance pay and what that means, and so I'll just very briefly talk about that. For in-scope staff, the collective agreement provides for increments. Based on years of service, in-scope staff will have their salary adjusted and increased year by year until they reach the top end of the scale.

Out-of-scope staff who are under the Public Service Commission scheme, as ours are, do not have their salary adjusted automatically based on years of service. There is a performance pay system. So for the out-of-scope staff there is a performance planning exercise that we go through every year. We work with our staff to develop work plans at the beginning of the year. We do a mid-year review, and then we do a review at the end of the year, and there's a rating scale that is applied. And based on whether they receive a rating of essentially 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 which would be: doesn't meet expectations, meets, exceeds, or greatly exceeds — I guess there's four— they will be eligible for benefits which may range from nothing to, in some years, it's been as high as 6 or 7 per cent. So we are estimating that the cost for our office of paying for those performance increases will be \$28,000.

The total cost of all of those salary increases therefore for 2013-14 is \$94,900, and that's included in what we're calling our status quo programming budget. So that's a known increase.

The second aspect of our work is what are called own-initiated investigations. I still use the phrase own-motion because that's what the former Act said. We haven't all adjusted completely to the lingo in the new Act, but they're now own-initiated investigations. We do those for a number of reasons. Occasionally we will do an own-initiated investigation because someone comes to us with an individual or a particular complaint that doesn't allow them to disclose who they are. That's rare but it can happen.

More importantly though or more recently and more frequently, what we're doing is spending more of our resources looking for patterns of complaints. I've used the phrase before that if we have 10 complaints come to us this year about the same issue that we had 10 complaints about last year, then we haven't done our job. So we look for those patterns of complaints. We try to get beneath the tip of the proverbial iceberg and say, what are the underlying causes? And if we can see a pattern or think there might be a pattern, we will launch an own-motion investigation, an own-initiated investigation or what we often call our systemic reviews.

Although that is not by any means the majority of how we spend our money, an argument can be made that that is some of the most impactful work that we do because those reviews result in systemic changes that can be very broadly based and can affect a number of people at the same time. In fact it often leads to changes in the way programs are delivered, and occasionally it leads to changes in the design of the programs themselves. So we think that's an important part of the work that we do.

We have actually now dedicated approximately 1.5 full-time equivalents to that work. It isn't focused necessarily in one person's hands all the time. We'll move people around to bring particular skill sets to a particular review. But we're now at the point where about one and a half of our people are working on those systemic investigations.

Occasionally we will also bring someone in from outside our office to help us with those systemic reviews if we need some subject-matter-specific expertise in a certain area. Most of those reviews now are done very collaboratively. We are working with a co-operative influence model. We talk about co-operative influence as a kind of partnering that we will sometimes do with ministries. Important that we maintain our independence, but we can do that in this co-operative influence model where we work together and try to come up with common solutions that the ministry says, yes, this is a good idea; we'll work with you to make it as good as it can possibly be.

At the present time, we have one of those co-operative influence reviews under way with the Ministry of Social Services, looking at the transitioning of young adults from child and family services programs to community living division services programs. And that has very much been a working together kind of exercise that we hope will lead to solutions, perhaps in the form of recommendations from our office that will improve services that the ministry delivers to that very vulnerable group who are going through a number of transitions as they reach adulthood.

Occasionally we are actually requested by ministries or other agencies to come in and do those reviews. One of the most satisfying things for me is when we have something on our list and the agency comes to us before we go to them and says, can you help us with this? We will sometimes do that with what we call our fairness lens, where we'll say to an agency, if you're running out a program, rolling out a new program, don't wait till the complaints come to us for our comments. Let us sit down with you and give you the benefit of that fairness lens to make the program as good as it can be so that we don't get the complaints in the first place. That's the second major part of the work we do, which is the systemic area.

And the third part of our core mandate is public education, and that takes the part partly of communications and partly our fair practices training. Again we're not asking for an increase in funds other than the adjustments to take into account salaries with respect to this area of our work either. We have a director of communication and public education. One person wearing two hats does both jobs and does them both very well.

We also now have dedicated almost one full-time equivalent to one of our staff who is working almost exclusively on our fair practice training workshops. Board members may recall that I've used the phrase before that we used to go out and talk to government departments about what to do when the Ombudsman calls. Now we have a two-day workshop called the Fine Art of Fairness. that is about what to do so the Ombudsman doesn't call.

Our mission for our office is a government that's always fair. Our goal should be to make ourselves redundant. Our goal

should be to try and work with government agencies so that they naturally and always treat people fairly, in which case there'd probably be no need to have an Ombudsman. I have about two years left in my second term, and I probably have enough work to keep me busy for those two years. But that's our goal.

And fair practices workshops are an important part of that. We sit down with those government agencies and we talk to them about what fairness means. We work with them to develop skill sets on how to identify fairness issues and communication skills in order to listen, most importantly, and then talk in ways that people can understand. And we also talk to them about what the role of the Ombudsman is, in the four half-day modules of a total of a two-day course.

I'll blow the horn of our office a little bit here. This particular workshop has been several years in the making and is now widely recognized across Canada and in fact internationally for the quality of the work that we are able to do. Two years ago we were requested to be the one and only pre-conference workshop for our national organization called the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman. We were asked to deliver that workshop at the conference in Vancouver in 2011.

There were two attendees at that conference from Pakistan, from the office of the federal taxpayers' ombudsman. And as a result of that and what they saw, at the cost of the government of Pakistan and CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, a colleague and I were in Pakistan earlier this year delivering two two-day workshops, one in Islamabad and one in Karachi, to members of the newly formed Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman at no cost to the people of Saskatchewan. But it was, I think, it was a pat on the back for us that that work was recognized and we've been asked to deliver it internationally. We, I think the phrase is, punch above our weight class in Ombudsman Saskatchewan in terms of what we're able to do nationally and internationally because of the good work that we do here.

[13:30]

The problem we have with our public education training and our fair practices training is that we can't keep up with the demand, so we have been trying to work with new models. We've been trying to develop models where we don't have two people present at all of these sessions, where we are developing expertise within the ministries. We'll continue to work on those models so that they're a little bit less resource-intensive for us. But they're important, so we'll do whatever it takes in order to make sure that happens.

Summary of some numbers for you. With respect to goods and services, we're asking for status quo with respect to known increases. Some of those are not insignificant. The guidelines that government is working under this year are the cost of doing business increase or inflationary increase of 1.6 per cent. We're asking for that, \$10,700.

Madam Minister, you asked about case tracker. We have been advised by the ombudsman from British Columbia, and they are the ones that provide us with our IT [information technology] support with respect to our complaint tracking mechanism —

we call it SIM [system information management] — they have indicated to us that the cost of doing business is going up and the increase over last year is \$9,400. We bought that system from the ombudsman in British Columbia a number of years ago. They have continued to work with us to customize it to meet our needs and to provide us with ongoing day-to-day IT support when we need it. And that's what they have told us the cost is going to be over and above what it was last year.

We came before the board in 2005, I believe it was, for funding for a package together with the, at that time, the Children's Advocate's office. We looked at different models, whether we bought something off the shelf, whether we constructed something from scratch. And what we decided was the most cost-efficient to meet our needs at the time was to purchase this package from British Columbia. We're happy with it; we're satisfied with it; but we've been told the costs of maintaining it are going to go up.

The two other significant increases are with respect to the lease of our space. As board members will be aware, our space is actually provided to us by Central Services. They're the landlord. They rent the space from someone else and then essentially sublet it to us. The actual negotiations are outside the purview of our office. We trust that Central Services does the best it can to get us the best rate possible.

In Saskatoon what they've been able to do . . . And this is in partly our existing space and partly as a result of a move that's upcoming. The cost is an additional \$89,000 for next fiscal year over last. And in Regina we've been told that the cost of our existing lease for our existing premises is going up next year by \$6,000. So the total ongoing costs that we're aware of that we're asking to be incorporated into our baseline budget for those items is \$115,100.

And then we get to the big number. The big number is with respect to our move in Saskatoon. We are partners in Saskatoon in our space with the Advocate for Children and Youth. We have the ability to share a number of services and have done that since the Office of the Children's Advocate was created a number of years ago. We share infrastructure. We share boardrooms. We share a number of things. We share personnel from time to time to allow us to cover each other off. We provide some legal services from our office to the Advocate for Children and Youth as well. And so what we have done is, number one, we've outgrown our current space. And number two, we've engaged Central Services to help us find alternate space.

The Ministry of Highways is moving out of space in the adjoining building. They're actually considered in Saskatoon to be one building, although technically I think they're two that are connected by a link. In any event we're moving next door on to the fifth floor. At least we're hoping to if the board sees fit to fund that move. And we have already reached the stage of moving from the basic plans to the design stage, the detailed plans as it were. As a matter of fact, we signed off on phase 1 yesterday and we're ready to move into phase 2.

We again rely on Central Services to tell us what it's going to cost for that move. We assume they've done their due diligence and have no reason to think otherwise. Our one-time cost for

that move is \$240,000. That's our share of what we have with the entire project. It's a lot of money, but we're actually fortunate that the space we're moving into was formerly government space so it complies with what government needs in order to have space. We're able to move in and use a lot of the existing infrastructure that's there. We're able to use almost all of the fixtures that are there. For example, we're even going to use the same blinds on the windows, that type of thing. But there is some construction because Highways was using a modular system and they're taking it with them. So at the present time their space we're moving into is pretty empty. So we need to build some walls, and that's where a lot of the cost comes in.

In addition our space in Regina is also smaller than what we need. And just as importantly, our lease is up. And so what we've been working on now for a number of years in conjunction with other independent offices of the Assembly is finding space where hopefully we can all locate, so that we can get some of the efficiencies of sharing that we are fortunate to have in Saskatoon with the Advocate for Children and Youth.

So we are continuing to work with the other offices, with great assistance from the Assembly, to find that space. And we hope that in this fiscal year we will get to the place where we are now in Saskatoon at the design stage, at the planning stage. And so we're told by Central Services that we can anticipate those costs at about \$60,000. And so we're requesting that so we can move ahead in Regina as well. Those are both one-time costs. The total of those one-time costs for our office is \$300,000.

I have a couple of things that I want to say on last year's initiatives. But if there are questions in terms of what I've said so far, I can take them now or I can talk about them later, whichever you prefer.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — I just have a question about your move on to the fifth floor, and I asked the Children's Advocate earlier. I don't know if he remembers this question but I was asking about walk-ins. Do you have many walk-ins in Saskatoon? And how will this impact them by you moving up to the fifth floor?

Mr. Fenwick: — Excellent question, and two parts of the answer. First of all, the space is accessible. There's a street entrance to the elevator. So there's a street entrance off 3rd Avenue that people come in and the elevator's right there, so we're certainly comfortable that it is accessible. We're actually thinking that in some ways, it might be more accessible because the entryway, Mr. Forbes, as you're aware, in our space in Saskatoon is crowded for people certainly with wheelchairs.

But the answer to the first part of question is most people, the vast majority of people contact us by telephone. We do not have a lot of walk-ins. We have now a secure access point on our website if people want to file complaints that way. They can certainly do them by mail as well. But we have . . . I believe the number last year was around less than 3 per cent of our complaints came to us by walk-ins. Now we certainly meet people in person. Often we go out to their residence or their place of business. We have some people who come in and we conduct interviews with them, and so we absolutely need to

have space that's accessible.

For us it's more important that the premises be accessible. We want to be close to bus routes, for example, because a large number of the people who come to us may not have their own vehicles. They tend to be clients of Social Services or Corrections and Public Safety and may not have their own vehicles. So as long as they can get to us, we think that the new space does give them pretty good access.

The Chair: — Any other questions before Mr. Fenwick carries on? Good. Okay. Mr. Fenwick.

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you. I just want to talk about a couple of last year's initiatives. As I mentioned earlier, we were fortunate to receive some funding a couple of years ago to expand our role in health. We hired a team of people, some of whom had experience in our office, some of whom came from various backgrounds in the health field, and we've put together what I think is an absolutely crack team who can work within the health sector specifically. We have crack people who work in other areas as well, but these were the new hires to our office. They have both the ability to respond to individual complaints and to deal with systemic issues. They are working very closely with the existing system of care, assisters of advocates and navigators within the health system, and that's the quality of care coordinators that work for the health regions. We are seeing more and more referrals to our office from those client reps and quality care coordinators and we certainly refer back the other way.

That's an area, the health field, where our Fine Art of Fairness workshops are in the greatest demand. A number of health regions have come to us and have asked for that training and we're happy to provide that. With our additional jurisdiction in the health sector, we've embarked on a round of contacts, of relationship building with people and agencies with whom we didn't necessarily have contact before. So for our health team, that's a significant initiative for this year.

And the other thing I would mention is the report that we did last year at the request of the Minister of Health with respect to the Humboldt senior centre. We were asked to do a report on St. Mary's Villa that we entitled *In the Name of Safety . . . A Review of the Saskatoon Region's Decisions and Actions in Relation to the Former Enriched Housing Residents of St. Mary's Villa, Humboldt*.

Our Act provides for referrals from ministers of the Crown for issues like this. In the history of the office since it was established in 1973 there had never been a referral of that nature, and last year essentially we had two — this one and the other one I'll comment on in a minute — and we're very proud to take on that role. I think that we did excellent work, if I can say so, in that particular report. The phrase that we heard over and over from families and residents from the home, from the Saskatoon Health Region, and from others that we contacted was that the report was thorough, fair, and balanced. And that's what we're all about.

So I'm happy to say that Saskatoon Health Region and the Ministry of Health accepted without equivocation all of the recommendations we made in those reports. It was a huge

undertaking for us. We had two people who essentially worked on nothing but that project for six months and a number of other people who worked on it as well. So it was very resource-intensive but very, very worthwhile, and I am proud to say to you that we received that request and responded, I think, in a very good fashion.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of complaints that come to our office about health issues, from about 80 in 2009 to 186 in 2012. We've spent a lot of time analyzing why those numbers have gone up in the fashion that they were, and our analysis leads us to the conclusion that it's not because the health system is performing worse than it was in 2009. It's because of the effectiveness of public awareness.

We know that every time the Minister of Health answers a question in the Assembly and talks about the Ombudsman, we can expect five or ten more complaints that month than we did the month before. And we used some of the money that was provided to us with respect to our health package to do some public awareness work. And we see increases directly when we do some bus advertising and some newspaper advertising and some television advertising, etc.

One of the things we were able to do last year was to qualify for what are called public service announcements. There's a federal accreditation agency that does that, so a number of television stations are running our ads at no cost to our office. And that, we think, is the primary reason for the increase in numbers.

And we think that's a good thing. What it demonstrates is that there are people out there who have issues that they want someone to look after. And the more people that are aware of who we are and what we do, the more likely we are to receive that information.

The second continuing new initiative, if I can call it that, for our office is with respect to public interest disclosure. We did receive some funding when the new legislation was passed a year and a half or so ago. And then last year, when as Ombudsman I was appointed as the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, we had estimated the cost of running that program in the first couple of years at around \$150,000 a year. The board saw fit to provide us with 126,005. We're asking for essentially the same dollars this year.

Aaron Orban, who I introduced to you before, is our point person with respect to public interest disclosure. He continues to work with Crown corporations and ministries to make sure that there are good, robust processes in place for reporting wrongdoings or things that civil servants think might be wrongdoings. We are interested in seeing that there's some consistency in terms of the models across government and the Crowns, and he works with them to do that. We are heavily involved in providing training to the designated officers within ministries about that.

We have the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman is actually delivering a course in Saskatchewan in March for investigators, and the majority of people who will be attending that session will be the designated officers. And our office is directly delivering half to two-thirds of the material in that two-day workshop. We will actually be hosting the national conference

for public interest disclosure offices next year. Sounds fairly grand, but we're a pretty small group. So it's not a large conference, but we are hosting it nonetheless. And we continue to develop written materials and our website for the use of civil servants with respect to public interest disclosure matters.

[13:45]

And then the other thing I will mention — although it was not strictly a public interest disclosure issue, there were enough commonalities that I think it's worthy of mentioning at this point — and that was the second ministerial referral we had last year. And that was from the minister in charge of the Public Service Commission with respect to a public servant who wanted to run for municipal office in a small city in Saskatchewan and who had asked for an outside employment waiver, is what they're called, and was denied.

The matter was raised in the legislature and the minister asked us to take a look at that. And so we did a second significant report that was entitled *Achieving the Right Balance: A Review of Saskatchewan's Conflict of Interest Policy Respecting the Provincial Public Service Sector*. And what that report did was led to a significant movement towards renewal of Saskatchewan's conflict of interest legislation, which had not had a significant review since 1994. And so that particular review will have a significant impact for all public servants in Saskatchewan once it's been completed. The Public Service Commission was very good to work with in that review. They accepted all of the recommendations that we made, and we will continue to work with them to make sure that they're proceeding with the review of that process.

In conclusion — and I'm sure you're glad to hear me say that — I say in all sincerity that we believe in fiscal responsibility at our office. I think we are fiscally responsible. We work very hard to find efficiencies within the office. I could give you many examples, some large and some small. Sometimes we do manage temporary vacancies in order to allow us to do certain projects. We've found ways to reduce our reading materials budget. There's all kinds of little things that have allowed us in the past to find dollars here and there.

The vast majority of our budget though is salary, and over that we have very little control. Even our significant non-salary items, things like rent, are items over which we have very little control. So what we're delivering for you here today is a budget that will allow us to take into account the known increases and deliver the same level of service next year as we did last year, with the notable exception of some one-time funding we're requesting with respect to our move in Saskatoon and a possible move in Regina. Thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Fenwick. Questions. Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, and thank you for your presentation and your work. And on behalf of the Public Service Commission, I really did appreciate the work you did in achieving the right balance. I think it was important. And also congratulations on the work in Pakistan. I think that sends a great signal as well.

I'm interested in, on page 13 it says that Government Services is recommending that you seek funding of \$60,000 on behalf of the five independent officers to assess collective functional requirements. Is that a pretty new thing? I mean it seems to me that you're supposed to do the work and vet the money for Government Services.

Mr. Fenwick: — We've been one of the active partners in that endeavour, and I'm not sure whether it's fair to say that we have taken the lead in it. I think that would be overstating it. But we've certainly been one of the more active partners in doing it. I think this is a mechanism where it's easier to do the bookkeeping through one office, is my understanding. I don't believe you're going to get a request from each of the independent offices for a similar figure. That's what the estimated cost is, and my understanding is we're the only office at this point that's asking for that amount. Obviously if that process doesn't proceed, we wouldn't be spending the money. But yes, the answer to your question is yes, that's essentially what's happening.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — And this is for the Regina office.

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes, for Regina.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — And it will be fairly unique then to have the five independent officers together?

Mr. Fenwick: — It would be in Saskatchewan. It certainly is not unique in other provinces. There are a number of other provinces that have similar models. When I visited the ombudsman's office in British Columbia, for example, I walk in their doors and there are four or maybe five of the independent offices that are co-located. Their particular model is you get off the elevator and there are five separate doors, but you share interview rooms out front. And once you walk through the doors, there's a lot of shared space behind.

We don't know what that model would be. Our model in Saskatoon is somewhat different. You walk through. You get off the elevator, and the plan's for one joint office where we have reception staff for our office and reception staff for the Advocate for Children and Youth that are not separated by walls, if you like. But we would work with the other offices in Regina to see which works best.

I sometimes sort of facetiously say that I think for the public what would work best is if they could come to an office and the sign above the door says, complaints are us. And they don't need to sort out whether it's a youth issue or a privacy issue or an ombudsman issue; it's about service first. And quite frankly, if we can get some benefits of efficiencies with shared services, that's a great thing as well. But for me it's primarily for the benefit of the public.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — As you do this work, are you looking at the disability issues to ensure that people who may be coming there would be able to access it regardless of any disability they may have?

Mr. Fenwick: — Certainly. Yes, absolutely.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — And my other question, I'll go back to

the original question I had when we were walking about the work with the BCOO. So yours is 9,400 and I think the child advocate has got, asking for 10,000. So together what is the increase that you're . . . I can't break it down within your consultants to find out how much money you were charged last year.

Mr. Fenwick: — The total increase of the contract or contracts that we have would be \$19,400 with British Columbia.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — So what percentage increase is that from the total that he asks for for last year, from last year. I just can't break it down here. I see that it was 501,000 last year.

Mr. Fenwick: — Perfectly fair question. We'll get it to you very quickly — between 15 and 20 per cent. Looks like about 19, but between 15 and 20 per cent.

What we're told by . . . If I can give you a little bit of background which may help out. At the time that British Columbia was offering to work with us, we purchased their system together with the Children's Advocate . . . Alberta actually, Alberta Ombudsman's office purchased at the same time. BC [British Columbia] was at the point where they wanted to expand their IT service but without some partners paying them some money, they couldn't do that. So it was good opportunity for them to do that marketing.

What they tell us is that they've done an analysis now and they're losing money, and they're not sure they should be subsidizing the offices of the independent officers in Saskatchewan. So what they're telling us, this is essentially cost recovery. They're not looking to make a profit off us, but this is what it costs to deliver the service. I accept that that's the case.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — And I just have one other question. I see that the contractual services last year was 501,900 and this year it's 614,000. So I see part of this would be from the advocate. Part of it is probably that \$60,000 for the work that you have to do for the independent offices.

Mr. Fenwick: — The contractual services actually includes the rent. Our rent is a contract. So the 60,000 that we're talking about is on a different line. That's shown as a one-time funding cost in the 300,000 about five lines below where you're probably looking. So that 60,000 for Regina is included in the 300. The largest part of the contractual services increase is the rent for our existing premises, the increase in rent for our existing premises.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Okay.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Just a question about history. Just the last page where you have your budget comparisons going back to 2009 — and I wasn't part of the committee at the time — but the increase from 2010-11 to 2011-12 is quite significant. And I'm just wondering, is that the year the health thing all came in and . . .

Mr. Fenwick: — Health and public interest disclosure both came in at the same time.

Mr. Forbes: — That same time and that's with the increase in new staff and that type of thing.

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes.

Mr. Forbes: — Okay.

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes. We had, if my memory serves correctly, I believe we received an additional \$493,000 for health and \$100,000 for public interest disclosure. It's a nice pattern. We'd be more than happy if it continued.

The Chair: — Okay. Any further questions? If not, just to confirm, Mr. Fenwick, your budgetary totals, you're asking for 3,373,000 plus statutory salary of 221,000 for a total of \$3,594,000.

Mr. Fenwick: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just would add one thing. That's the number we're asking for. I know from having sat at board meetings before that, matter of fact I've heard one board member say that the board doesn't want to be in the position of having to manage our projects by way of special warrants, etc. That number that we're providing with respect to Saskatoon is the best number we have right now as provided by Government Services. It can change.

If the board members preferred to build in something for the changes that may or may not occur, I mean, if that's the preference of the board, we would certainly undertake to say whatever portion is not committed right now would be set aside. It makes no real difference to us, but it would mean that it would be less likely we would have to come back for a special warrant or supplementary estimates if there were increases that were brought to us by Central Services. And we'd be fine either way.

The Chair: — But you have no knowledge today of what kind of a number if there were any such increases?

Mr. Fenwick: — No, the numbers we have for you are the numbers that are current as of . . .

The Chair: — And we have certainly seen how Central Services has changed those numbers over the last couple of months.

Mr. Fenwick: — Good. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Chair: — Okay. No further questions, thank you, Mr. Fenwick. We will deal with the budgets in camera later today.

Okay, item no. 5, decision item, review of the 2013-14 budget and motions to approve the budgetary and statutory expenditure estimates for the Advocate for Children and Youth. So I'd like to welcome Mr. Pringle to our board meeting and, Mr. Pringle, if you could introduce your staff and proceed with your presentation please.

Advocate for Children and Youth

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, board members. I'm just going to change my glasses so I can see my

notes, but then I won't be able to see you. I've got to make sure I get my notes.

Anyway, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Greetings to yourself and board members. And I'd like to introduce Bernie Rodier, our director of administration who is with us again this year, been a number of years here. And it's a pleasure for me to have her here. So it's the same as many of you do — I'll take the easy questions and Bernie will take the hard ones.

Anyway we do appreciate very much the opportunity to be here before you, and I want to say thank you very much for your ongoing support and your ongoing interest to our office. I also want to thank, you know, Greg Putz and the leadership, the Legislative Assembly here for the wonderful support we get every day, and to our independent officer colleagues and to the dedicated staff in our office. It's my honour to be working with them. And to say also a special thank you to the ministries — the ministers, the ministries, and the staffs in the ministries — and also indeed our communities who work with the children and youth because we're kind of all in this together in terms of promoting the quality of life and the well-being for Saskatchewan's children and youth. We'll give a short presentation and then be happy to take your questions.

I see our role as to assist government to deliver good public services to children and youth in the province. We endeavour to inform, where we feel we have something to say, and to influence all levels of government in the planning and the decision-making around the best interests of our children. And we like to believe that, for the most part, we work in co-operation and showing respect in addressing these important issues and challenges that face all of us.

We take very seriously, Mr. Chairman, members, that you have entrusted our office to be the independent lens to oversee that the rights of our children and youth are honoured and respected. And this is, we believe, the value that we add to the advancing of the rights of children and youth in Saskatchewan. We all agree that our youngest citizens have the right to be safe. They've got the right to be protected and to be valued and nurtured, and the right to be at the centre of all government planning and decision making around issues that affect them.

[14:00]

Our approach is to identify and resolve concerns through individual casework first and foremost, through advocacy and investigations, and by addressing systemic or broader issues, as was described by my colleague the Ombudsman, using evidence-based research and analysis. And some of this we do alone, and some of these we do in co-operation with government ministries and other community partners.

We also have a responsibility to engage in public education and communication on the importance of issues in the community that affect children and youth. Bullying and others is one example of that.

Like many other challenges in community life, those facing children and youth today, and especially those children and youth who are vulnerable or at risk, we often find the issues are complex. And they require that government works with the

community very closely and also require that government ministries work together in a holistic, integrated fashion and that communities do the same thing so that we can ensure that the best services possible are being provided.

So our role, this active engagement, the coordinative, co-operative role is the one that we frequently play in addressing issues related to our children and youth. And of course children and youth live in families, so really where it lands on issues going to children and youth, we obviously have an interest in the fact that we need to strengthen families, and therefore strengthen our communities as well. We feel we have an obligation to contribute towards that.

But it's our independence, our requirement to keep information that's shared with us confidential and our exclusive focus on children's issues and their rights under legislation — which is derived, as you know, from the UN [United Nations] Convention, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which Canada is a signatory as well — so we're obligated by legislation to pull together the issues that affect children and to think and plan holistically.

And at times when perhaps we say something public, it may not seem that we're working together. But I can assure you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, that the vast majority of time, children and youth services are enhanced through co-operation and non-adversarial means.

We always build into any processes — whether with government ministries, First Nations or media agencies or community agencies serving children and youth — our responsibility to ensure that we are independent, that we bring that independent lens and that we call issues as we see them. That is our obligation. It's our daily action with children and youth and our consultations with organizations like the Saskatchewan Youth in Care and Custody Network that we believe legitimizes our right to be a voice for youth and children.

Now we recognize that we're not the only voice, of course, because everyone in this room cares about the well-being of our children and our youth. But we are a voice, and you have given us responsibility and authority to be that voice. This is a special position to be in, and we are working hard to build your trust and build trust throughout the province. And we hope that we're in a position where you feel confident in our work.

I want to just mention a couple of things about our new legislation as well — as my colleague did, the Ombudsman — and express appreciation to specifically the Ministry of Justice and Minister Morgan for his contribution and Mr. Wyant and also the Ombudsman for the leadership and support.

This new advocate and youth Act, Saskatchewan advocate and youth Act, leads Canada in our jurisdiction and authority to pursue children's rights and well-being. It strengthens the existing broad mandate which we actually had before. And my colleagues across Canada are very envious of the areas that we can delve into to look at whether or not children's rights are being advanced.

The Act takes a holistic view of children and youth issues. The

new Act more clearly defines our authority and also adds responsibility for health care — which is new to us — and all of its funded entities. And this is very important, and it allows as well the ministries to voluntarily share information with us in a way that they weren't able to before. In other words, we had to trigger an investigation at times to get information because there wasn't the ability to do that through the advocacy program. So now the ministries can share information with us upon request and we don't have to trigger the investigation which was sometimes seen to be a bit heavy-handed just to get information. So it's been beneficial there as well. And it ensures that information that young people want to share with us that guarantees that they have a confidential access to us. It's a requirement in the legislation which is very important.

I want to just mention two important considerations about the Act. One is that we can already tell — we just heard the Ombudsman talk about the increased amount in health care over the last couple of years — we can already tell that our expanded jurisdiction into health is bringing about an increase in the advocacy work and also bringing a complexity to some of the cases that are coming to our attention, especially around those with children with special needs or those with mental health issues and so on. And so that's a good thing because we're able to sort out through some coordination role a number of the players that are involved, and sometimes there may be eight or ten different agencies. So that's just . . . I just want to flag that in case somewhere down the road we may need to be looking at some resources.

Secondly in any future amendments, we really would like some authority, the same authority in education that we have in health care, which is the only gap in the new legislation is that we do not have authority to address issues in education. We at least want to ensure that we have that authority where we have pre-existing jurisdiction in other, say education or health care and social services. And so when we present our stats in our annual report, and I could speak to those today, but you'll see that increasingly we get more issues around education. And that's only going to continue. So we will be grateful for the new Act, but we will be working hopefully with Education and Justice. We've already had discussions around some amendments that gives us jurisdiction into education as well.

With regard to new resources, I want to say that we really appreciate the support, the additional operational funding last year, the annualized funding. We have the same FTEs [full-time equivalent] but we got some additional annualized funding. And it has allowed us flexibility, as we requested last year, to deal with some of the pressure points and especially through our intake. We have added another half-time position to our investigation to try and catch up with our case assessments. We've expanded our outreach, adding another half-time advocate.

And I was just having a conversation before we started with Ms. Eagles about our successful trip to Estevan-Weyburn, especially Estevan, on the National Child Day, into a school there. And they had some Riders and Gainer come out. But we were talking about the rights of children and we focused kind of on bullying in that particular session. But we were well embraced by the school in Estevan and the full community.

My point being is that we had not been to Estevan before. We had not been to Weyburn. Now we have connections and we have regular contacts and we have forums of those in the community working with children and youth to connect to. And we want to do the same thing shortly too in Moose Jaw and Swift Current, where we really are not going, and I just don't think that's fair. If our service is valid, it's fair to be available to go everywhere in the province.

So the additional resources have also gone to some systemic work. For example we're engaged, I might say, at the request of the Minister of Social Services to look at some of the critical issues and the persons of sufficient interest program that we both have concerns about. And we appreciate that opportunity. And it's been very clear to both the ministry and to our office that we will maintain the ability to be independent or to speak publicly if we believe that there's some . . . or if we disagree on sort of how some of the issues related to policy, program, or service in the PSI [person of sufficient interest] program as it's called.

We've also looked at doing some additional work. In fact we've signed letters of understanding with the First Nations, working very closely with the First Nations Child and Family Services agencies, which is a growing body of work for our office as they assume more responsibility for children and youth services. And we've tried to find a way to ensure that that work progresses in a positive way, and in the process of doing the same thing with the Métis agency. And we also have committed some resources to the new child and family services review which we're grateful to have an opportunity to be a key part in, in terms of our advisory capacity.

So those are some of the systemic issues we're working on. And again, they're time-consuming but they're timely and they're critical in terms of the safety and well-being of our children.

So, Mr. Speaker and members, you have a copy of our budget there. I'm not going to go into our vision and our mandate and the operating principles and all that and our strategic plan, although I could try to answer any questions around those areas. We have four major goals which somewhat align, by the way, with the goals of the provincial government with respect to the Saskatchewan child and youth agenda in terms of giving children a good start in life, preparing our young people for their futures, building strong families, and building strong and caring communities. So specifically to our budget proposal for 2013-2014, we are requesting respectfully, as we say, a status quo program budget or one that allows us to — put it this way — one that allows us to deliver the same level of services as we provided in 2012 and '13.

So in addition to our desire to maintain existing service delivery levels, we have a one-time request related to our lease expiring, as you are well familiar now, and the pending move with the Ombudsman in Saskatoon. I won't go over all the details because my colleague did a very good job on that, but I'm happy to because we're making a request which we need to be able to speak to.

But for the record, on personal services, counting this year, just to advise you, Mr. Chairman of the Board, that our requests

have been 2.6, 2.6, and 2.4 in terms of personal services. So we're trying to show that our office is prudent. And again I want, last year, I want to credit Ms. Rodier for her leadership. We again had absolutely no audit observations by the Provincial Auditor, and we're very proud of this. So I invite you to take a look at page 10 in our budget booklet summary, and so you can see there the status quo programming request, 2.6 per cent, the personal services. The explanations are there.

The non-personal services . . . Again we have, Ms. Draude, we have the same \$10,000 information management system that Mr. Fenwick does. Again it's a cost recovery. As I say, it's a cost recovery; that's the information, the advice we get. And actually this has cost us very little new money in the last two or three years. But the system meets our, is tailored to our unique needs and allows us to ensure that all the information we need to function effectively. In fact, expansion, the system has the capacity to do that.

[14:15]

With regard to the \$138,000 on non-personal expenses, the little bullets at the bottom as to the 19, the 84, the 25, in terms of what makes up that amount, I recognize that that becomes a 37 per cent increase this year. So our overall status quo program budget, if you will, is 9.2 per cent. Then we get to the one-time lease increase, leasehold improvement cost that you're well familiar with. But our share of that at this point is . . . Because it's a 60/40 arrangement with the Ombudsman and our office, we pay 60; that's based on the staffing we have there. The Ombudsman pays 40 per cent. Our share is \$360,000. That's the best information we're getting at this point, as you know, from Central Services.

So in conclusion, the status quo programming and budget programming request in the amount of 2.123 million maintains existing staffing and service delivery levels. And this reflects, as I say, an increase of 9.2 per cent over 2012-13 annualized budget allocation. And then the 360 one-time funds are requested for our share. And when added to the status quo programming amount this particular year, this reflects an overall budget increase of 27.7 per cent.

To best address the pressure as outlined in my submission, our submission, I respectfully ask that the Board of Internal Economy recommend to the Legislative Assembly a total appropriation for the Advocate for Children and Youth office, vote 076, in the amount of 2.483 million for the year 2013-2014.

Thank you very much. And again I could go into some of the same efficiencies I believe that we're gaining with the Ombudsman and some of our own, and around investigations and some joint work we're doing with the Ministry of Social Services. But I'll wait and respond to your questions. And a significant amount of that information will also be in our annual report, which is due soon. Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Pringle. One point of clarification, if I may, and I may have missed the numbers that you said at the end. Was it 2.126 million or 2.273 million?

Mr. Pringle: — It's 2.123 million, and in addition is the 360.

The Chair: — Oh, and 360 on top of that?

Mr. Pringle: — Yes. Sorry about that.

The Chair: — Okay.

Mr. Pringle: — Yes. So that takes the total — I'm sorry — to 2.483 million.

The Chair: — Yes, I had the total but I didn't see any place on here specifically with the 2.123 million so that's why I was just not quite sure where that had come from.

Mr. Pringle: — Okay. My apologies. I'm sorry. I had the conclusion on page 11. Yes, sorry about that.

The Chair: — Okay. Questions. Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. Thank you very much. I have a couple of questions. You talk about an expanded social media presence. What are you . . .

Mr. Pringle: — Pardon?

Hon. Ms. Draude: — On page 2 it talks about an expanded social media presence. I think it's . . .

Mr. Pringle: — Now what we've done there is — I don't see that offhand here, no. 2 — but what we've done is we have, one of the things that we identified in our advocacy review last year is that we needed to take a more active role in more public awareness, public education, and so we've significantly expanded some of our communication tools and also Facebook. And so anything we hear about that relates to children and youth or communication from the Youth in Care and Custody Network or information that comes from best practices regarding other jurisdictions or communication that we do jointly with our national advocates, we put on Facebook so that it's available to . . . or information around bullying or whatever, we put on Facebook.

So we've kind of expanded our communication resources to get more information out in terms of public awareness of children's rights and trying to support young people calling us and so trying to use greater social media.

In fact we believe it's working. We still need to do some more analysis because in our data, in our stats, we had a 20 per cent increase in calls last year to the office from youth, and I'm advised that that's the highest percentage of calls of all the calls we get we've had from youth. We believe a lot of that's coming through our social media outreach.

The other thing might be as well, you know, we've got communication in certain weeklies and so on that we never had before. So we're trying to find ways to get the message out for free because we don't have advertising money. And so when we go to Estevan or Weyburn we try to get some coverage there, or wherever we go we stop into the local media — usually the paper or perhaps the radio — to try and get some coverage there about what we're doing. And so it's not costing us a lot of money, but that's what we're talking about there.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Okay. I just have one other question. I'm familiar with and very thankful for the independent work you're doing by working with the ministry on the lean review of the child death and critical incidents investigation. But you talked about . . . It's not across ministry; you're working with ministry. Have you done any work cross-ministry that would actually be a type of lean process? And I'm thinking about the issue that you discussed and that was bullying. Has your office ever dealt cross-ministry?

Mr. Pringle: — Well what I do is I meet at least once a year — in your case, three or four, five, six times; same with the Ministry of Corrections and Justice. But I meet with the ministers every year, and more than once usually, and the deputies at least once, maybe twice, sometimes three or four. And then we meet with the next level of management. I've got a meeting with your senior people next week in your ministry. Ministry of Education in March. And there are sometimes personnel from other ministries at those meetings.

And then, as you know because you coordinated us, I'm meeting with all the ministers next week with regard to issues that we'll be actually focusing on at that meeting. My message will be focusing on some of the recommendations of the child welfare review that require greater integration by the ministries and greater work with the community. So with regard to lean specifically, no, to answer your question.

In addition to some of the . . . Those of us who have taken the lean course and our own process that we're on the verge of doing, one of the first projects we'll be doing with any ministry is your ministry with regard to looking at how death and critical injuries are addressed by your office, by us, to try and find a way to make those more timely. Because it just isn't possible . . . We don't get the answers to families and communities and the public quickly enough if we don't kind of move those along quicker, so we want to make sure that we assess that together.

Again you know because this is our role here, we make sure that we will be using the independent lens as we'll be doing the review of the child and youth legislation process. So we haven't done this before but this is the first because this is where we think is a pressure point for both of our systems. And so I don't know how that's going to go. But in terms of pulling people from different ministries along with us, we have not done that, not with regard to lean. We have with regard to issues affecting children and youth and kind of an interdisciplinary or kind of try and look holistically at issues but not through the lean process. We're just trying to understand all that ourselves. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much. I understand that this is a different process and we are, while maintaining independence and knowing that we have the same goal and that is the protection and safety of our children, we may come about it in different ways. But we have the same goal. So thank you for your work.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you. Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay, Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Just to follow up on that though, because

obviously as opposition we are very interested that you maintain the integrity of your office and you're always seen as an officer of the legislature first and foremost. Obviously you share, we all share the same goals in terms of working for the children's rights and that type of thing. But clearly we're not privy to all the conversations that you may be having and it is critical that we have confidence in the work that you do as a legislative officer. When you talk about your independent lens, what does that mean? What does that mean to us to ensure that you're doing the work as the legislative officer and walking that very fine line of being a legislative officer? And you know, if there are efficiencies, nobody's for inefficiency, I can tell you that, but I'm curious to hear more about that.

Mr. Pringle: — Well the way we view our mandate is that we operate under the child and youth first principles which have been adopted, developed by the office five or six years ago and endorsed by the current provincial government. And those evolved from the convention of the rights of the children, declaration of the rights of children.

All of our literature, all of our conversations revolve around advancing the rights of children and youth in the province. Our legislation requires that we keep an independent lens so that at all times the rights of children to be safe, to be protected, to receive quality health care, to receive a quality education, to ensure that they are at the centre of all decision making about them, whether it's on casework basis or whether it is program considerations . . . In fact we will be moving to a process, promoting in our annual report that we believe that before any program is developed by government, our responsibility is to make government, support government to provide a better service, no matter what government it is.

We will be promoting child and youth impact assessments. So before any new initiatives are brought in by government — which is the case now in New Brunswick and well on the way in British Columbia — that the government will undergo a child impact assessment. In other words, how is this new program that's designed to serve children going to impact children? And what are the intended consequences? What are the unintended consequences? So that kind of . . . And of course there's a, you know, it's a theory that sells itself. It just makes sense. It's part of just making good sense in terms of planning so that if you're intending to bring in a program that helps children, it actually helps them and it doesn't in fact bring about some consequences that you didn't intend, that would not necessarily be positive.

So we're committed to, when I say advancing the agenda of children and youth, that's what we're committed to, advancing the agenda of their rights. So I, you know, I've extended invitations to come and speak to caucuses, both government and opposition. As a matter of fact the last time we briefed, as independent officers, we briefed the members of the Assembly, there was no one there from the opposition. But I would come any time to meet with all members of the opposition and to talk about what . . . go over the Act, go over what we do.

But I subscribe to the philosophy that we advance the rights of children and youth by finding ways to co-operate and move the agenda along. And as I said at the outset of my comments, I see my role as to influence government and to advance the agenda

of children and youth's rights. And so we try and send information, whether it's releases or anything to, if not all members of the Assembly, certainly government, opposition members on any public issue that we present.

So when we agreed to look at the . . . I think it's pretty clear in our communications that we have significant concerns about what's called the PSI program, placing children with relatives or friends or someone who has an interest. There's a logic to that. But we have significant concerns about a number of issues around those placements. I received a letter from the minister who indicates that she has a number of concerns about that program. Could we do some joint review recognizing that — and the correspondence went back and forth — but recognizing that we're willing to agree to some kind of a review design. But if we can't agree, we're going to speak to that, if necessary, because we need to preserve our independence. And so we may not agree to anything.

[14:30]

With regard to an invitation to be part of the committee that would look at the review of the child and family services legislation, I'm not really willing to be a partner in that. But I'm willing to play an advisory role so that we won't be part of the decision-making round, what that report will say, but we will have some advisory input into, be part of the discussions around what we believe is important in the Act. And that gives us the freedom to say, you know what, we don't agree with that.

So that's what we're trying to do, Mr. Forbes, as best we can. It's a work-in-progress, right? But you know, I've met with opposition members. I've met with the critic. I've met with the Social Services critic twice last year, and that offer is standing. I'd welcome that, actually.

Mr. Forbes: — You referenced a meeting to which you had invited opposition members and no one came. What date was that meeting?

Mr. Pringle: — Well that was set up with the legislature where the independent officers come together with the opposition, who I think was at the Ombudsman's office. We didn't set that up ourselves. It was set up through the legislature to orientate new members. So it was . . . I could get the date to you.

Mr. Forbes: — Sure, yes. I'd like to follow up on that.

Just a different question, just a different line. I appreciate that answer because I mean I appreciate that we're in new areas, but I just . . . You've talked about education as a potential new frontier for the Children's Advocate, which I think is very interesting as a teacher myself. I think this is one that I've always been interested that it hasn't been done.

And I'm just curious in terms of what again your lens of going into schools. Because we did have that landmark court case from BC that went to the Supreme Court about fairness of treatment of . . . Now he's a grown adult, but at the time he was a child with, I think it was autism. So is it that type of thing you're going to be looking at? Fairness? What do you sort of see out there? And are you starting to do work? And would this work be paid for so that when you're talking about the systemic

researcher or that research person you have? And how's that . . .

Mr. Pringle: — Well we get about 4 per cent of our calls come around educational issues. In fact recently I personally just met, along with one of our supervisors, with a family who had a significant concern in school around bullying. And I've had a recent meeting with the minister and the deputy of Education and a meeting with the deputy and another couple of meetings . . . or a meeting with the Ministry of Education senior people in March. Because we don't have the same opportunity if we get complaints in Education as we do, say, Social Services, to send to the deputy and have it be dealt with because we don't have jurisdiction.

To give you a couple of examples: one example is that there's significant concern in northern Saskatchewan that there are a number of children, perhaps hundreds of children, where English is not their first language but the instruction is in English. You will know this, given your profession. So young people aren't ready at age three and four. And we appreciate the commitment to early learning, but what happens: every year they fall further behind because the school system doesn't provide extra support because English is not their first language because the instruction is in English.

Now there are jurisdictional issues there too, but that's a concern. And we get significant concern expressed to us by some, not coming from children but some from their families, but also from teachers and resource people in the North who think that's a significant issue in terms of disadvantage for northern children.

We also have a concern about, for example, in the school system where there are children with special needs, with speech impairments, for example, who have the opportunity to get their needs assessed, but there aren't sufficient services there. We've met recently with the speech pathology association — or the speech therapist association, pardon me — and so we have really no authority to look at those individual cases and try and support those families because a lot of our . . . The heart and soul of what we do is sorting out the individual cases. And there may be 700; estimates are 700 young people in schools with speech impairments, and the information we have is that a high number of those young people are actually teased and bullied. So there's that whole issue to sort out, right? And so that's another area.

There's several areas where we believe that if we had jurisdiction in education, we could at least . . . It's not that principals won't talk to us, but there's no protocol. And I'd say the deputy minister of Education has been very good, very supportive, but we don't have any jurisdiction. And we believe that the school boards will be open to allowing us to have that jurisdiction at some point down the road, and we're just trying to do the best we can to co-operate and sort issues out, but the number of issues in education are increasing. And we believe that, not that we're not going to have our hands full with the additional work in health care, but we believe the education concerns are going up as it relates to children's rights and their issues around education. Thank you.

Mr. Forbes: — That's good. Thanks.

The Chair: — Okay. Any further questions?

I do have one question. The initiative in Regina that Mr. Fenwick was talking about with the investigation into shared accommodation, is your office a part of that?

Mr. Pringle: — That's a very good question, Mr. Speaker. You know, we've been looking at trying to put someone in Prince Albert, potentially, and Regina. I'm actually going to meet with the Alberta Children's Advocate next week. They have seven individuals working alone in different communities in Alberta, and they're drawing back from that model to pull everybody into Calgary and Edmonton. I'm not sure that's good or bad, but they believe there are lots of issues around doing it that way.

We actually weren't considering seriously putting someone in Prince Albert and then there were just so many issues; we didn't have a resource up there, but there's just so many issues there that we . . . Then we got wind of what they're doing in Alberta. They're actually going in the other direction, having had about seven years of experience in doing that.

We did, I think — Bernie will correct me if I'm wrong here — but I think we did indicate that we might put one or two people here and have that explored in the design of the new space, but we have not built anything into the budget around that. We could just maybe use some of Mr. Fenwick's money to do that planning, but that would still be more personal desire actually. Yes. One or two people here.

The Chair: — Okay. Well I guess we'll wait and hear from you what you've heard from Alberta as to their rationale for their changes of direction.

Mr. Pringle: — Going the other way. Yes. Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay. Any other further questions? If not, thank you, Mr. Pringle, and thank you for your good works.

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, everyone. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members.

The Chair: — Okay. I believe that we may have some information available from the Ombudsman on the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's budget. So if Mr. Fenwick would like to give us the update.

Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Mr. Fenwick: — Mr. Speaker, yes, thank you. We contacted Mr. Barclay and he's been able to clarify a couple of matters for me in answer to the question, and he thanks the board for the interest and the question.

If I understand the question correctly, you were curious about the contractual services line and why there's an increase from '11-12 of about 14,000 to 23,000 essentially over the last two years. That number is a difference of just over \$9,000, and essentially all of that comes from two figures. One is the \$6,000 figure for legal services in line 521800 and the \$3,700 for contractual services general.

The contingency number is just that. In the '11 and '12 budget

year, you'll appreciate that Mr. Barclay had just been appointed as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. He did not build in a contingency in that first budget for legal services. He then found from experience that he was contracting for legal services from time to time. So, as he did last year, this year he has built in a \$6,000 contingency for those legal services. That's the bulk of the difference.

The other difference is with respect to contractual services general. It actually relates to a number just below that, where you see printing and publishing in line 531900, which was \$1,000 in '11-12 and is down to 500. In the past, Mr. Barclay indicated that he was producing a very inexpensive annual report and last year had decided that the annual report deserved to be more than that. And so that additional figure of \$3,700 is almost exclusively, I understand, for the cost of his annual report. So he has upgraded the annual report, has gone to something that has colour, etc. And those are the two numbers that have resulted in the increase.

The Chair: — Do any of the committee members have any questions related to this? Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Fenwick.

Mr. Fenwick: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay. We are now at the point where it says break. So we will take a break for half an hour and we'll be ready to come back at 3:15. That will give you time for . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, and your teddy bear.

[The board recessed from 14:41 until 15:18.]

The Chair: — Okay, ladies and gentlemen. If you would take your places again, we will start the races. Okay, the Board of Internal Economy Committee is back in session. Item no. 6, decision item, the review of the 2013 and '14 budget and motion to approve the statutory expenditure estimates for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. I would like to welcome Mr. Boda here, and his officials. So, Mr. Boda, if you could introduce your officials and proceed with your presentation.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Mr. Boda: — Thank you. It's a pleasure to be with you today, and thank you for inviting me for my first budget presentation. I will introduce Dave Wilkie initially here. I guess it's a reintroduction. You've known him as your acting chief electoral officer, and Dave has kindly been assisting me as assistant chief electoral officer since my arrival and helping me during this transition period.

Before getting into the details of my submission, I thought it might be helpful to look more generally at what I might describe as a path for renewal in Saskatchewan's election administration. Many of you are aware that since my arrival in June, I've intentionally taken the time to listen to what stakeholders have to say about Elections Saskatchewan so that we can determine how the institution might more effectively serve the people of Saskatchewan and reinforce their right and their responsibility to elect you as MLAs.

In the months ahead, my colleagues and I will complete a

comprehensive strategic planning exercise focusing on three key pillars that have been shaped out of the discussions that I've had with stakeholders in recent months and which are based on what's expected globally of an electoral management body like Elections Saskatchewan.

These pillars include, one, professionalizing Saskatchewan's electoral management body. Now it's no secret that since the appointment of our first independent Chief Electoral Officer in 1999, Elections Saskatchewan has experienced some growing pains. Given what I've heard from stakeholders, including the members of the board here, there appears to be a consensus that a new direction is desired, that we need to be much more deliberate about developing our electoral agency, an electoral agency that adheres to the principles of best practice and standards for electoral management that are followed around the globe.

A second pillar involves renewing our focus on democratic stewardship. Now when I talk about democratic stewardship, I'm referring to the need to revisit and to renew our focus on supporting citizens that help fundamentally to sustain electoral processes that have allowed us to work together and to shape the province into what it is today. In recent decades that burden has been carried principally by what is now an older generation. And I want to be clear that I have a lot of respect for that generation and I don't want to lose the knowledge they have to offer and their interest in continuing to be involved. At the same time when we consider the electoral service in the province, which is really made up of about 10,000 people during an election period, we absolutely have to determine how to enrich and diversify our electoral service so as to ensure that our democracy can be reliably sustained in the decades ahead.

And then a final pillar focuses on improving the delivery of electoral events. Now events are shaped by institutions and by the people that are mandated to implement elections, but it's also essential that we both improve on the technical delivery of elections and look at ways that we can more effectively develop the skills of field personnel that greatly influence an election success or its failure.

In the fiscal year ahead, and actually over the course of the coming electoral cycle and the next electoral cycle, these three pillars will guide our work at Elections Saskatchewan. Of course the management challenge is to translate those pillars into effective and efficient programs that will help us achieve those end goals.

Over the next few minutes I'd like to offer some insight into the programs and projects included in our budget submission for FY [fiscal year] '13-14 that we see as essential to fulfilling our three objectives. And you know, as I was thinking about how to prepare this presentation, I began to think about the stereotypical bureaucrat around the world — although I'm quite sure that Saskatchewan is the exception — but the stereotypical bureaucrat who actually works very hard to confuse his audience when coming to describe planned and actual spending. And I do have to admit I am a big fan of *Yes Minister*, but I am not a strong advocate of the approaches shown in some of those episodes, okay? And for that reason I want to offer some very clear, overarching budget considerations for FY '13-14 at the very outset.

First, and this will become clear as I return to you on the board over the course of the electoral cycle, we're going to do our part at Elections Saskatchewan in planning forward through the entire cycle. This approach is going to be central to everything that we do at the institution.

Second, we are going to increasingly make a clear distinction between ongoing operational costs and event costs in a way that will allow us to more effectively implement electoral processes and provide better fiscal responsibility. In FY '13-14, Elections Saskatchewan's budget for operational costs is about \$2.65 million and that is a 46 per cent increase from what has been requested in FY '12-13. It's a significant increase linked directly to the parameters within the Hamilton report that are consistent with establishing a professional electoral management body.

We are also proposing that an additional \$1 million be set aside for essential work on electoral events. Work related to the boundary redistribution process begun by the Boundary Commission in 2012 will continue this year because we simply can't wait until year 4 of the electoral cycle to conduct electoral geography work as has been done in the past.

And in transitioning to an electoral cycle planning approach, we will begin to put in place the procedures and the structures that are necessary to conduct the 2015 general election according to electoral best practice.

So with these overarching considerations, I'd like to briefly touch on some of the priority programs and projects that Elections Saskatchewan would like to pursue over FY '13 and '14. Pretty significant details of these are offered for you in my submission between pages 5 and 16. And I won't go into, of course, all those details, but I would very much like to demonstrate how those programs and projects will be developed with an eye towards fulfilling each of the pillars that I've laid out for you today.

So if we consider pillar no. one, the goal of professionalizing Saskatchewan's electoral management body, on page 5 and 6, we will allot funds to an effective recruitment process for our head office leadership team. Consistent with the discussions we've had in recent months, I have been using the Hamilton report as my guide. And I've begun to work with human resource professionals to establish policies and procedures that will allow us to establish a leadership team that has the skills, the experience, and qualities needed to implement a modern electoral process.

Part of professionalizing an election management body includes ensuring that all stakeholders, all stakeholders know where the institution is headed and the rules under which we're going to operate. And I've laid out three tenets for you today. But we also have to re-examine the organization's current priorities and establish a road map for constructing an institution using those pillars.

On page 7 and 8, I talk about establishing a strategic plan that will offer further guidance for all our team members and stakeholders across the province for how we will conduct business during the current and coming electoral cycle. The strategic plan will offer greater detail and expand on the three

pillars I've outlined today, and in turn it will be reinforced by business plans of the different service lines within Elections Saskatchewan and the performance plans of individual staff members.

Looking next at pillar no. 2, renewing the province's focus on democratic stewardship, we describe on pages 6 and 7 an allocation of funds for recruiting and beginning to train our field leadership team. During FY '13-14 we'll also lay the foundation for regenerating our electoral service made up of thousands of citizens who facilitate the electoral process. Part of this will involve establishing a project plan that reinforces our renewed focus on democratic stewardship, looking specifically at how we intend to recruit, to train, and energize a diverse group of citizens who will help us sustain Saskatchewan's electoral democracy in the decades ahead. And then a reinforcement of democratic stewardship is also discussed on page 14 and 15 where funds will be allocated to establish partnerships with institutions operating across the province in order to gain access to their employees during the election period.

Turning to the final pillar, I've described improving the delivery of electoral events. I'd like to focus on how funds allotted for FY '13-14 will be used to support three different supporting programs. On page 10, the redrawing and implementation of new constituency and administrative voting boundaries is a discrete electoral event that requires significant staff and financial resources to implement. In pursuing an electoral cycle planning approach, Elections Saskatchewan will need to take a very different approach than in the past, continuing on with the work of the Boundary Commission as soon as it's approved by the legislature in year 2 rather than waiting until year 4 of the electoral cycle.

Mindful of the Supreme Court's recent Etobicoke decision mentioned on page 11 which highlighted that Canadian election management bodies haven't been doing enough to prepare the electoral service for election days, we'll begin to train and equip our field leadership team during FY '13-14 in preparation for any by-elections that may result from seat vacancies and we'll begin formal training and preparations for the 2015 general election.

[15:30]

And a final project that I'll highlight has to do with accessibility, and that's described on page 12. I've been advised that Elections Saskatchewan was very intentional in reaching out to disability groups during the past electoral process, but we do believe that more can be done so as to facilitate the voters' access to the ballot. During FY '13 and '14, we plan to lay the foundation for improved accessibility during the 2015 general election by arranging a workshop that focuses on international best practice and electoral accessibility, and we'll bring together key provincial disability stakeholder groups to discuss these issues with experts on international standards. Based on recommendations that arise out of this, we'll create an implementation plan for the upcoming general election.

Now there are other programs and projects detailed within my submission that support all three of these pillars, including the use of technology to gain efficiencies, lower costs, and allow us

to implement our mandate, and an effort to refocus how we can communicate with the public and to shape their understanding of what Elections Saskatchewan is mandated to do in order to reinforce the voting public's confidence that their provincial elections are being conducted in a transparent and professional manner that will sustain Saskatchewan's democracy.

But there are three additional projects that I'd like to focus on in particular. And each supports the three pillars, but each will require that I return to you on the board over the course of the coming year, independently.

The first has to do with legislation which underpins every aspect of election administration in democratic jurisdictions around the world. My initial assessment has been that many elements of our current legislation diminish Elections Saskatchewan's ability to conduct elections with the greatest levels of efficiency and according to electoral best practice.

Beginning in FY '13-14, Elections Saskatchewan intends to begin what I would call the legislative two-step. First we'll evaluate the current legal framework in order to offer a limited number of recommendations on amending current legislation that focuses on achieving greater efficiencies for implementing the 2015 general election. And I will return to you with those recommendations by the end of the year. I'd only emphasize at this time the importance that these recommendations be given timely consideration and then I will work closely with the Speaker to determine how this can be best achieved by working with you, the board.

Second we'll begin a broader examination of the legislation to which major changes were made last in 1996, with the aim of introducing more comprehensive change to our election system in year 1 of the next election cycle. Again this is not a unilateral effort, but one in which I will work closely with you, the legislators, to facilitate change.

Now one thing I want to make clear is that while the costs of focusing on electoral legislation have been included in the '13-14 budget, those for two other projects have not yet been included. One has to do with voter registration.

When Mr. Wilkie appeared before you last February, you had asked Elections Saskatchewan to study the cost and operational implications of implementing a permanent register of electors. That study is nearing completion. So I intend to return to you to offer my recommendations on a path forward. At that time I'll be able to provide you with a business case and the parameters for costs that would be involved in a process of transitioning to a permanent registry.

A final project has to do with the facilities that Elections Saskatchewan has used since 1996. Since my arrival in June, I've begun to assess our current head office facilities in light of the parameters outlined in the Hamilton report, and what it takes to run a credible election according to electoral best practice. Here's what we know. We're operating out of a facility that was designed to house three permanent staff and a Chief Electoral Officer. We have a warehouse, and I'm going to put that in quotes, with just 3,200 square feet that doesn't allow Elections Saskatchewan to meet occupational health standards, and forces it to operate using an antiquated and inappropriate

version of just-in-time delivery. That is, we are forced to assemble our shipments to 61 — well 58, now 61 — returning officers at the very last minute, leading to significant inefficiencies and, from my assessment, much confusion.

Going back to our commitment to an electoral cycle planning approach, I've determined it essential that we reconsider our facilities almost immediately. So I've taken some initial steps in this assessment process by considering potential collaborative efforts with other independent officers, discussing possible alternative sites with Central Services, and commissioning an initial study on our needs in light of facilities in other jurisdictions. The related costs of addressing Elections Saskatchewan facilities aren't included in today's submission, but I will come back to you in the coming weeks with a separate and a very specific proposal.

At this point I'd like to transition briefly to look at the tables that are found in section 3 of my submission between pages 17 and 19. And I do understand that in the past there's been the tradition of a line-by-line review, but I think that I'll offer an overview and we can return to your detailed questions after I'm finished.

On page 17, table 3.1, we offer a summary of our FY '13-14 budget requests side by side with budget requests for the past two years. And of course FY '11-12 was much larger than '12-13 and '13-14 due to the 2011 general election.

Table 3.2 is pretty straightforward but it emphasizes the breakdown that we will increasingly consider between ongoing operations and event costs.

On page 18, tables 3.3 to 3.5 break down our proposed ongoing operational and event costs and then offer a breakdown of the total budget request.

And then on page 19, table 3.6 is simply a list of some of the costs related to priority programs and projects that I've described in section 2 of the submission. I included that table because I wanted you to gain a sense of the costs that are related to implementing the programs and projects that will support the three pillars that we've been talking about and will be pursuing over the course of the coming year.

So before going on to some questions, I'd like to conclude by stating what is perhaps the obvious about Elections Saskatchewan. We're in a period of transition. Change is not easy, but I do find it exciting, exciting because of what is offered on the other side of the process and what we can achieve. The path for renewal that I've outlined in our budget submission today is only the beginning of an electoral-cycle-long process. And in truth, some of the changes that we're going to pursue are going to take two electoral cycles.

What I want to emphasize in conclusion is that the coming fiscal year represents a critical turning point in the history of Saskatchewan's electoral management body and in the implementation of electoral delivery in the province. I also want to state publicly my belief that the success of the institution's transition to an election management body that operates very differently than it has in the past is highly dependent on my

ongoing communication with this body, the Board of Internal Economy. You are essential partners in this process. So I feel inclined to apologize in advance, as I suspect that you're going to see more of and hear more from your Chief Electoral Officer than you're used to, particularly in the coming year.

What I'd like to do is introduce two additional members of the team that have been working with me through this transition period, offering me insight on how elections have been run in Saskatchewan in the past. Sandra Arberry — if you'd like to join us — has worked as the chief operating officer. Dave asked her to join the team prior to the last general election, and she's kindly agreed to continue to act as a special adviser to me on elections. And Brent Nadon has served for many years as Elections Saskatchewan's director of finance. So perhaps they can help me in answering some of your questions that you may have regarding the submission document or my presentation. Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Boda, and welcome to the officials. Do you have any questions? Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Boda, and officials from Elections Saskatchewan. Thank you for joining us here today. I guess one fairly broad question for Mr. Boda and officials, just in terms of the budget before us as relates to the Hamilton report, how far down that path of renewal prescribed by Hamilton will the year's budget being proposed get us?

Mr. Boda: — The budget for FY '13-14 is intended to allow us to get to the staffing levels that were framed by Mr. Hamilton. And so basically my goal is to have our team in place by mid-year, after which we will conduct a formal and comprehensive strategic planning exercise so that in fall we can fully launch.

Now it has been a bit of a cart and horse. It has been a bit of a time where, from my arrival onward, I didn't want to move forward immediately. I wanted to listen to the stakeholders. And you knew very much that that was my approach. And subsequent to that, however, there are certain things that have to be prepared for the next general election if you are pursuing an electoral cycle planning approach.

And so what we have been trying to do is set up the beginning of the infrastructure in year 1 with the view that we need to get our team in place and then do a comprehensive strategic planning exercise for the coming cycle and into the next cycle. It won't just be for one cycle; it will look forward to the next cycle as well.

So to answer your question, I think FY '13-14 is where we want to lay the framework for what the Hamilton report outlined. I do want to be clear that it's not just about the Hamilton report. It's about looking as well at what is called for in terms of electoral best practice. And so Mr. Hamilton did an excellent job at providing a framework, and what we need to do is also look at that in the context of running a modern electoral process.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — I just have a question about the election dates. You're planning for the fall of 2015, and there is a chance it might be 2016 in April. What are the implications for that in terms of your planning? You know, we could be well prepared if it's April, but what will happen in that scenario if it . . . When is a good time for us to know whether it's going to be November or April, or what's . . .

Mr. Boda: — Well you know, in the past, electoral management bodies in Canada have been ready to run elections at any time but there has been obviously a transition where we have set election dates. This helps us plan more efficiently, more effectively, and to be more cost-effective in our approach. We are planning for a November 2015 election. If that is changed, the cost of election will obviously go up by some because we will have that delay and we will have a team in place ready to go. So there are implications for delaying it, but at the same time we will be ready for that election in November 2015.

The Chair: — Any other questions? If not, I believe that the committee wished to go in camera at this time. So if I can have a motion from a committee member to move in camera? Mr. Harrison. Secunder? Mr. McCall. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. So we will now move in camera.

[The board continued in camera from 15:45 until 17:06.]

The Chair: — [Inaudible] . . . given sufficient time for our colleague to reappear, so we will proceed. The session is now back in. And you see, if you give them enough time . . . We will proceed with item no. 7, decision item, the review of the 2013-14 budget and motion to approve the budgetary expenditure estimates for the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So, Mr. Dickson, if you would care to proceed and to introduce your staff please.

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Mr. Dickson: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the board. With me to my left is Pam Scott who is the director of operations in the Office of the Information and Privacy Commission or OIPC. On my right is Diane Aldridge who is our director of compliance. And seated right behind me is Danielle Shabatura who is the — sometimes the job titles change; I have to read this — acting intake coordinator and database manager.

And just as I'm getting into my presentation, I'm going to ask Danielle to pass out to the members of the board . . . It just so happens that just yesterday, or I guess the day before, we issued the 92nd edition of our e-newsletter called the Saskatchewan *FOIP Folio*. And since this is the one time every year I have a chance to meet with an all-party committee of MLAs, I thought you might like a bit of a glimpse of some of the stuff we do in our office in terms of our education mandate. So, Danielle, if I could just ask you to pass out the *FOIP Folio*.

Just by way of a brief refresher for members, I'd say our independent office has a broad mandate but chiefly our activity

falls into one of four different discrete areas. So one part of our work is providing advice and assistance to public bodies, and that's whether government institutions, local authorities, or health trustees. Another part of our mandate is providing education on information rights, which is the reason we have 91 archived issues of the *FOIP Folio* on our website. It's a useful tool to promote education and awareness about access and privacy in Saskatchewan. And then the third thing we do is we undertake reviews when access has been denied to a citizen by a public body or by a health trustee. And then the last sort of major part of our mandate is we undertake breach of privacy investigations.

Now as you will already know from our briefing booklet, we're requesting approval to hire two additional investigators. We call them portfolio officers, along the lines of the practice in all other offices like ours across Canada. And I'm going to explain to you in the next matter of minutes why we're making this particular request this year. But just prior to submitting our estimates to the Speaker's office a little more than a week and a half ago, we learned of a new development in our office. This development has just made the mountain in front of the three people seated in front of you a little bit higher and a little bit larger, and I'll tell you about that as well.

First though, I'm happy to report some really good news from the OIPC. Members will recall we've had something of a chronic problem with a very massive backlog. That meant that your constituents that came to our office looking for assistance would have had to wait often for a number of years for us to issue a formal report or achieve some form of alternate resolution of a particular file. And as we've explained to the board for each of the last five years, we needed more portfolio officers, more investigators to keep up with the demands from your constituents for our mandated work.

But 2012 turned out to be a remarkable year for the OIPC. It was the very first calendar year in nine years that we had three fully trained portfolio officers who worked very diligently to tackle our oldest and our most challenging case files. Most of these were matters of first impression, so it takes longer to research and produce reports when you're researching something our office has never interpreted before and we don't have the benefit of a court interpreting some of those interesting wording and some of the provisions in our Act. These were also the files where we were getting usually the least co-operation from public bodies, and it was apparent no informal resolution was possible.

So in the fall of 2011 we engaged in some intensive planning as an office to stretch the rubber band as far as possible. We developed a new operational plan to review all elements of our work and activity, and this involved shifting away from certain parts of our mandate and deferring certain things. So obviously we had to address all parts of our statutory mandate. But it's a question of, within that, putting a much bigger focus on closing our oldest case files. And this built on a change to our intake procedure that we shared with members at past meetings of the board.

And I'm delighted to tell you we succeeded in that effort. For the first nine months in 2012-2013 we closed 119 case files, and this represented the ugliest and the most difficult of the files in

our office, includes all of our oldest files but for two that will close really in the next month or so. And we've been able to issue 18 formal reports since January 1st, 2012. That's about three times what we've ever been able to do before in any particular year. So that's the good news, Mr. Chairman and members.

But notwithstanding that progress, and I'm certainly proud of that, the average time to close a case file is still 15 months from the time that the matter is appealed by one of your constituents to our . . . Fifteen months; I think that's still unacceptable. That's too long for your constituents to wait. Our goal has always been — and we've talked about this, I think, in the first year I got here nine years ago — that we think that your constituents shouldn't have to wait longer than five months for about 80 per cent of the access denial files. We don't think your constituents should have to wait more than five months for about 60 per cent of the privacy investigations. But we can't get there with only three portfolio officers, no matter how creative we are in terms of tweaking our process.

And I'll just remind you our process after all is a statutory one. The statute largely defines the things we have to go through. But one cannot simply focus on case files, which is after all only a part of the mandate defined by the Legislative Assembly in 1992 and then dramatically expanded when we were assigned responsibility for HIPA [*The Health Information Protection Act*] in 2003. That meant that the number of public bodies we were overseeing went from a few hundred to 3,000 public bodies and health trustees around the province.

Increasingly though, we're spending a lot more time addressing expansion of the electronic health record or EHR and the steady growth utilization by doctors in our province of the EMR, the electronic medical record. And the demands for service in this area just outstrip our capacity to keep up.

Let me just quickly explain the challenge posed by the EHR and EMRs. And you'll see in the budget booklet we've provided to members, we referenced the Throne Speech commitment to a "patient-focused and efficient health care system." And I submit respectfully to the Board, certainly part of an efficient health care system is one that utilizes an electronic health record and electronic medical records.

Now I can tell you that more than half of the physicians' offices in our province now have an electronic medical record, and this is really just putting the clinical information they have about their patients in digital form. That's the EMR. And in fact we were involved in working with the Saskatchewan Medical Association in developing the specs for the computer equipment doctors are buying and installing. This has generated — and this is good — lots of increased awareness on the part of physicians about HIPA and the rules to protect patient information. But it's also generated a lot more calls to our office: people wanting to know whether they're being compliant, and they have questions about the legislation and how it applies in their particular practice.

[17:15]

In terms of the EHR, what I'm going to ask you to do is, if you look in our estimates booklet just after page 6, is a fancy colour

photograph. It looks to me like an engineer's nightmare but this, ladies and gentlemen, is the electronic health record that's being built in the province of Saskatchewan. And if you look to the, sort of, to the top line and it's the thing, the box entitled EHR data and services, this contains what we call domain repositories. And you'll see the one that's the lab repository. So this would be all of the lab results for you, for your family, for your constituents — no matter whichever lab you'd gone to, this information will be in this domain repository.

The next one to the left, diagnostic reports and imaging. So all of your pictures, radiologists' reports from X-rays, CAT [computerized axial tomography] scans, ultrasounds, that's going to be there for you, your family and all of your constituents.

Then the next one's the drug information, so this is where you find a complete drug profile for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan. Once again, it doesn't matter what pharmacy they went to to have their prescription filled, all of this becomes available there.

And then more information on your constituents, if you look to the far left-hand side to the registries, the client registry. So this would be information about your health services number, your contact information, contact information, that sort of thing about individual patients.

And then down here, depending on what kind of service you've had, you see the box RHA [regional health authority] integration hub. So if you'd had a surgical procedure, there'd be additional information in the health region: home care if that applied, long-term care if that applied, and then information about immunizations and public health information that might relate to any given individual.

This is a system that we're building, or at least eHealth Saskatchewan is building, for Saskatchewan Health and for all of us. This system is then going to be linked to a similar system in 12 other provinces and territories so the information can be accessed not only by trustees in Saskatchewan but by their counterparts in Alberta and British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, and so on. So this system, this very expensive, very complex EHR system should lead to better health outcomes for patients. It should lead to more efficient health care delivery. And it should reduce medical error.

Now these are all very good things, but there's a big privacy issue with all of this. A huge amount of your personal health information suddenly becomes available to health care workers all over Saskatchewan, not just in the area where you live, not just in your own health region, and not just doctors and nurses but all kinds of support people: clerks and assistants and health records staff. And let me perhaps describe it this way. Contrast what happens now. If I were to go to see my family doctor tomorrow, there are I think two women who work with my family doctor in a clerical role and doing booking appointments and so on. I suppose if they wanted to snoop in Gary Dickson's personal health information, it wouldn't be tough for them to do it. But that sort of limits my risk and my exposure, those three people in my doctor's office.

Now consider that when we build this electronic health record

— and we're partway there — when that's finished and there's an electronic health record for every man, woman, and child in the province, my personal health information and your personal health information potentially becomes available to every approved user in the entire province, wherever they live or wherever they work and wherever you live.

How many people, you may be asking, would that be? And Alberta is the only province they've actually tried to figure that out. They've come to the conclusion it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of between 13 and 14,000 people all over Alberta will have the keys to the system, will have the ability to access people's data. Saskatchewan, we don't know exactly what that is, but I think it's safe to say it will be many thousands of people will have the ability, the keys if you will, to the system to be able to go in and look at people's information.

Now to safeguard your most sensitive personal health information is important because this system only works if patients trust that their information and EHR will be protected, that it'll be safe from anyone who does not need to see it for the purpose of treating you as a patient.

Annual opinion surveys done by the Canada Health Infoway confirm that people are concerned about snooping and misuse of their PHI, personal health information. They want to know who's looking at their electronic health records and they want to know why and, significantly, they want stiff penalties for people who snoop.

So this huge project — I'm talking about the electronic health record and the parallel proliferation of EMRs in doctor's offices — directly impacts my office, our office, in two ways: firstly in planning to protect privacy at the beginning and then secondly dealing with breaches of these electronic systems after the fact.

Just talking about planning to protect privacy, you may or may not know Canada Health Infoway is this huge non-profit corporation. The board of directors was made up of Dan Florizone and the deputy ministers of Health all across the country. So it's a federal-provincial organization and they're in effect funding and building this electronic health record in our province and other places. Big money. It's over \$4 billion in federal money. I don't have a good handle on how much our province has paid but it's a substantial amount of money going into it.

And one of the things Canada Health Infoway does, they require that a detailed privacy impact assessment be done for each one of these domain repositories, each piece, and if there are different stages — most of these programs require three or four or five stages — a separate PIA [privacy impact assessment] for each stage. The privacy impact assessment is like an analysis and it has to be provided to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So this isn't my rule. This isn't my urging. This is a requirement of the Canada Health Infoway. So what happens is that we get large boxes and huge accordion files come into my office. They decided it's too much paper. They now send us CDs [compact discs] which are very complex and so what we're talking about is something that's extensive, dense text, highly technical. And it takes us a long time to review all of this material, compare it with what HIPA requires, compare it with best practice, and then provide extensive

feedback to eHealth Saskatchewan and Sask Health.

We have plenty of these files and we have to scramble to stay current, to do the analysis. Some cases it takes us several years to complete them. And in fact, we've encountered situations where they've already finished a phase of one of these domain repositories and we're still . . . You know, by the time we get our recommendations to them, they've already finished that off; they've moved on to the next piece of the electronic health record. I don't think that's optimal because it's pretty expensive then to retool systems if we're able to persuade somebody there's a more privacy-protective way of, you know, building this thing.

So the second impact that the electronic health record has on our office is dealing with breaches. Now this is part of the challenge associated with HIPA. When physicians allow patient information to be tossed into dumpsters, when patient information is faxed or emailed to the wrong address, when hospital workers snoop in patient charts for their personal, non-professional reasons, we're mandated to investigate. These investigations can be intensive and they can be lengthy. The Albert Park Family Medical Centre with 180,000 pieces of information in the dumpster, that took almost four months. And that was me and two of our three investigators working flat out for almost all of the four months.

Just a few days ago we issued our latest HIPA breach investigation report. It'll be public in a week?

A Member: — Tuesday.

Mr. Dickson: — On Tuesday. This involved a large RHA, a regional health authority that had dealt with three serious breaches within their health system, similar in nature and all involved electronic records. These involved staff. This is what's interesting and curious to me. It involved staff who'd all been HIPA trained, and it happened in a region that had HIPA policy and procedure. But three successive times you had staff going in. Notwithstanding the policy and training and knowing that what they were doing violated HIPA, they went in and viewed the personal health information of patients for non-professional reasons.

Now let me be real clear. This isn't unique to our province, and in fact what we're seeing as we talk to our colleagues and as you pick up your newspaper or you boot up your electronics, your smart device, you read about these all across Canada. Just to give you a sample, Alberta has been actually prosecuting health staff who snoop. They had one case, a clerk in a cancer clinic, snooping to find out information on . . . She was having an affair with a husband of a patient in the cancer clinic. She was snooping in the records and sharing it with her boyfriend. We had another case . . . And she got a \$10,000 fine.

There was another case where a pharmacist was having a falling-out with some people in her church, so she went and looked up their prescription profiles, as she was able to do as a pharmacist, and then put all of that on a website containing prejudicial information about the other people in the church she was disagreeing with.

More recently in Alberta they've had a case that involved 34

charges under the *Health Information Act* which is like our HIPA.

In BC just before Christmas, a clerical employee of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority was fired after snooping in medical records of five local celebrities. Now I'm only grinning because the experience in Ontario and BC is that when they talk about people who are often snooped, politicians, premiers, cabinet ministers who go into hospitals, you see, are seen as high-value targets. And you have a lot of people in hospitals who want to key in and find out what the premier's in for treatment, what the minister's in for, what the neighbourhood MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] is doing in a local hospital.

In Manitoba they had a snooping investigation involving their cancer agency, found there was snooping. My counterpart in Manitoba recommended more serious treatment to snoopers, and the Manitoba legislature, moving with amazing speed, actually introduced a bill — I'm not sure they've passed it — to toughen the penalties for snoopers. And in Newfoundland two clerks snooped in health records of 46 patients. This was the third breach of its kind in that province in 2012.

So to protect personal health information, you need soft safeguards and you need hard safeguards. The soft safeguards would be things like training of staff; policy and procedure, making sure you have good policy and procedure; having an audit feature, having a proactive audit program; cautionary prompts when you boot up your computer — there's a prompt that comes and says, you know it's an offence under HIPA to be looking at information of people you're not providing care to and so on; and getting an oath or declaration from health staff that they will follow HIPA.

Well the soft safeguards, in our experience, even when they exist — and in too many regions and places they don't fully exist or they're not well done — it doesn't appear to be sufficient to deter snooping. So you need hard safeguards. The hard safeguards are typically two: dismissal for cause for deliberate snooping by staff who have been trained in HIPA and understand what the requirements are, what they can and can't do; and the second one is the prosecution under HIPA under the offence provision. And I have to tell you, staff have certainly been dismissed in Saskatchewan for snooping in health regions. But in at least two high-profile cases, and every other case I'm aware of, the dismissals were overturned by arbitrators who substituted one or two weeks without pay.

We don't seem to be following the approach in Ontario and BC where they have even arbitrators follow a zero tolerance policy. You snoop: the expectation is you're going to be dismissed for cause — no ifs, ands, or buts. As Minister Morgan well knows, there's never been a single prosecution under HIPA in nine years despite lots of breaches. And when he was minister of Justice, we had this conversation.

So, so long as we don't have in our province meaningful hard safeguards, and so long as we find trustees are not always doing a good job at the soft safeguards, we anticipate many more HIPA breaches, many more privacy violations. That just appears to be the reality.

So why do we need two more portfolio officers? In our office is seven staff. We have only three — they're highly trained — but they're only three investigators who do this work. As the pace of EHR development picks up, we fall further behind. With the two additional POs, portfolio officers, the five-month goal remains. Without the two additional POs, the notion of achieving that five-month goal remains something of a pipe dream.

Long-time members of the board will recall that we've asked for one additional portfolio officer in each of the last five years — singular testament to my lack of persuasiveness, Mr. Chairman, I think — but five years we've asked for just one more portfolio officer. And I think I've always said, this doesn't mean we eliminate our backlog. It doesn't mean that we're going to be able to achieve that five-month goal. It just means the backlog wouldn't get bigger. We wouldn't be falling further behind. But I haven't been persuasive.

[17:30]

I told you a moment ago when I started I'd tell you about a new development that makes our mountain a little higher. Well here it is. In the last week we've been notified one of our three portfolio officers — interesting the most experienced, the longest serving portfolio officer — will commence a long-term leave, at least one year at the end of the summer. I say this . . . It sounds like I'm soliciting sympathy but this is the ninth long-term leave in our small office of over just nine years. The ninth long-term leave. This leaves us with two fully trained portfolio officers. We will be down one-third of our investigative capacity. And you know, the challenge is we can't seem to achieve and sustain critical mass to be able to do all of the stuff we need to do to be dealing with electronic health records and coping with those kinds of breaches, being able to turn the case files around in a reasonable time. If one of our two POs quits, moves, takes a leave, we are in desperate straits.

We try to fill them on a temporary basis but as some members may recall from our discussion one year ago, it takes us . . . Diane Aldridge has put together, in my mind, the finest training program for portfolio officers anywhere in the country, but it takes 10 to 12 months to take somebody who doesn't come with a background in this world — and most people don't — and so by the time we train a new recruit, a temp person, up to the point where they can make a meaningful impact in our work . . . Maybe that person's coming back from long-term leave. So the benefit of a new employee is optimal starting a year after they commence employment. We therefore cannot expect that temp workers are going to allow us in the short term to reduce our caseload or to prevent a repeat of a big backlog. It will certainly not allow us to reduce the long waits, provide feedback and advice on the EHR PIAs. It would not allow us to provide more timely advice by medical clinics moving to EMRs.

Just switching gears, let me conclude by reaffirming our office's interest in and support for the shared-space proposal with other independent offices. We think it's a great idea. We're very familiar with the way it works in the province of British Columbia where our colleagues have been in a similar kind of arrangement. We see some synergies. We see some benefits to citizens, so we fully support it.

So our request is for \$1,423,189 for the continuation of what we've been doing, but with the addition of two additional portfolio officers, two permanent FTEs; one-time capital cost — we'd have to do some office renovation to accommodate the new positions.

Now as I say, we're part of this collective effort to try and find shared space, but from the sound of things that may be some . . . not the least of the problems is there isn't a lot of space available in the city, but that may be some time down the road. In the meantime we'd have to be able to renovate to accommodate these two new staff.

In any event, thanks for your patience. I know it's been a long afternoon for you and I didn't mean to go on quite so long, but I only get this chance, members, once a year and I wanted to make sure that I didn't leave anything out. I look forward to your questions, Chair, and members.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Dickson. Questions. Ms. Eagles.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Dickson, for your presentation. You focused a lot of your presentation on violations, I guess, with HIPA policies — records found in dumpsters and the pharmacist that was accessing records and then putting it on the web. These people . . . I mean if you say you need two more officers, I understand that. But if you say you need two more officers to remedy things like this, I don't understand. Because these people already know that they are in violation of your policies. So, I mean, you can go back to them and you can teach them the soft safeguards or the hard safeguards and stuff in there. I mean, they know they're doing wrong. So I just want to get your thoughts on how you think two more officers would help remedy that situation.

Mr. Dickson: — Oh there's no question having two more officers isn't going to eliminate those. I mean, until we have genuinely hard consequences and people who snoop understand that, that's going to continue to be a problem. The difficulty is just the number of complaints that come to our office. I'm just saying we have to, we're required to investigate. If one of your constituents discovers that somebody's been snooping in their drug profile or whatever for personal purposes, and that complaint comes to our office, we have an obligation, a responsibility to investigate that. So those things will continue.

The solution is things beyond anything we can do. It has to do with legislative change. It requires a different approach on the part of government, on the part of, you know, it's maybe . . . it affects arbitrators and labour relations, the regional health authorities . . . [inaudible] . . . I mean that's kind of where the big answer is.

In the meantime I'm just here to report, we have these complaints coming in and we have to investigate. I'm just, I think, trying to help give you a bit of a picture of what, you know, the kind of stuff that comes to our office. Diane Aldridge, our director of compliance, I think can supplement too.

Ms. Aldridge: — So to give you an example though . . . And Gary mentioned that, you know, there's either the soft

safeguards or the soft measures or the hard ones. In an ideal world all of the trustees, you know the thousands of trustee organizations that are out there, would have everything they need in place in terms of the soft measures to make sure they were doing their due diligence to help prevent these things from happening.

Here's an example — and we're not at the stage yet where we'd be issuing a public report so I can't get into specifics in terms of which regional health authority — but we were called out in the summer to do an investigation involving a medical office assistant that had decided on her own to be helpful, or at least it appeared to be, to take a pregnancy test and run it herself. And this is not normally part of her job description. And the reaction of the employer was that, well clearly this is something you could prosecute under HIPA in terms of the offence provision.

When we went out and started doing the investigation, we found that the trustee had not, or it appeared that the trustee hadn't done everything it could have to have prevented the incident even in terms of simple things like, how does a medical office assistant know what is part of his or her job and what isn't. So we asked questions like, well where's the job description? Was the individual ever given a copy? And the answer was no. We're like, when the individual was trained, was there a performance period where they were sat down and they went through specifically what the individual needed to improve on, what they were doing well? And the answer was no. What we found out is that the particular health region hadn't been doing performance reviews since 1995.

So this is part of the role that we take on, which is when we have these specific complaints is to go in and to look at the organization as a whole to see if it really does have what's needed as per HIPA when it comes to safeguarding and training and all of those things that are necessary to protect personal health information, and then to work with them to institute what's needed to help prevent it from happening again. So in this particular case, it shows it's not just an intentional act. It also has some responsibility that has to be put back on the trustee organization to make sure that its doing its part as well.

Mr. Dickson: — If I might just supplement by saying if I could that, you know, there's a lot of provisions in HIPA. Section 16 is what I call sometimes the spine for the HIPA skeleton because it sort of connects all of the other parts of the statute. And what section 16 does, it says as a trustee — so this would be a health region or your doctor's office — you're responsible for having a policy and procedure that set out administrative safeguards, physical safeguards, technical safeguards, reasonable measures, not Herculean, but reasonable measures to protect personal health information. If you fail to do that, you've breached the Act.

And I think what Diane is talking about, I mean a lot of our work is making sure that they've put in place . . . I mean if somebody's really hell-bent to snoop, they're going to be able to likely do it. But the challenge is, have we put in place . . . has the trustee put in place all the reasonable measures to minimize the risk of that happening? And often what we find is they haven't.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. So do you work closely with the Ministry

of Health? You know, have you suggested to them that you need more employees because a lot of it is dealing with health issues — right? — health records.

Mr. Dickson: — Well I mean I think when there was the biggest HIPA breach in Saskatchewan history in 2011, the Health minister took one of our resources which was a set of tips and included it in a registered letter he sent to every doctor in Saskatchewan. And that had a salutary effect. We spend a lot of time in discussions with the privacy team at Saskatchewan Health. We have regular meetings with them. We do attempt to kind of coordinate activities.

I guess the thing is, they're responsible for administration of HIPA; we're responsible for oversight. So when breaches have occurred it's something we need to do, and I have to say that when we meet with Health, I mean their privacy team certainly agree we need more staff because they're not assisted. If it takes us a long time to get reports done and if it takes us a long time to respond to those EHR PIAs, that's not helpful to them. So I don't have, I'm afraid, a testimonial letter from the deputy minister or the Minister of Health but I would like to think — I hope I'm not being delusional — I'd like to think the Minister of Health would, if he were here, would be encouraging us on and encouraging his colleagues, saying this is an area that is important because again it's all about, at the end of the day it's about patient confidence.

I mean, that's what all the surveys continue to show us. And if you going to build this big, expensive, elaborate electronic health record, we darn well better make sure as a province that people are going to be confident in using it and being forthcoming when they talk to their primary doctor.

Ms. Aldridge: — Just one last quick point. I think the other part of our role is, when we're helping to work with the organization to institute measures that can help prevent these types of instances from happening again, it's also to protect the integrity of the health record. What we found also in that report that will be released next week is on a number of occasions individuals had gone in and actually tampered with the patient records and in one case even put "rest in peace" on the patient file itself. So in terms of patient safety as well, there have to be measures; there have to be ways in which these types of breaches can be discovered, investigated, and then there's consequences for those actions.

Mr. Forbes: — A couple of questions. So health is a major area that you work . . . Is the major, is it the biggest one or is it growing? What does the field look like for your area?

Mr. Dickson: — A couple of ways of answering. When we do a pie chart and look at where complaints and reviews come from, the biggest part is still from FOIP, from *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and that's provincial government ministries, Crown corporations, provincial boards, commissions, and agencies. That's still the public bodies that we deal primarily with. What you've seen though in terms of health information, it's 20 per cent of the files we have would be HIPA privacy breaches. So I've talked a lot about it because it's been a new and emerging and expanding market. The other areas have been fairly traditional, right? I mean, there always have been people wanting access to their file from Justice or

Health or, you know, Education, that sort of thing.

So I'd have to say this. Health presents kinds of complexity. This stuff we're talking, I guess you can see from the depiction it's quite complex. And so it just takes us a lot of time. So I probably spend 60 per cent of my time specifically on health-related matters. Only one of three statutes, but that occupies a lot of my time.

Mr. Forbes: — So my following question to that, and it sort of relates to the emerging issues, you know, some of these situations that you've quoted in Health — is there sort of a copycat snooper syndrome? Or do you find that when people find they can do this they start doing it more? Or, you know, has this the potential to go beyond just emerge, but to actually go really fast?

[17:45]

Mr. Dickson: — Well let me try and answer it in a couple of ways. I came from Alberta, and I was there when their *Health Information Act* came into force in 2001. And it's quite similar to HIPA. I mean, there's some differences. And I remember that first charge, the woman in the cancer clinic who was sharing information with her boyfriend who was married to one of the patients. And there was a prosecution — and that was the first prosecution anywhere in Canada under a health information law — and a \$10,000 fine being imposed. She's not a medical professional. She was just like a clerk working in this cancer clinic.

And I can tell you, I was doing training for doctors at the Foothills hospital at the time in health information. Heads literally snapped to attention. I think you saw physicians and health professionals . . . That had a huge impact. And when I do training with doctors after that, everybody knew about that case. And I can't help but think . . . So this isn't very scientific, but my experience is you have some of those big . . . You don't want to rely on fines and charges. I mean, that's only for the most extreme cases. But if you never do it, it creates, I think, a disincentive for people to play by the rules.

And then the second thing I'd say, the experience . . . You know we've been at access and privacy in the public sector for 30 years in Canada. And when it comes to privacy, it's about building a culture. It's about building a set of attitudes where people understand somebody's health information or somebody's personal information . . . It may be a social service client where there's lots of sensitive information there. It may be in an adoption situation. You want a culture where everybody working with this material understands this is sensitive. It's prejudicial. It can hurt people if it's improperly disclosed, improperly used.

And building a culture, it doesn't happen easily. I'd have to say that's still a work in progress in our province. You know, we've had legislation been around for 20 years, but I've had senior people in government tell me there wasn't a lot done the first 11 years after FOIP [freedom of information and protection of privacy] was proclaimed in 1992. I'm the first-time commissioner, but that was only, you know, in 2003.

So we're still building that culture. And I think that's part of the

answer, but I think some of those significant penalties, they do, they do help to focus the minds of people working in the health care field. It's a really important encouragement, if you will, to make sure you don't get offside.

The Chair: — Any other questions? Well I have a couple. I guess based on your last comments and some of your previous comments, are you then prepared to recommend to the legislature that there be harsher penalties for breaches, you know, penalties that are harsher than a sternly worded letter or some unpaid free time off?

Mr. Dickson: — Well in fact I'm . . . Maybe I anticipated your question. If you look at my last four or five annual reports, I've specifically talked about things that have to be addressed. The difficulty is, though, it's not really with the statute on this one. When HIPA came into force on September 1st, 2003 it had a \$500,000 maximum fine for an organization that breached HIPA, a \$50,000 maximum fine for an individual that breaches HIPA. I mean that's right up there with sort of the stiffest penalties in the country. The difficulty is that there can be no prosecution without the consent of the Minister of Justice.

And so I have in annual reports and in a host of ways been gently nudging the current minister, the former minister, the former former minister of Justice to have a look at this and do something about it.

And you may recall that after the Albert Park Family Medical Centre thing, which achieved a reasonable amount of notoriety in our city and maybe in the province, I had recommended there that there be a prosecution of the physician involved. The Minister of Justice had that under consideration for a year. And then the new and now current minister had a news conference, you may recall, last August where he announced that they would not prosecute. They didn't think they could successfully persuade a judge to convict the individual. But the Justice minister said, Mr. Wyant acknowledged, it appears that the offence provision may not be up to it, may not be adequate. And he announced that he and the Minister of Health were creating a high-level working group, if I can describe it that way, to look at alternatives, whether it's administrative penalties, whether it's amending the legislation.

Right now it has to be proven beyond a reasonable . . . It's quite a high standard. And I think what the ministry is looking at . . . That was a year ago, well eight, nine months ago. I haven't heard what's coming from that, but I think they're looking at some potential opportunities. But I've tried to sort of signal, send a bit of a clarion call in, I guess I'd say, at least four or five annual reports focusing specifically on this issue.

On the side of arbitration decisions, who knew there were so many labour lawyers in Saskatchewan? But after I'd issued an annual report being quite critical of some of the arbitration decisions that had substituted two weeks without pay or 10 days without pay for dismissal, I heard from . . . I got lots of feedback from people who practise labour law saying, well you know, we have progressive discipline and so on. And my response was, so how many times does somebody have to snoop in my health information, my health records, before it's determined appropriate that warrants dismissal? Anyway, but I've raised that.

And you know, part of my job as ombudsman I think is to help encourage and stimulate some public discussion about these things, and I've been trying to do that, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — Thank you. Some of us have been encouraging that as well.

Mr. Dickson: — Great.

The Chair: — I do have a question related to the budget, specifically under your budget request (a) which is for the two FTEs. You have equipment and fixed asset additional costs of 159,000. You have the same additional costs for your budget request B which is for one additional FTE. Why are those costs identical?

Mr. Dickson: — I'm going to invite Pam to respond to that.

Ms. Scott: — Yes. What I've done actually, or mentioned to Mr. Dickson, when establishing or creating our estimates document, we realized that by the time we hear whether or not we're able to hire two portfolio officers, we likely won't be able to have them on board with us until probably May. So what we would be able to do then is offset the costs for equipment and computers with perhaps a one month salary. I'm sorry . . .

The Chair: — You lost me on that one.

Mr. Dickson: — I think part of it is . . . We take advice. We have some office space we're currently in, which everybody is in an office, so we'd have to reconfigure to be able to have — whether one or two more portfolio officers — we'd have to do some partitioning and things like that. And I think we've got some advice, right, in terms of the cost, the estimated cost, for doing some of that rejigging of office space and so on?

Ms. Scott: — Right. We wouldn't be able to facilitate the two portfolio officers in our office right at April 1st when our new dollar allotment or our new appropriation is put before us. And so we just estimated that the \$150,000 would be for capital costs, whether that would be one office or two offices. Certainly if it doesn't cost that much, the remainder would be going back to the General Revenue Fund. And in terms of the equipment and furniture for two additional portfolio officers, we wouldn't be able to hire them probably until May, and we would . . . This is just an estimate, basically, of what the costs for the capital assets would be. There would be some cost savings in the personnel dollars if we weren't able to hire them until, let's say, the 1st of May rather than the 1st of April. So we would be able to offset that one month's salary with furniture and computer.

Mr. Dickson: — Mr. Chairman, I should just point out that our landlord is your government. The Central Services is our landlord. Any renovation whatever, we would be going to them. And I can tell you, not being in the construction trade, I'm always astonished at the estimates we get for what seem like not a major renovation. But . . .

The Chair: — And how very short term they are.

Mr. Dickson: — Yes, well all I can say is that, I mean, that's simply an estimate. We know there'll be some cost in terms of knocking some walls . . . moving walls around and then getting

some furniture to set up two more portfolio officers, and . . .

The Chair: — But my question is though, why is the cost the same when it's two additional FTEs or one additional FTE? There's no difference in the cost. So you wouldn't have to have the furniture or computers and electronics set up for the second one if you didn't have that FTE. So if you only got one FTE . . .

Ms. Scott: — Yes. Again, these are just estimates. We've just added \$150,000, one-time cost, for the capital costs. You know, if you wanted you could probably say \$145,000 for one FTE, or 150 for two FTEs for the capital cost. But we simply just estimated that.

The Chair: — Oh, so the equipment . . .

Ms. Scott: — And we wouldn't be able to get you a really good figure as to what that would cost until we involved Central Services, which would mean we'd have to have approval to hire those individuals first.

The Chair: — But so the cost saving would be relatively insignificant if you only got one set of office equipment rather than two sets?

Ms. Scott: — I'm thinking a desk and computer furniture is about \$5,000, telephone.

The Chair: — Okay. I'm just checking the clock. The one thing that I noticed with health information, and this is sometimes the lack of access or use. That when my wife was in the hospital, it seemed that every new nurse or every time we went to a different ward or went to the admission you had to completely rewrite your history because they never accessed it. And yet we seem to have people that inappropriately access it when the staff that should be accessing it aren't doing so, you know, so . . . which creates some significant frustration. I see a few people in the back, that have participated in the health care system lately, nodding their heads in frustration as well. You know. And, you know, so maybe we need to teach some people to use it more and some people to use it less.

My son is a software engineer and he tells me that once you've started on a project, you're better off to finish the project and then go back and redo the little bits that you want to change rather than stopping part way through and redesigning the whole thing, because at the end of the day it means starting right back at the beginning again. So that's my commentary on trying to fix computer software — his advice when he fixes my computer.

Mr. Dickson: — Mr. Chairman, just with respect to the earlier point you'd raised, one of the things that drives me a little crazy is that often we have people . . . And it is getting back to what happens in a unit in acute care hospital. We often have people who will suggest that privacy is somehow a barrier, an impediment. It slows things down. It prevents them from getting service in a timely way. Every time somebody says that and I have the opportunity to sort of look at what happened, it's somebody who just didn't understand. HIPA was specifically designed to facilitate the electronic health record. It was designed to provide enhanced sharing opportunities between health care providers with a need to know to be able to provide

diagnosis, treatment, and care. I mean, that's the purpose of the Act.

[18:00]

The problem is sometimes either people . . . It's either not understanding what the Act . . . The Act actually allows a lot of sharing. I mean the kind of thing about shifting from one section of a facility to another. I mean HIPA is designed to eliminate that and the electronic health record is designed to get past those kinds of issues.

The Chair: — To facilitate it.

Mr. Dickson: — But you find what happens is so either people, they haven't got adequate training or, to be honest, sometimes people are just a bit lazy. And they'll throw out, it's a convenient excuse, well privacy rules prevent me from telling you about your injured child or your injured spouse. I mean, which is nonsense because all privacy rules including HIPA have what I call sort of safeguards. They have situations when information could be shared without consent to prevent risk of injury to harm. There's information that can be shared with people in a close personal relationship with somebody in a hospital. You know, I mean there's actually quite a bit of opportunity for sharing. It's just not always well understood, and it's unfortunate because it sometimes then allows people to go around saying, it's this darn privacy is handcuffing us. And I've almost never found that in fact is accurate.

The Chair: — Well in the case that I'm thinking of it was the patient themselves that had to keep giving the information to every new nurse, or every new administrator, because they didn't either want to access the information that they had available online or they were too lazy to access it. And it was easier for them to simply ask again, you know, what drugs are you on? You know, who are you? And it becomes an exercise in frustration.

It now being 6 o'clock, and we had scheduled a break at this point in time, if there are no further questions we will take a break and reconvene at 6:30.

Mr. Dickson: — Good. Thank you very much, Chairman, and members. Thanks very much.

[The board recessed from 18:02 until 18:34.]

The Chair: — It now being after 6:30, I would like to reconvene this meeting. And we will proceed now with item no. 8, which is the decision item on the budgetary estimates for the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service]. And I would like to welcome our Clerk, Mr. Putz, here and his staff. So if you would like to introduce the staff you have available and proceed with your presentation.

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

Mr. Putz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good evening to all of the members here. Yes indeed, I'd like to introduce the staff we have joining us here tonight. I only wish I could introduce all of our staff to you because we so much enjoy serving you as members of the Assembly and this

important institution. But I'll start with the ones who are here, and we'll see how far we get.

And in no particular order of importance, just because this is the way I've written them down, Ken Ring, our Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. We have Iris Lang, our Principal Clerk; Melissa Bennett, our Legislative Librarian. We have Pat Kolesar, Melissa's assistant. She's the assistant legislative librarian. Lynn, to my left here who is our executive director of our member and corporate services division. And you've met Lynn for the first time last year so she's got just over a full year of service under her belt. And she's responsible for the next two people I want to introduce who are the newbies to our crew: Dawn Court, director of financial services; and Brad Gurash, the director of our member services. And these two fine people, it's their first estimates for the Assembly, but I don't think . . . It's not their first estimates. They've helped even maybe some of you with your ministerial estimates. So just keep that in mind when you're questioning us. It's their first time here.

To my right is Darcy Hislop. He's our chief technology officer. We have Lenni Frohman who's our director of parliamentary publications, and with her, one of her staff people is Joelle Perras. She's with our parliamentary publications branch as well, working in a communications capacity. I think Jeremy Phillips is here. He was here. Sorry, he's not here. Everybody knows Jeremy anyways. One person who needs really no introduction is Patrick Shaw, our Sergeant-at-Arms. And Lorraine deMontigny, director of visitor services, and Janis Patrick, manager of our member payments and allowances, sitting right behind me. I think that's everybody, isn't it? Did I miss anybody?

So these managers and staff are responsible for the day-to-day support the Legislative Assembly provides to not only the Assembly but also to you and the other MLAs in your many parliamentary roles. And I also want to point out that the budget before you, all of these folks had helped in developing our budget for this coming fiscal year as well as the action plan that's summarized in the budget document. They're here tonight not just to be introduced, but they're here to answer any questions you might have about any aspect of our legislative service.

Before getting into my remarks, which mercifully will be very brief because it's late . . . We've been here all day, but you've heard me droning on for seven years. So I've got some helpers this time to help me out in this regard.

I just want to remind you of the broad array of services that all of these folks provide to you, which is catalogued in this document. This is our *Guide to Members Services*. We catalogue everything we do for you twice a year, with contact information. That's available to you in paper copy and also in the members' portal. Some of you utilize that portal to access information electronically, but it's updated twice a year so you have all the current contact names of people you and your constituency assistants need to access when you have some question or concern about any of the services we provide. So I just want to remind you of that. Basically this catalogues almost everything that we do for you, as well as the officers of the Assembly.

And I'd also just like to remind you that we also service approximately 400 people, including your constituency assistants, various folks who work for the independent officers, and the people working in your caucuses as well.

So as I promised, I'm going to make a few short introductory remarks regarding our budget, then I'm going to turn over the presentation to Lynn and Dawn who will take you through the specifics of our budget request, and then Darcy is going to take you through the Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund for the various projects under that fund that we have outlined for you to make some decisions on later this evening.

With respect to our budget request for 2013-14, our request has been developed to ensure that we're able to maintain the core service delivery to members of the Assembly and also our many services to the public.

As such the base level funding will allow us to maintain what we call our status quo programming — I know Mr. Speaker has some issues with that terminology — but status quo programming, and still continue with our commitment to find efficiencies and to anticipate future service delivery needs.

Our budget proposal that you have before you is a decrease over our previous year's budget. It's a \$30,000 decrease of about point zero one two per cent. And similar to other publicly funded entities — ministries, boards, organizations — we recognize an obligation to be prudent with the expenditure of public funds. And in pursuit of that we work diligently to minimize our funding requests by trying to refine our expenditures and redirecting funds internally. And I hope we've been able to achieve that to your satisfaction this year.

So at this point I'm going to turn it over to Lynn and we look forward, as a group here, to answer any questions you might have at the conclusion of the formal part of our presentation here. So I'll turn it over to Lynn now.

Ms. Jacobson: — Thank you, Greg, and good evening, members, and Mr. Chair. With respect to our budget request, it also supports and fully considers our strategic plan. And for 2013-14 our key action and plans, in support of our strategic goals, are summarized on pages 4 and 5 of our budget document as a summary. And then there is more detail provided in appendix B which begins on page 24. So I'm going to confine my remarks to a number of those. I was going to just highlight some of the key actions for us as we go forward and not all of them in terms of brevity tonight.

With respect to our first goal, which is sustained and enhanced institution of parliament, chief among the key actions for the coming year are the following: implement any changes to the directives deriving from the review that has begun this past year in 2012-13; to continue the pursuit of technological solutions to integrate video, transcript text, and indexes to preserve historical legislative recordings and publications, more of which you'll hear later about when Darcy Hislop talks about proposals under consideration from the RARF [Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund] fund; a legislative exchange with the Government of Western Australia; and introduction of a model parliament program for elementary school classes.

With respect to goal no. 2, which is purposeful services with accountable governments, we have a couple of key actions for the coming year. One is researching indexing technologies and reviewing indexing practices, and investigating technology to improve member expense data processes and requests for payment.

Our third goal, which is an effective, responsive work environment, we have a couple here as well. Oh, pardon me. I'll go back to goal no. 2 for just a second. I would be very remiss if I did not mention one of the key things for the coming year is supporting the Board of Internal Economy in the recruitment for replacements for the Privacy Commissioner and the Ombudsman whose five-year terms will be coming to an end in the following year.

With respect to goal no. 3, that's more internally focused for the Legislative Assembly Service, and we look at effective, responsive work environment. And we're pleased to announce two major human resource initiatives in that respect for us. One is the implementation of a competency framework for all positions in the organization similar to what has been done in other agencies like executive government. And also we have the phased-in implementation of an employee planning and development with our management team, and complete rollout throughout the organization by 2015. So those are two new major initiatives that we'll be undertaking with our staff.

At this time I'd be pleased to entertain any questions that you may have regarding the proposed actions. Or if you would prefer, later on I'd be pleased to entertain them at that time. Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay, thank you. Questions by members. I recognize Ms. Eagles.

Ms. Eagles: — Yes. You mentioned about the parliamentary program for elementary schools. Could you just explain that, what your intentions are a little bit please?

Ms. Jacobson: — I'm actually, if that's okay, I'm going to turn that over to Lorraine deMontigny.

Ms. Eagles: — Sure.

Ms. deMontigny: — Thank you for that question. With respect to the program for elementary kids, what we're hoping to do, and this has been a dream for a while, we're working with the Ministry of Education to find the fit with curriculum so that we can have students at that grade . . . Well we're finding that it fits at the grade 4 level or the grade 8 level of students, where they can come here and when they book their tour, or their visit I should say, we can give them a choice. Are they going to go on a tour of the building, or would they like to participate in model parliament? And if they choose model parliament, then we will be sending a package of prep work out to the school.

[18:45]

With our existing funds we've sort of been working towards this to prepare for doing it at some level so that children will, in their classroom, be prepared by the teacher to introduce a bill, to go through all the motions, to come into the House in parade

just as we do here, and they will go through all of those steps. They will dress up in the robes of the Speaker and the Sergeant and the Clerk, and they will be prepared to act out whatever assignment they've been assigned in the classroom.

So we see it as an opportunity to reach that audience in a way that the tour just . . . You know, I don't think grade 4 gets a lot out of the tour, and I'm not sure how much they're getting out of question period. But if they are going through the motions themselves of the activity in the House, and then we get them into the House . . . And of course what we would like to do is have the MLA attend. If someone from your constituency is coming in for model parliament, then we would invite you to come and pop in on that if you could.

I think we're looking to have something for every age that visits. We know what works. Our educational material works really well for grade 8. The material works for grade 12. But we need something for the younger students.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay, thank you.

Ms. DeMontigny: — You're welcome.

The Chair: — Any other further questions? Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, and I appreciate that. I think giving them options is a good idea.

One of the things that I've found: there's no issues when students come in here. They always go away saying that their trip to Regina, coming to the legislature is one of the highlights. So I thank you for that. But it's more difficult when we go as MLAs to classrooms to give them information. I'm wondering if there's anything, if you're doing anything new that we can be presenting to the children in their classrooms that would give them a better idea of what we're doing.

Ms. DeMontigny: — Well one thing — and this is a point that I, you know, should have made perhaps earlier — what we are doing we hope will enhance and be a complement to what the Speaker is doing with outreach and the model parliament that he is conducting. But of course not every Speaker is able to do that or is conducting, doing the outreach and doing model parliament here in the building. So by doing this, this is an at-home program for all students.

I think the way that the MLA could really be engaged is when we know in advance that there is a booking and a school in your constituency is going to come in, and they've chosen to do model parliament, then — and I realize you don't have a lot of time in your constituencies when we're sitting — but there might be an opportunity for you to visit that school before or after, you know, or be engaged in that way. And these are things I think we can work out. We really are still in the trial stage. We do hope to have a trial run one of these days before too long.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Any other questions? Greg, you have a question?

Mr. Putz: — No, I have no question. I just want to say that it looks as if there was sort of this pregnant expectation that we were done. We're not done yet. Dawn wants to tell you about the numbers in our budget, and then Darcy's going to talk about RARF. But Lynn addressed our action plan and some of the initiatives we're doing this year, including Lorraine's model parliament. So I just didn't want you to lose sight of that.

The Chair: — All right, Dawn.

Ms. Court: — Good evening, members and Mr. Chair. I'd like to begin by directing your attention to pages 6 and 7 in our budget document. I want to take a minute to walk you through the principles that we used in the development of the LAS budget and some of the assumptions that we used during our budget development and some of the key operational decisions that were used to develop our budget as well. With respect to the principles, we looked at the historical spending trends of the LAS and we've noticed that we've experienced a modest growth over the past few years, with an increase of clients served.

We also took a look at the direction provided by executive governments to develop a zero-growth budget year over year. We used this as a guiding principle. Our fiscal responsibility to be prudent with public funds, we wanted to maintain our current level of service delivery.

And we took the opportunity to redirect one of our one-time fundings to offset some of our new pressure so that we could deliver a decrease in our budget of point one two per cent, as Greg had mentioned. We looked at the parliamentary cycle and we used the CPI [consumer price index] growth that was announced by the Ministry of Finance about a week ago, which was 1.6 per cent. And we provided funding to cover off in-range progression and range adjustments for our staff. And we also used a 65-day session based on the parliamentary calendar to develop our budget. Some of the operational decisions that we used, we realigned our resources to better reflect our core business within the branches, and our FTEs remain the same at 82.6.

Some of the assumptions that we used are on page 7 in the middle of the page. As Greg indicated, our overall budget request represents a point one two per cent decrease over '12-13. The total request is for 26.142 million, which comprises of 16.7 million in statutory funding and 9.4 million in non-statutory funding.

If I could now turn your attention to page 10, you will see that the statutory funding requirements have decreased by approximately 1.94 per cent or an amount of 330,000. And this is primarily due to the redefining of statutory expenditures to better reflect actual spending patterns. We have been monitoring spending patterns for the past several years, and on average have been underexpended and returned funds to the GRF [General Revenue Fund] of the last five years.

Statutory funding comprises approximately 64 per cent of our budget and is presented as a projected expenditure, as these expenses received ongoing spending authority regardless of whether or not the projected amount is exceeded. Within the non-statutory funding you will see a net increase of 3.27 per

cent or an increase of 300,000. We have been able to partially manage the increase to non-statutory by the redirection of one-time funding from 2012-13. The redirection of funding will offset the anticipated in-range and range adjustments, the one-time hosting requirements for interjurisdictional conferences that the Provincial Auditor's office will be having, and the Clerks-at-the-Table three-day forum with provincial and territorial jurisdictions and the Parliament of Canada, and funding for anticipated increased committee hearings.

And if I can now turn your attention to page 11, I'm just going to walk you through the details of our budget. As you can see from the chart, our 2012-13 budget started at 26.173 million. We have found savings in the statutory requirements of \$380,000 and that's gross savings. We have an offset of 350,000 and that's the redirection of the one-time funding that was provided for the fourth floor committee room.

The pressures that we anticipate for '13-14 are 200,000 for anticipated funding for committee hearings with the public. We have the one-time funding for interjurisdictional hosting obligations of 158,000, status quo salary increases of 158,000, funding of 50,000 to begin the competitions for the two independent officers that Lynn had highlighted earlier. Thirty-five thousand is with respect to the Western Australian exchange program. Thirty thousand dollars is related to rent increases for the Walter Scott Building as well as for the library space. And we have some miscellaneous minor increases which total about 69,000, bringing our request for the '13-14 budget to 26.143 million. I'd be pleased to answer any questions that you have on the detail.

The Chair: — Okay, do you want to proceed with this and then move to Darcy's, or do you want to do Darcy's now and then come back to questions? It's up to you. Go ahead, Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I have some questions. First of all, I should tell you that you might know that I'm on Treasury Board as well. So you guys having a decrease, you may be my favourite group of people that I've met. So the \$380,000 in decrease in statutory requirements, give me an idea of what that means? What is the decrease?

Ms. Court: — I'll turn it over to Brad.

Mr. Gurash: — So within the statutory funding for directive no. 2, telephone and related expenses, we maintained that at approximately the same level as the prior year, as this provision was under spent by approximately \$100,000 in the prior year compared to what was originally input for the estimates for '12-13 there. As well, with MLA travel and living expenses, we maintained that at the same level as the prior year, which is \$1.88 million. This provision was also under spent; looking at the historical spending patterns, it was under spent by about 412,000.

And then we also had some increases. Again the statutory increase due to CPI within directive 4.1 was about \$46,000. And as well as the constituency assistants expenses in directive 6 and 6.1, we're estimating a 2 per cent increase due to a cost-of-living increase which will be settled once . . . because it is tied to the collective bargaining agreement of executive government. So for right now, we've estimated it at a 2 per cent

for now. So that's where we were able to get the savings from out of the statutory requirements.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much. I have one other question. And I think probably most of the elected people will notice that when we pay some of our office bills like telephone or power we often get, I shouldn't say often, but sometimes a late penalty involved in that. That always bothers me because I know that I don't think it's you, and I know it's not me, but I just wondered, has anybody ever figured out what it costs us to pay the late penalties to utilities? Like this is a considerable amount of money when I look at my own office. It's something that's an irritation to me that we should have to pay that.

I don't mean to cause a lot of work for anyone. I just wonder if anybody else has noticed that, that even though we may send them in on a timely manner, and I know that they're paid on a timely matter, we still get late charges.

The Chair: — We dealt with this a little bit in Victoria on the weekend. What British Columbia has done is provided credit cards to the MLAs to pay those kind of bills. The auditor is not keen on this at all because those credit card bills come in and the legislature pays them. So they're paid on time, but they're paid before the MLA actually submits a receipt for them which has caused great consternation with the auditor. So by the time the paper gets shuffled back and forth from the member's office to the legislature and the cheques get issued, I don't see how you can get it within that three-week window that the utilities now want that bill paid in.

So I think we're always going to be stuck with a late payment unless there is some way that we can directly pay that. As soon as the bill comes in, the member would have to authorize it, perhaps online, so that the legislature could pay it with a photocopy or a scan of the bill. So I think it would be a significant imposition. Greg.

Mr. Putz: — Janis was just informing us that in her estimation — I mean, she's subject to checking — that this is a minimal issue that's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . She's very knowledgeable but obviously shy.

Ms. Patrick: — Yes. Now I'm done.

[19:00]

The Chair: — All right. I recognize you, Janis. Go ahead.

Ms. Patrick: — I was going to say typically the late payment costs are fairly minimal overall in comparison to the rest of the phone bills. And there also is a payment lag date set by the Ministry of Finance that we're kind of tied to as well. And often by the time SaskTel gets the money in a lump from several MLAs and parcels it out, it's already been charged late charges for the next month. We don't have to break out the coding on that. That is an option.

The Chair: — Brad.

Mr. Gurash: — I believe, back in the late summer there, we were looking at this. Again it came from a coding matter. And at that time — we're talking about late July, early August there

— and we were running maybe at about \$330 in total late payments. I asked Janis to run a quick . . . to see how systemic or how large of an issue this may be. Again that was late July, early August, and that's how much at that point from April 1 that we had put a trace on that.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and to members. I guess maybe I must be one of those bad ones. Anyway thank you very much for that. It's just something that I have noticed because we definitely appreciate the work that's happening and the speed that we do get payments out. So thank you for that.

The Chair: — Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Harrison: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. On page 11, the funding provided for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association exchange with Western Australia, how is that going to be impacted, if at all, by WA [Western Australia] pulling out of the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association]?

Mr. Putz: — Western Australia has not pulled out of the CPA. It was the federal branch of Australia that pulled out along with Papua New Guinea. And that had to do with the ongoing accountability question for the Secretary-General's office in London. Very shortly after the federal branch of Australia pulled out, all of the states very quickly advised the Canadian branch that they were opposed to that action. They feel that in order to have change in CPA, they needed to work from within and not from without. So they made it very clear that they are still in CPA and will still participate in CPA as they have done it in the past. I hope that answers the question.

The Chair: — Ms. Eagles.

Ms. Eagles: — Yes. On page 10, members' committee expenses up \$50,000, and I was just wondering if there was an explanation for that.

Mr. Putz: — There is, and Iris . . .

Ms. Eagles: — Iris will do it? Okay cool.

Mr. Putz: — And the Government House Leader might have to help us out on this one.

Ms. Lang: — Actually they're the same item.

Mr. Putz: — They're interrelated.

Ms. Lang: — It is related to our anticipated understanding that there will be increased committee hearings coming this fiscal year, and so for one major public hearing throughout the province, you'll see on page 11, it's \$200,000. Of that, \$50,000 is for members' travel and their expenses related to public hearings; \$150,000 would come out of the committees budget you'll see on page 10 below in the non-statutory portion.

Ms. Eagles: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — So I see that the direction of one-time funding

for the fourth floor committee room, so what would be the future of . . . Is that something we're going to have to talk about at a later time?

The Chair: — No, we can talk about it now.

Mr. Forbes: — What's the thinking on that?

The Chair: — There is no talking.

Mr. Putz: — I can address that at least initially, because ultimately it is a decision made by an authority higher than even the Speaker. You'll recall that since, well it's about a decade since the committee that dealt with our committee reform and rule changes advocated that we have two committee rooms, and in 2003 working with then SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation] it was identified that unused space on the fourth floor of this building would be suitable for a second committee room. It had not been used for many years because it did not have proper fire egress, and that actually is the major cost that would be involved in converting that space to usable space for a committee room.

Through two governments now it's been on and off, and last year as you'll recall you had this very question. I'm sure that's why you're raising it is that it was to be part of an initiative for the centennial of the building and the major costs were to be appropriated through the capital commission, and the costs that we had were for our part of it — that was to buy the television, broadcasting, Hansard equipment, and to equip the offices for the staff that would be up on that fourth floor. Ultimately after you as a board made that decision, government decided to go in a different direction, and they did not fund the project.

And it's my understanding now that the future of this project is probably involved in a more major review of what needs to be done as far as the whole building — of the dome, the repointing of the building. And I think that study's ongoing. So at this point I guess we're just waiting for direction when this project then again will be put back on the front burner. So that's sort of it in a nutshell. I don't know if Mr. Speaker wants to add anything to that.

The Chair: — Well I don't know anything further than that. I mean the Board of Internal Economy does have the legislative authority to approve that kind of spending. But I would suggest if they did that we would have four new government members on here shortly thereafter, you know. So until the government makes a decision as to what it's going to do with the entire building as far as renovations and maintenance are concerned, we're being held in abeyance for the last 10 years. Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — I guess in that vein, do you have any sort of illumination for the committee as to what the time frame involved in the government's deliberations as to what's the future of the building overall? Is that taking place through Government Services or through the Capital Commission? How is it being conducted? What's the timeline involved?

Mr. Putz: — That is a better question for Central Services. There was some idea that the funding for these projects would come through the Capital Commission. I'm not sure of the status this year. That was last year in connection with the

centennial, the building. Whether that's going to be the ongoing case, as it were . . .

We are not responsible as the Assembly Service or even the Speaker for the maintenance of the building. That comes under Central Services. And as the Speaker has indicated, over the years it's been sometimes the preference was that the Assembly should ask for the appropriation for the full cost of this project which — Darcy, correct me if I'm wrong — is in the neighbourhood of about \$4 million now, and most of that is the construction of the elevator and that second stairway for fire egress.

Then other years it's been thought . . . And I remind you this has been through a couple governments now. We seem to go back and forth on the best way to approach this project. It seems that we're spinning our wheels. So I can't be helpful in that regard. The question about the overall building I think is properly directed to the Minister of Central Services.

Mr. McCall: — Are you trying to tell us that the timeline involved is the next centennial?

Mr. Putz: — It might well be. But it is a lot of money and there are a lot of considerations in all of this, and I suppose that's why the project has been on and off over the course of the last decade.

Mr. McCall: — I guess to be serious, I mean I appreciate that this has been an ongoing topic through a couple of governments, as you correctly point out. I guess my interest as a member of this body is to find out, when decisions that are made outside of this body that impact decisions that have been made by this body, I don't know how we get notified of that other than here tonight.

Mr. Putz: — My suggestion would be that you could raise this with the minister involved when the estimates for Central Services come up. I have no idea at this point whether they'll be including funds for the building in the executive government estimates that will be, you know, for the maintenance of this building.

Mr. McCall: — And for Government Services, not Central Services.

Mr. Putz: — I think it's called Central Services now. They changed the name again, last summer I think.

Mr. McCall: — What?

The Chair: — Central Services now. It used to be Government Services. Government Services from Central Services.

Mr. McCall: — Well, there we go. Okay.

Mr. Putz: — Just to confuse the issue even more. I mean, don't get me wrong. I mean this is something, you're right, that the Assembly has desired over the course of the last decade, and for whatever reasons it's been postponed. The committee, on a couple of occasions when they've looked at this, have restated, or stated in the first analysis that we should have two rooms like this to conduct our committee hearings rather than utilizing the

Chamber. And the original rationale was that when you're in committee it's more collegial; it's less adversarial, and that the role of the committees is to gather information for you to perform your adversarial role in the Chamber. It just hasn't happened. And like I said, because the government's responsible for the building, that's where the decision has to be made.

Mr. McCall: — Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: — Commencing probably about 10 years ago I believe that the LAS has paid for about three architectural plans — starting 10 years ago, and probably five years ago, and again last year — to get the project ready to go. And we're back into that position again where it's ready to go. But as it gets delayed, then down the road you have to redo the architectural plan because the rules and regulations change, fire codes change, and you have to do it differently again. So we have been investing in the project over those 10 years. It is ready to go now. At one point in time it needed serious cleaning up and, you know, there was things stored up there that had to be removed. So the project is ready to go, but now we need funding from executive government for Central Services to make that decision whether they want to do it as one stand-alone project or if they want to look at it as a larger project for the building or whether they're not going to do any of it.

The Chair: — Mr. Putz.

Mr. Putz: — I would ask Darcy if he recalled offhand what the investment has been so far. Darcy believes it's been around \$400,000 so far in the project over the last decade. You've enumerated some of the plans and engineering drawings that have accounted for some of that expenditure.

The Chair: — Darcy, did you want to . . .

Mr. Hislop: — As per our pre-budget discussions, I had actually left the fourth floor step out. It wasn't something that we had tabled so I don't have the exact figures here with me. But the original RARF funding came about for work to prepare the fourth floor for it. So we did some initial demolition. From that we did some further design. We came back; we did some tender-ready documentation that paused for a couple of years, and then last year there was 90,000 allocated to again get it tender ready. And we'll likely get to do another tender ready at some future point, should we come. Fits and finishes, wallpapers, carpets, all those details change as well as different building codes that come into effect. It would be nice if we got to that point again. We'd push it over the edge. I really thought centennial was about as good as it was going to get.

The Chair: — Okay. Further questions? Okay. We will move on then to Darcy's presentation.

[19:15]

Mr. Hislop: — Great. Good evening, Mr. Chair, members of the board. I have the opportunity this evening to present five RARF proposals for your consideration. Fortunately or unfortunately, our amounts exceed the 250,000 allocation so we will require some of your direction and some of your input.

Just before I get to those proposals, there are two items that are not part of our RARF proposals that I thought were worth mentioning. One is related to the metal detector system that has come up in past years. While we still feel that the security of the building and security for people in the building is an obvious priority, we think that that item warrants some serious consideration. And we're going to undertake, under the auspices of my esteemed colleague, Sergeant-at-Arms Patrick Shaw, a comprehensive review of security for the building in today's modern environment, and we will present that information to Mr. Speaker at a later date for his considerations.

The second item I will have to give credit to Mr. Forbes and one of his constituents interested in closed-captioning services for our broadcast of the legislative proceedings. And so I have prepared some information, and I'm willing to look at that and discuss with you folks, but that is not one of our five RARF proposals tonight. So with that, I will detail our five proposals in a summary format. The information is in your book, starting on page 14 I believe, and then we can go back and we can work our way through each of those and address any questions. And again, we look to your direction as to amounts or what initiatives you may care to proceed with.

So our first item up is our interior card access system for some of the more high-profile offices in the building. As you recall, two years ago this item was initially approved by the board, and then later that decision was reversed. We again . . . we believe security for the people in the building is important, and this year we are proposing a project for \$175,000 to begin. We hoped we might get 26 offices' doors equipped. Lots of that depends on the adventures of wiring electrical installations in a historic building such as ours.

The second item we have is for an air conditioner for our room 5 server room. That houses all our critical IT infrastructure — computers, servers, communications equipment — for the LAS as well as for some of our independent officers. That amount is for \$44,000.

Our third item is the digital restoration of our audio-video archive collection. Our first year we're just looking to dip our toes in the pool for \$20,000. We estimate that the total cost of this project is about \$350,000, and that covers a digitization of approximately 10,000 hours and over 30 years of legislatures and our proceedings. And some of the material is quite old, quite fragile. I've been talking to the Archives Board and I know they're quite interested in how we make out tonight.

Our fourth item is Chamber chair mats. With our plush new carpeting, we've heard some talk about it being a little bit difficult for members and staff in the Chamber to move their chairs, so this would help alleviate that as well as help protect the carpet, and that amount is \$11,000.

The fifth item on the list is a portable video system. This system would enable us, if we have travelling committees or committees outside our two equipped facilities, to actually record with a small three-camera system those proceedings in conjunction with our audio that produces the transcript. We would then also, we would target to be able to provide a live video stream over the web of that as well as to record the information so we could play it back out on our television

network at a later date. Again those items do go beyond \$250,000. And so with that, I'll entertain any questions and discussions.

The Chair: — Thank you, Darcy. What is the cost for the interior card access system?

Mr. Hislop: — We are proposing \$175,000.

The Chair: — Okay. Any questions on Darcy's presentation? Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Harrison: — Yes. So for 175,000 we'd get 26 kind of separate entrance ways completed. How many would that be out of what the total we need to have done is?

Mr. Hislop: — I'm going to turn this over to . . .

Mr. Harrison: — Sure.

Mr. Shaw: — I'm sorry. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Harrison: — Yes, sure Pat. For the \$175,000 Darcy indicated, we'd get about 26 doors with card access to them. How many is that out of the total number that we're going to eventually need if we are to do every office in . . .

Mr. Shaw: — That's approximately one-third.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay.

Mr. Shaw: — One-third to one-half. Those would cover all the ministers' doors, the Premier's suite, the Speaker's suite, the Clerk's suite. I think that's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Pardon?

Mr. Putz: — And the opposition.

Mr. Shaw: — And the opposition as well, pardon me. Yes. Your main office doors, 265, and your main office doors.

An Hon. Member: — And keys inside?

Mr. Shaw: — Yes.

Ms. Eagles: — Two sixty five, and the caucus offices you mean.

Mr. Shaw: — Yes.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay. Thanks, Pat, for that. The other question I have is with regard to the matting protection for the Chamber, \$11,000. So what exactly are the things that are going, the chair mats that are going to be purchased? Because that seems like quite a bit for, you know, 60, 70 . . .

Mr. Shaw: — They're custom measured and cut. So if you have two members sitting together, there would be one chair mat encompassing the two seating areas. And it's mainly to protect the floor where the chair is and where the feet would go. And those seem to be the main wear areas.

Mr. Harrison: — Okay. Those are my questions.

The Chair: — Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you. How often do we have a security threat?

Mr. Shaw: — Well that's interesting. There's an old adage in security, whether it be VIP [very important person] security or regular security: you can't prevent people from trying; you just hoped that they're unsuccessful.

We don't really know for sure how many times there's been a . . . I mean certainly if there's a door that's been jimmed or something like that, we know of that. We don't know of the attempts where there wasn't something. It's not that high.

If I might just add, the interior card access system is . . . What we have now is keys and locks. We don't have any clue how long ago those were rekeyed. We don't know how many pass-keys there are out there. So fine, they can switch cylinder to cylinder. We still can't account for the keys. I always like to think of a lock and keys, the locks are a security and the keys are an insecurity. With an interior card access system, you can dictate who has cards to that office. You have an instant, and I mean within seconds you know who's accessed at what time. And if there is an incident of a security breach, we know pretty much who's gone in and at what time. People who don't have access can't get in there.

Mr. Putz: — And just to add to that, the system that Pat is proposing is the same system that the executive government has put into many if not most of government buildings, so ultimately it does save money.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — One of the other things that's important to this building is the whole architecture and what the doors would look like. I mean that's one of the charms we have. Now what would this look like that it wouldn't deface it?

Mr. Shaw: — We wouldn't be able to do anything without heritage branch giving us the okay. They would have a look and see what we want to do. They would design a card reader or a card holder and it would be in keeping with the heritage of the building, as unobtrusive as possible.

The Chair: — I was just in British Columbia in the legislature there and they have the interior card readers, and they're like our fobs. You don't actually, you don't swipe. You just put it up against a keypad or some kind of a reader, and it worked very nicely. We were in there over the weekend, so everything gets locked up, and we were only accessible to certain doors that our key would let us access to.

So in the case of a card reader in this building, you could set them up that they were . . . The offices, just a doorknob would work, you know, from 7 o'clock in the morning till 6 o'clock at night so staff aren't always needing to use their pass-keys. They could just walk in and out as they do now. But after that, you could have them that you have to use your pass-key to access all of the offices, and your pass-key would access your office. In the case of caucus members, it would access the caucus doors, but it wouldn't access the ministers' offices.

And so you have the opportunity for multiple restrictions or

multiple accesses depending on your circumstances and who you are. So in my case I could access the Speaker's office and I could, you know, whatever else, but I wouldn't be able to access caucus or a minister's office or the opposition's or the Clerk's office even unless it was specifically designated that I could do so. And I know the Clerk has some assets in there he would prefer me not to have access to.

Mr. Putz: — You have enough assets.

Mr. Shaw: — If I might, Ms. Draude, these readers aren't on the doors proper. It'd be on the jamb outside around the edges, not on the door. And it's an electric strike is what . . . When you put the fob up, there's an electric strike that activates so the door opens and closes immediately afterwards.

A Member: — Like the ones outside here.

Mr. Shaw: — Yes. There's one on room 5 if you want to have a look.

The Chair: — Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks. I guess this is a question for the digitization of the archives. But, Patrick, really good to see you at the table as ever. I don't know if you want to do the two-step with Darcy here but . . . So the end product, what is envisioned? Is it something you could access from your laptop where you'd be able to cruise the entire digital archives of the Chamber, or what?

Mr. Putz: — Darcy can answer that question. Just before he answers that, I just want to remind you that part of the reason why we're doing this is that, as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, I have a statutory responsibility for the permanent record of the Assembly, and we've had . . . We've started . . . We're the third jurisdiction in Canada to have television broadcast of our proceedings. Those were done on a variety of formats which Darcy can speak to better than I can, but some of them are magnetic tape. And these things are fast disintegrating. They're at the Archives now, but we estimate there's about one play left on them. And those proceedings, those video proceedings are an important part of the historic record of this parliament, and it would be a shame if we didn't preserve them. So that's the whole purpose of doing this. And so I just wanted to preface it that way and let Darcy answer the more technical aspect of it.

Mr. Hislop: — Actually . . . Thank you for the question, Mr. McCall. You've actually touched on one of the really neat things about protecting these records, as Greg's alluded to the importance of them as historical records. But digitizing them in today's world also means we're going to be able to make those records much more accessible to researchers, historians in a much more readily accessible way.

Right now we have pneumatic cassettes, three-quarter inch tape cassettes sitting on a shelf at Sask Archives. Who can access it? They have to go through a long, difficult process, and given their age and condition there would be a great deal of hesitation about anybody trying to access that material. Going through the digitization process, we now have it in a digital format. Sask Archives Board has a trusted repository. They have a large

initiative about digitizing their information, and part of that is so people can access it online via the web.

And I know currently they have lots of historical photos that you can go and search. They're also working on other media, film, tape, and we would propose to do the same thing. Once we have this digitized, we can add that to our video stream collection that you can access via the Legislative Assembly where you can go back and look at the *Hansard* or the video stream of proceedings of yesterday. Once we have this digitized, we can put all those entries into that legislative calendar so you can search again by date and say, oh here's the video of that. So it's making it much, much more accessible for researchers down the road and for citizens everywhere.

Mr. McCall: — I guess the . . . Please go ahead, Greg.

Mr. Putz: — I was just going to say that even though the records are at the Archive, they permanently belong to the Assembly. So they belong to this institution, so it's important that we take this initiative because they're our records. I just want to say that because you might ask, well why isn't the Archives doing this? Well these are our records, and by agreement we make them accessible to the public along with all of our other sessional records. Everything you do has to be catalogued and put into the sessional record for each session, and then we eventually ship those to the Archives when they have room. Now they've had space issues. This will also help with their space issues by digitizing these things because there's a lot of foot space of shelving needed to store all these. And if you've seen the earlier ones, they're great huge massive cassette canisters that hold these magnetic recordings.

[19:30]

Mr. McCall: — I guess that leads to my next question, which is the 2,462 hours of audio reels. How far do those go back, to what year? Any idea?

Mr. Hislop: — I'm actually not certain how far back they go. That information obviously predates me by a bit, was provided by the provincial archives. And so we know that we have 547 reel-to-reel audiotapes that are pre-1983. I'm not sure what that 2,000-some-odd hours, how far back that will go.

Mr. Putz: — Now 1983 was the start of the Assembly broadcasting its proceedings, so they'd certainly go back before then. Some of what Darcy's talking about is that apparently the archives has for us — and I didn't know that until we initiated research on this — Saskatchewan was also the second jurisdiction in the world to do radio broadcast of our proceedings, and that started in 1944. New Zealand was the first. So we also have all of those reel-to-reel audio recordings that we'd like to do something with, to digitize those as well. Those are an important part of the historic record as well. So we were leaders in many of these things but we've sent them to the archives and they do have a limited shelf life, given the media of the day. And what we're proposing here is that once they're digitized in computer format, whatever way you look at this they can be converted so that you can watch them in the future or listen to them, as the case may be.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much.

The Chair: — Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Harrison: — Yes, along this same line. Darcy, say if you had 150,000 this year, how much more work would you be able to do preserving these materials? Or is there a reason why you're only asking for 20 and that you have to ramp up or could you, if you had more, be able to just start doing this stuff right now?

Mr. Hislop: — Certainly. When we put together this year's RARF proposals we did sort of an assessment of bang for the buck in what we thought were priorities that we would propose. And certainly it's up to the board's direction as to how you'd like to proceed. So with \$175,000 being allocated for the card access system and the air conditioner, which we felt again security of people and the building, protection of our IT infrastructure because it's mission-critical to the work that is done here, were the two highest items.

The next on the list was the protection of these historical archived documents. The total cost of the project we're anticipating is about 350,000. And so I'm never one to leave money on the table, so I'm perfectly willing to entertain additional amounts or varying amounts to help move that forward. I know the Archives Board again is quite interested in whether we get to proceed with that. I know they would be thrilled to see more money allocated to move that along. A great issue would be, wow, that's a large project and we have to allocate resources for it. But that would be a wonderful problem to work on.

Mr. Putz: — This is a scalable project and we're limited by the \$250,000 fund we have. And we've outlined some of the priorities and we haven't heard from David yet. He had made a suggestion about closed-captioning which we didn't put in here because we thought, that's your initiative and we'd like you to make the pitch for it. So that could come from here but there are some ongoing costs that might be associated with that. That doesn't exactly fit in with the RARF.

But I also remind the board that we had a library project that, even though we had the 250, you decided for that year to increase the breadth of the fund to get that project done sooner rather than later. So, as Darcy said, if you're putting the money on the table, we'll take it.

The Chair: — I think we need to also keep in mind the portable video system, that if we are going to start having committees outside of this legislature that we need to be able to record and broadcast those. So having that equipment available to us, I think, will be very important for the committee work. We do have some limited capabilities, but if we ended up with more than one committee we don't have the capabilities to support that.

Darcy and then Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Hislop: — I just wanted to say if we're looking at how much in allocations, certainly the archives digitization project is flexible with the amounts. For that matter the card access system is also scalable in that the 175,000 was for X number of doors that, you know, there are options to also incorporate then things like the portable video system. So pretty flexible, pretty

scalable. A few of these things are multi-year projects no matter how you look at them.

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Well I just want to thank Darcy. You've done some work on the closed-captioning. Wow, that's great. I was sort of anticipating this would come later and we'd take some time to make a pitch next year or whatever. I don't have any sense of what the numbers are that we're talking about here.

Mr. Hislop: — If you'd like, I'll quickly outline what I was able to ascertain regarding closed-captioning of broadcast proceedings. I put together a proposal that said we'd be looking for \$92,000 to implement closed-captioning for our broadcast proceedings. And that would be closed-captioning not only legislative proceedings in the Chamber but also committees.

The equipment costs for this are relatively low. I anticipate 11 to 15,000. I think I rounded it off at about 12,000. The larger issue is about an \$80,000 annual operating cost, and that is by having a transcriber service who takes the audio feed via the Internet or via dedicated phone line like a court stenographer, and pipes it back, and that gets then inserted on those closed caption lines on the TV. That is an ongoing operational cost and so that's really where we came into, is that part of RARF when we need a pretty good chunk of that on an ongoing operational basis.

In terms of a jurisdictional review, there are one, two, three, four, five, six other legislatures across Canada who do closed-captioning. And that ranges from all their proceedings to just, you know, sort of question period, budget, Throne Speech, special events. And so it sort of runs the gauntlet from there.

Mr. Forbes: — I can just say to the committee that this came up as Darcy said last, from a constituent who is deaf and had raised this as an issue. And I didn't know the answer and really thought about it, and thought we could do some research. So I think I'd like to take that information and maybe work with you, Darcy, further to refine that and also Hansard implications for that, and what other, you know, what people think about that kind of thing. I wasn't thinking it would be coming up tonight but appreciate the . . .

Mr. Putz: — You've raised this here with our rules committee review and also with the board directives, with the Speaker, so we anticipated you'd be . . .

The Chair: — And Mr. Forbes sent me a letter on this as well. So I have correspondence.

Mr. Putz: — So you've gone at this from a number of angles. I guess it wasn't hard for us to anticipate.

The Chair: — Any further questions, commentary either on RARF or any of the budget from the LAS?

Mr. McCall: — Do you think we could get you to say RARF again, Mr. Speaker?

The Chair: — RARF. Ms. Draude.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I will thank everybody because I do think you all do a terrific job and I think we can get everything they wanted if we cut all the Speaker's budget. It was just a suggestion.

An Hon. Member: — I second it.

The Chair: — If there are no further questions, then the committee will, if someone would move, we will move in camera for deliberations on this because there are a number of implications, including personnel implications, involved in the discussion. Ms. Eagles.

Ms. Eagles: — Before I make that motion, I would just like to thank all the Legislative Assembly staff for everything they do for us throughout the year. It's much appreciated. And maybe often we don't stop to say thank you, but I'm sure I speak on behalf of every member in saying that I appreciate you all very much.

Mr. Putz: — Can Lorraine have a pair of your shoes for the Doreen Eagles persona for the model parliament?

Ms. Eagles: — I'll arrange for that actually, yes.

Mr. Putz: — And maybe, Warren, a pair of moccasins you're not using?

The Chair: — Mr. Forbes.

Mr. Forbes: — Just to echo Ms. Eagles's comments too, we sure appreciate the work that you folks do and appreciate tonight's presentation. So thank you very much.

Ms. Eagles: — And I will make the motion.

The Chair: — Okay. Ms. Eagles has moved that we go in camera. A seconder, please? Ms. Draude. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The board continued in camera from 19:40 until 20:24.]

The Chair: — Okay, I will call the session back into order. And we will proceed with the discussion and the decision making on the number of items that we have here.

Item no. 3, which is the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The request by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner is for the amount of \$148,180. Is there someone who will make a motion to approve this budgetary request?

Mr. Harrison: — Okay.

The Chair: — Read that to move the motion.

Mr. Harrison: — I move, Mr. Speaker:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$148,180; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to

the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

I so move.

The Chair: — Seconded by Mr. McCall. Okay. It has been moved by Mr. Harrison, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote no. 057, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$148,180; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. Decision item no. 4, the budget and motion for the Office of the Ombudsman. Okay. The motion reads:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote no. 056, Ombudsman, be approved in the amount of \$3,594,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, 3,373,000; statutory, 221,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Somebody move that motion. Ms. Eagles. You can read it out.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman, be approved in the amount of \$3,594,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$3,373,000; statutory, \$221,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — Okay. Do we have a seconder for that motion? Mr. Forbes. Moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by Mr. Forbes:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 056, Ombudsman, be approved in the amount of \$3,594,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted \$3,373,000; statutory, \$221,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. Decision item no. 5, the budget for the Advocate for Children and Youth. And the motion will read:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 076, Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth, be approved in the amount of \$2,483,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$2,273,000; statutory, \$210,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Would somebody move that motion? Ms. Draude. Seconded? Mr. McCall. It has been moved by Ms. Draude, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 076, Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth, be approved in the amount of \$2,483,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$2,273,000; statutory, \$210,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[20:30]

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. Item no. 6, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The motion will read:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, be approved in the amount of \$3,800,000 statutory; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Someone move that motion, please? Mr. Harrison, seconded by Mr. McCall.

Mr. Harrison: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, be approved in the amount of \$3,800,000 statutory; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — It has been moved by Mr. Harrison, seconded by Mr. McCall:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 034, Chief Electoral Officer, be approved in the amount of \$3,800,000 statutory; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Item no. 7, budget of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The motion will read:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$1,116,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Somebody move that motion? Ms. Eagles. Seconded? Ms. Draude. Is there any discussion on this item?

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the 2013-14 estimates for vote 055, Information and Privacy Commissioner, be approved in the amount of \$1,116,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Harrison: — Yes thanks, Mr. Speaker. Just on this item, I know the commissioner had made a request for or had a number of alternative budgets that included, in a couple of instances, additional funding for FTEs. Currently the government is undertaking a review of privacy-related legislation. In light of that review, and without prejudging the outcome of that review, we feel that it would be more appropriate to make a decision with regard to additional financial or personnel resources in that office once that review has been concluded.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Harrison. Any further comments? If not, all in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Decision item no. 8, budget for the Legislative Assembly. Okay, the motion will read:

That the 2013-14 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$26,143,000; budgetary to be voted, \$9,468,000; statutory \$16,675,000. [And there are no capital acquisitions, I don't believe, on this.]

And further, that the 2013-14 estimated amortization expense for the Legislative Assembly be approved in the amount of \$114,000;

And further, that such estimates and estimated amortization expense be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

Would someone move that motion? Ms. Draude. Secunder? Mr. Forbes.

Hon. Ms. Draude: —

That the 2013-14 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$26,143,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$9,468,000; statutory, \$16,675,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you. Moved by Ms. Draude, seconded by Mr. Forbes:

That the 2013-14 expenditure estimates for vote 021, Legislative Assembly, be approved in the amount of \$26,143,000 as follows: budgetary to be voted, \$9,468,000; statutory, \$16,675,000; and further, that such estimates be forwarded to the Minister of Finance by the Chair.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. A further motion dealing with the Legislative Assembly, this is the refurbishment and restoration fund. Motion will read:

That for the 2013-2014 fiscal year the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be

approved: digital restoration, \$160,000; server room air coolant system, \$44,000; portable video system, \$35,000; matting protection for the Chamber, \$11,000, for a total of \$250,000.

Would somebody move that motion? Ms. Eagles. Secunder? Mr. Forbes.

Ms. Eagles: — All right. I move:

That for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved: RARF, digital restoration, \$160,000; server room air coolant system, \$44,000; portable video system, \$35,000; mat protection, Chamber, \$11,000, for a total of \$250,000.

The Chair: — Okay. It has been moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by Mr. Forbes:

That for the 2013-14 fiscal year, the following Refurbishment and Asset Replacement Fund projects be approved: digital restoration, \$160,000; server room air coolant system, \$44,000; portable video system, \$35,000; matting protection for the Chamber, \$11,000, for a total of \$250,000.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay. I believe that's it for the budgetary items that we have done. We have one item of business left and that is item no. 9, other business. And that is the letter from Mr. Forbes dealing with the potential for closed captioning for the legislative system. So, Mr. Forbes, you have the floor.

Mr. Forbes: — Well thank you very much, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this. And we've received some information tonight, I think that I wasn't anticipating we'd get it as quickly as we did. And that's great, but I don't have a suggestion about where we go with this at this time. I wouldn't mind talking to the staff about it and getting some more details.

It is for next budget cycle, so we do have some time. It's not for this budget. And then we could see what's appropriate with the board in terms of where to take it. So if it's all right with the committee, I'd like to review the information and speak further with the Speaker about where we might go with this.

The Chair: — That's acceptable. That's acceptable with me as well, and if need be we can take it to the steering committee. And you can make your pitch there as well with the further information that you will acquire from the staff of the LAS that know about these things.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you.

The Chair: — Okay. Is there any other issue, item to come before the committee? If not, would someone move an adjournment?

Mr. Harrison: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Harrison. All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. This committee stands adjourned.

[The board adjourned at 20:43.]