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Government Services**

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Digital Government and Service NL

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Honourable Scott Reid, MHA

GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Digital Government and Service NL

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Appearing:

Service NL and Public Procurement Agency

Hon. Sara Stoodley, MHA, Minister

Alan Doody, Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Government & Services

Dave Heffernan, Deputy Minister

Angelica Hill, Executive Assistant

Scott Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister, Regulatory Affairs

Melony O'Neill, Director of Communications

Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller

Also Present

Hon. Derek Bennett, MHA, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities

Jordan Brown, MHA

Hon. Gerry Byrne, MHA, Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour

Hon. Andrew Parsons, MHA, Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology

Kevin Parson, MHA

Hon. Brian Warr, MHA, Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development

Laurie Bonia, Official Opposition Office

Steven Kent, Researcher, Third Party Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Derek Bennett, MHA for Lewisporte - Twillingate, substitutes for Pam Parsons, MHA for Harbour Main - Port de Grave.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Jordan Brown, MHA for Labrador West, substitutes for Alison Coffin, MHA for St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Gerry Byrne, MHA for Corner Brook, substitutes for Christopher Mitchelmore, MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Kevin Parsons, MHA for Cape St. Francis, substitutes for Loyola O'Driscoll, MHA for Ferryland.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Andrew Parsons, MHA for Burgeo - La Poile, substitutes for Perry Trimper, MHA for Lake Melville.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Brian Warr, MHA for Baie Verte - Green Bay, substitutes for Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's.

The Committee met at 6:05 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Haley): Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the Committee meeting for the Estimates for the Department of Digital Government and Service NL.

Before we begin I just want to remind you that prior to answering any questions I would like for you to identify yourself. That would make it easier for the media centre to pick up where you're sitting. As well, I just want to remind you that when you're out and about around the Chamber just ensure that you wear your mask.

We have three hours for this lot of Estimates and that will take us up to 9 o'clock. To ensure that you get your questions asked and your answers, I suggest that you keep your preamble shorter.

Now I will start with the introductions, beginning with the minister, and your staff can introduce themselves as well.

MS. STOODLEY: Hi, Sarah Stoodley, Minister of Digital Government and Service NL and

MHA for the economic powerhouse District of Mount Scio.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Hello, I'm Dave Heffernan, Deputy Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

MR. DOODY: Alan Doody, Assistant Deputy Minister of Digital Government and Services Branch.

MR. JONES: Hi, Scott Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister, Regulatory Affairs Branch, Digital Government and Service NL.

MS. O'NEILL: I'm Melony O'Neill, Director of Communications for Digital Government and Service NL.

MS. HILL: Angelica Hill, Executive Assistant to the minister.

MS. STEELE: Bonnie Steele, Departmental Comptroller.

CHAIR: We'll now take it over to the Committee Members to introduce themselves.

MR. K. PARSONS: I'm Kevin Parsons, MHA for the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

MR. BROWN: I'm Jordan Brown, the MHA for the very snow-clad District of Labrador West.

MR. BYRNE: I'm Gerry Byrne, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the beautiful and historic District of Corner Brook.

MR. BENNETT: Derek Bennett, MHA for the beautiful, historic and scenic District of Lewisporte - Twillingate.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's a lot of pressure.

Andrew Parsons, MHA for the plain old District of Burgeo - La Poile.

MR. WARR: Brian Warr, MHA for the mining capital of Newfoundland and Labrador, Baie Verte - Green Bay.

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'll now pass it over to the minister for some opening remarks.

MS. STOODLEY: What about the researchers? Did they introduce themselves?

CHAIR: Oh, the research staff.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Okay, and the research staff to be introduced as well.

MR. KENT: Steven Kent, Researcher for the NDP caucus.

MS. BONIA: Laurie Bonia, the Official Opposition office.

CHAIR: Now I'll pass it over to the minister for her opening remarks.

MS. STOODLEY: Thank you.

Good evening. Thank you, everyone, for joining us.

This is my first Estimates as minister. I'm Minister of Digital Government and Service NL. I'm very pleased to be here this evening.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Opposition and my colleagues for joining us also this evening. I would like to thank the staff of Digital Government and Service NL for their preparation for today's session, and all the staff who work behind the scenes.

Now, I don't have Alexander with me, but he's in the caucus room with my husband. If he needs me, I might have to bring him in and feed him, but we'll see. Hopefully it will be as least disruptive as possible.

Before we get started, I just want to highlight a few points regarding our Estimates. Digital Government and Service NL has a net budget of over \$24 million. We do bring in a lot of revenue, however, so in addition to the over \$10 million in revenue identified in the Estimates, we also bring in over \$131 million in general revenue, which does not show up on the department Estimates but shows up in general revenue. We certainly make a lot more than

what we spend as a department, which I'm very pleased of. In 2020 and 2021, Digital Government and Service NL will generate this revenue through issuing fees, Registry of Deeds and, most specifically, transactions at Motor Registration Division.

My department is responsible for the majority of licensing, inspections and regulatory functions within government and is the primary access point for people who need those services. When I first got the portfolio, every day I would learn about a new thing that Digital Government and Service NL was responsible for. The former deputy minister referred to it as the lint trap of the provincial government. So when in doubt, it's Digital Government and Service NL. These range from electrical inspections, to restaurant inspections, to the production of Vital Statistics records and the registration of deeds.

Within the Motor Registration Division, the department completes more than a million transactions per year. During the current public health emergency, there has been a significant uptake in the use of government's online services, as you've heard me talk about before. More than 98 per cent of the vehicle renewals have been conducted online, compared to 75 per cent during the same period in 2019. We've had a significant uptake in the number of driver's licence renewals conducted online, with over 92 per cent of drivers renewing online, an increase of 47 per cent over last year.

We also are in charge of Occupational Health and Safety, which is responsible for health and safety inspections and enforcement programs. The Occupational Health and Safety Division establishes through legislation the codes, standards and practices for safe and healthy working conditions. The costs associated with Occupational Health and Safety are recovered from WorkplaceNL. So there's offsetting revenue for all related expenditures and those come from fees that employers pay WorkplaceNL.

Additionally, Vital Statistics entered into an agreement with the federal government to pilot an electronic death notification project. This is an 18-month project costing \$400,000 in 2020 and 2021 and \$235,000 in 2021-2022. The project is a hundred per cent funded by the

federal government with full funding received upfront in 2019-2020.

If you've attended some Estimates already I'm sure you're aware of this, but the budget also includes a net amount of \$846,000 for a 27th pay period in 2020-2021. These additional salary expenses total over a million dollars, less the salary recovery of \$184,200 for the Occupational Health and Safety Division. We also have a two-year attrition target of \$164,600, which is \$82,500 in 2020-2021 and \$82,100 by 2021-2022, which is equivalent to three PCNs. The department has submitted a plan to achieve this target and we're confident in doing so.

Hopefully, the Members tonight will have witnessed first-hand, at some point, the hard work of a least one of the divisions of Digital Government and Service NL. I'm sure we can all appreciate the commitment of staff to serving the people across the province. We particularly saw this during COVID-19. I know there have been some hiccups, but the staff at the Motor Registration Division had to completely change the way that they worked and delivered services within a very short period of time. We're still working out some of the kinks, but it should all be resolved soon.

I would also like to thank the Queen's Printer, the staff there, who stayed up all night printing the budget documents for us as they do every year.

Also, I would like to highlight the Office of French Services, which is also a part of this department and provides French language training and translation services to government. This office also provided support to me, as the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs. We have a translation line item which we'll get to. The more I speak in French the more that line item goes up and the more translation we need. We'll see how that goes this year.

In addition, through the Office of the Queen's Printer, the department provides printing services for the provincial government, the general public and, I've also learned, Eastern Health. So huge printing is undertaken by the Queen's Printer.

I also want to make sure we make the most of our time this evening, so I will turn things back over to the Chair and the Committee so we can get started.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you.

We'll move along now and ask the Clerk to call the subhead.

CLERK (Hawley George): For the Estimates of Digital Government and Service NL, 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Minister.

It's indeed a pleasure to be here this evening and it's so nice to see all the Cabinet ministers on this Committee. It's the first time I've ever been to one of these where I have all Cabinet ministers behind me. So pay attention to what I have to ask; you might learn something. Anyway, it's nice to have them all here this evening. It's nice to see everybody here.

Minister, before I start, I had the opportunity to be the critic for Service NL for four years and I always said that Service NL got you from the time you're born to the time you die and everything else in between. It's a very interesting department and I'm sure the general public doesn't realize the amount of things that go through the department for inspections, birth certificates, death certificates and everything else that goes in between.

I'll start off first, Minister, by asking if you could provide a copy of your briefing book when we're finished.

MS. STOODLEY: Absolutely, yes.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

I know in August that the department was realigned. Can you explain some of the changes that occurred?

MS. STOODLEY: Sure, thank you very much.

I'll jump in, but, my team, feel free to elaborate.

Obviously, we have a new name: Department of Digital Government and Service NL. The deputy minister's responsibilities have been slightly realigned, so I'll let them speak to that. But overall we haven't made significant changes to the department; we haven't moved any of the budget things around.

I'll pass it over, sure, Dave.

MR. HEFFERNAN: As the minister mentioned, I have a dual role now. As deputy minister for Digital Government and Service NL, I also have the pleasure of maintaining my old role, which was chief information officer, as well. The intention behind that is to align the IT functions, I guess, which also had the Digital Government portfolio prior to the changes in August, which was heavily invested in technology. Technology is the main driver for the Digital Government initiative and it made sense to align those.

In terms of the activities and where they are, the digital team is still a part of OCIO. But we're looking at now what makes more sense to come over, because it's so IT focused at the moment. There are aspects of digital government that the Digital Government and Service NL Department will do, but there are still aspects from an IT perspective that are in the Office of the CIO, so we're still teasing out what needs to be done in terms of bringing those together.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, all right.

I know you mentioned, Minister, about your attrition plan and how you follow it. Have there been any changes from last year to this year?

MS. STOODLEY: From the attrition plan?

MR. K. PARSONS: The attrition plan, yes.

MS. STOODLEY: I believe we're on target for the plan, but I don't know if anyone else wants to ...

MS. STEELE: Yes, the attrition plan for last fiscal was met and there's a new target in place for this fiscal and next. The department has submitted their plan earlier this summer to meet that requirement.

MR. K. PARSONS: Could you give me the current list of the number of employees in the department and break them down as permanent, seasonal, temporary and contractual?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The total number of employees is 493. Contractual positions are five; permanent, 427; seasonal, three; temporary, 40; Opening Doors positions, 11; and the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corp is seven. Filled are 374 and vacant are 101.

MR. K. PARSONS: How many retirements have occurred in the department and were these positions filled?

MR. HEFFERNAN: There were 15 retirements. I think that's for 2021; I'll have to ask our comptroller to confirm that. I don't know how many of those were actually filled. Bonnie?

MS. STEELE: The retirements were 15. That was at the end of '19-'20. I don't have the number of the ones that were filled, but we can provide that.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Were there any layoffs that occurred in the department last year or any new hires in the past year?

MR. HEFFERNAN: There were no layoffs. There were six new hires. There were 18 resignations, 12 end of employment, so I guess people that decided to leave the organization, but no layoffs.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

How many vacancies are now in the department that are not filled?

MR. HEFFERNAN: A hundred and one.

MR. K. PARSONS: Pardon?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Sorry, 101 vacancies.

MR. K. PARSONS: Have there been any positions that have been eliminated?

MR. HEFFERNAN: No.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

The impact of COVID to the department and how has this impacted the departmental spending and your budget?

MS. STOODLEY: I would say that COVID had a significant impact on our department, although the teams have done an incredible job of not letting the work stop. Everything seems to have continued. I'll let Alan elaborate, but one of the most significant – obviously, because we're customer-facing or resident-facing, so the way that we interacted with the general public completely changed in a very short period of time.

In Motor Registration Division, obviously, we previously had kind of walk-in model and we had to completely change that. We're still working on fine tuning. Obviously, with social distancing, people working from home, a lot of the field inspectors worked from home and not from the office. I understand that, of all of our staff, only eight were not able to work throughout the whole COVID-19.

I don't know if I can pass it over to the team to elaborate on some of that, or anything else that we should mention.

MR. DOODY: During COVID, as the minister had stated, we continued operations, although the only operations that we stopped from an in-person service perspective were those – we did stop in-person service for things like coming to get your photograph taken or if you had to actually come in and provide material, like to replace your licence plate. Those are the types of services that we didn't conduct initially during COVID. The staff continued to work. We were using other means such as email, drop boxes and things of that nature in our offices to allow for citizens to drop off their material for processing. Staff continued to work throughout. Driver examinations was one other service that we ceased because the driver examiners did sit in the car with the member of the public.

That was how we started initially. Our periodic inspections on the regulatory side, we also had stopped them and were responding more to COVID-related types of inspections related to environmental health and also on occupational

health and safety. During that time frame throughout, as you can map the path through COVID, from an occupational health and safety perspective we worked with every industry as they came back online. It started first with the construction industry. We were working with stakeholders, such as WorkplaceNL, and with those industry groups to ensure that they were able to operate safely.

As we started to move back through the different levels, as set by the chief medical officer of Health, we also started to reintroduce other services. As the minister said, we went back to in-person services by appointment into the offices, and that was for both the safety of our staff but also the safety of the public, to ensure that, how people came to the office, it was controlled. We reintroduced periodic inspections.

Back to your original question about impact on budget, because originally, where we had stopped periodic inspections, we had some savings on our transportation costs and things of that nature as we weren't out in full force at the time. Now we've resumed back to normal operations and so we did see some savings from a Transportation and Communications perspective in relation to that.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Did your department receive any money from the COVID fund?

MS. STOODLEY: Not to my knowledge. No.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Did your department receive any money from the contingency fund? No?

MS. STOODLEY: Not to my knowledge. No.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Well, seeing as I only have 38 seconds left, I won't start until the next one. But I'll let Jordan go if he wants to.

CHAIR: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Thank you.

I guess we will start on section 1.2.01, Executive Support. We noticed a significant increase in Salaries in that section compared to the actuals. I know we're dealing with the extra pay period, but this seems significantly more than the extra pay period. Is there any reasoning for that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: We're on 1.2.01, is that right?

MR. BROWN: 1.2.01, Executive Support.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Okay. The increase there was a reflection of the 27th pay period and regular step increases, for a total of \$129,400.

MR. BROWN: Okay, there's a step increase there, too. Okay, perfect. Thank you.

I notice in Employee Benefits, in the same section, it's double. What's the reasoning for that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: There was an increased cost there for workers' health and safety or, I guess, WorkplaceNL charges, and there was an overage there of a one-time lump-sum payment that was needed to be made.

MR. BROWN: All right, thank you.

MR. HEFFERNAN: \$49,000, I believe.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

Under Revenue there for that, what is the source of this revenue here under Executive Support?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Revenue here is tied to Occupational Health and Safety. All the Occupational Health and Safety costs are fully recovered from WorkplaceNL and they're all booked in this activity.

MR. BROWN: Okay, perfect.

Section 1.2.02, French Language Services. I know it was a part of the mandate to build government capacity in the French language services, but we noticed that there doesn't seem to be any increase in costs or anything like that. Is this project complete or is it just a very minute, ongoing thing?

MR. HEFFERNAN: It's a core program of the department. There are four staff, I believe, that are dedicated to translation services and then they deal with contract resources and the federal government when they need additional resources for that. But there's no expansion of the team. It's a core team that's there to –

MR. BROWN: Okay. I know because I noticed the language used was to build this service. We're looking at this as a very steady thing so we don't see any building per se. I was just curious if there was any increases to that.

MS. STOODLEY: Sure. One of the things that I am hoping we can focus on, I'm planning to focus on, is looking at the online services and how we can have more online services in French, because it's certainly more cost effective. If we built something in English you can translate it and have it in French. I would say the area of biggest opportunity for expanding our French services is the online services area, which wouldn't necessarily come in this budget area.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

I noticed under sources of revenue, there was a significant increase in revenue compared to what's budgeted. What was the increased revenue received?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The revenue here, I think, it was increased as a result of receiving a partial payment from 2018-19 in 2019-20. I think the payments come out at a certain time of the year and in this case it was received late and came into the new year funding.

MR. BROWN: Okay, so actually it's just recovered cost from a previous year.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

The budgeted revenue here in this current one right now, that's the core funding from the federal government for French Language Services?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes, that's correct.

MR. BROWN: Okay, all right.

Section 1.2.03, Administrative Support. Is this a new subdivision within the department? Because there's nothing budgeted last year but we're getting a new source of revenue and new sources of (inaudible).

MR. HEFFERNAN: This is a result of the death notification project, which the minister referenced in her opening remarks. This is a project that's under way with the federal government. They're fully funding the project and a portion of that funding has come this year. However, it's a capital project so we didn't have an active capital account for this to go into. This was an old account that was deactivated, I think, and Bonnie can speak to this better, but it was reactivated in order for us to put the federal funding into it for this project.

MR. BROWN: Okay. This is a hundred per cent funded federally?

MS. STEELE: Yes, this is a new project. It's a two-year project, so part of the funding is expensed here this year and recovering the same for the revenue. Then next year there will be another allocation of \$235,000 that will flow through with the related revenue as well. After that you will see that the budget for the Administrative Support will go back to zero.

MR. BROWN: Okay, perfect.

That's all the questions I have for this section, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr. Parsons, do you have more questions?

MR. K. PARSONS: Yes.

I just want to go back to one of the questions I asked a little earlier about the vacant positions. You said there were 101. Is there any intention to fill those positions?

MR. HEFFERNAN: I can't speak to all 101, but I think we're actively trying to fill a lot of those positions. I don't know the exact number off hand. Just the process of trying to fill positions can be difficult sometimes, so we don't

get a chance to fill all of them. The department has a significant pressure on salaries, so a lot of the times, even though we have the vacant positions, we need to manage the salary plan so that we don't go over on our salaries, just because of the deficit on our salary.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, all right. I'll have a question later on in a department that you will probably have to answer a similar question to that.

I just want to go to section 1.1.01, under Transportation and Communications. I went through this the other night, the last time I did the Estimates with Fisheries, and I was very interested in this department because of the current situation we find ourselves in. Last year it was budgeted and this year the budget is a little higher, but we spent less. I'm wondering why we're a little bit higher this year.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Sorry, can I get you to confirm—?

MR. K. PARSONS: This is Transportation and Communications under section 1.1.01 in the Minister's Office.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Oh, sorry.

MR. K. PARSONS: I just want you to explain the line there for me.

MR. HEFFERNAN: The increase of \$1,100 there is just the anticipated increase for out-of-province travel for FPT meetings. Of course, this was developed prior to COVID, so there was an anticipation that there was going to be some extra travel.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, so all of these were done prior to COVID. Okay, all right.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes, this was developed, I think, in November of last year.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

MS. STOODLEY: We don't plan on doing any extra travel now.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, I don't think you're going to send too many people on conferences.

MS. STOODLEY: Oh, sorry. Just to clarify, because I know my light wasn't on, sorry. I said we don't plan on doing any extra travel now moving forward.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, all right.

Just a final question in this section. I want to go to section 1.2.03 and Purchased Services. What's included in this \$320,000?

MR. HEFFERNAN: This \$320,000 is the federal funding that's coming to the Government of Newfoundland, to Digital Government and Service NL for the death registration project. It's a project to have automatic notification of death from funeral homes and hospitals, and to make it simpler for families through a very difficult time in their life.

The actual funding here is for an IT project that results in a capital asset that the department will own. It's for establishing that electronic notification system.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay. Thank you.

I think that's it on this section.

CHAIR: Okay, we'll call the vote for this section.

Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion has been carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.02 through 1.2.03 carried.

CHAIR: I now ask the Clerk to call the next subhead.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.2.03 inclusive.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, will I continue?

CHAIR: Yes.

MR. K. PARSONS: In section 2.1.01, what is the current caseload for the Residential Tenancies?

MR. HEFFERNAN: I'll have to defer to my ADM on Regulatory Affairs, Scott Jones.

MR. JONES: This year, the average caseload for Residential Tenancies has decreased compared to last year. For argument's sake, for September just gone there were 76 and in preceding years it averaged approximately 100. There has been an overall decrease this year, likely due to COVID, but also as a result of the legislative amendment made earlier in the spring to allow for 30 days' notice for a tenant to have to vacate a premise in response to COVID.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

There's an increase there in the Salaries. Is that ...?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The increase in actuals there of \$24,525 was a result of some temporary positions that needed to be extended to meet some of the demands.

MR. K. PARSONS: The Transportation and Communications is because it was budgeted last year. Okay.

Purchased Services: Can you explain what's included here? There's a variance of what was actually spent and what's budgeted.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Purchased Services, the variance here in actuals, is that the one you're asking?

MR. K. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. HEFFERNAN: The variance in actuals here was a result of lower than anticipated training and development costs as a result of completion of an adjudication certification program by two of our Residential Tenancies adjudicators.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Under revenue, what's included here?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The revenue here is from Residential Tenancies hearing fees.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Section 2.1.02, again, there is a decrease in the Salaries this year from what was budgeted last year by quite a bit. Can you explain what happened here?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The decrease here was a result of several vacancies. We had two managers, two investigators, two administrative staff and a policy position vacant at various times throughout the year.

MR. K. PARSONS: So their budget for this year is not included? It's just that they're gone and ...?

MR. HEFFERNAN: No, we have their budget included for this year. We know that we won't get them filled for the whole year so we have the budget adjusted to make sure that it accounts for not having them full-time for a 12-month period.

MR. K. PARSONS: We'll go to Purchased Services again. Can you tell us what's included here and why the variance?

MR. HEFFERNAN: In Purchased Services here, a lot of that is equated to Moneris fees. The variance from actuals was a result of lower than anticipated annual membership fees for our Canadian Securities Administrators membership.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Under this section, the funeral act review, is this currently under way?

MR. HEFFERNAN: I'll have to defer to my ADM.

MR. JONES: The Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act actually comes under Consumer Affairs. We haven't initiated a review yet, but we are exploring internally the steps to take to proceed with a review.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Is this the section also that has the locked-in pensions?

MR. JONES: No, pensions are under the pensions standards section.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, all right.

Let's go to section 2.1.03, Pensions Benefit Standards. Can you update me on what might be happening? Is there any movement on this?

MS. STOODLEY: The consultations have closed. We've received a package from engageNL of all the feedback. I believe the teams are currently reviewing it and we'll be making recommendations – but in the last week or two. We just got the package from engageNL, so we will be going through all the results now.

MR. K. PARSONS: When did you say you were expecting to hear anything coming through? How long?

MS. STOODLEY: Potentially in the winter. We haven't seen the results yet so it's probably too early to say.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

MS. STOODLEY: We did have over 130 submissions in the consultations so it was very popular.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Again, I'm just looking at the Salaries here with the budget and actuals. There's a good bit of variance there of \$118,000. Can you explain that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The variance here was the director responsible for this division was assigned to another position, but continued to also perform in this division. So we didn't have to fill that position.

MR. K. PARSONS: In section 2.1.04, under Registry of Deeds there, what percentage of the Registry of Deeds digitalization has been completed?

MR. JONES: The deeds that are registered can be accessed back to as far as 1982 online. We're

still working through trying to continue with digitalization beyond that, earlier than that as well.

MR. K. PARSONS: Again on the Salaries line there, can you explain the steady decrease in Salaries?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The decrease or the variance on actuals there was just a reflection of vacancies throughout the year. For the budget for 2021, there are still some vacancies there in the division that are being recruited, but the budgeted salary amount reflects that so it's just dropped down.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Purchased Services: What's included here and explain the variance, please.

MR. HEFFERNAN: The variance here in actuals was a result of lower Moneris merchant fees. There was a decrease there for March.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

That's it for questions for me on this section.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Under 2.2.03, Printing and Micrographic Services, there was an increase in Purchased Services. What were they for?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The increase here in the variance in actuals was a result of increased copier charges.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

I notice there's an increase going into Estimates. Is that a reflection of the increased cost of the service?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Vital Statistics, I want to go back to this one – 2.2.02, same thing, Purchased Services is estimating to be doubled in the coming budget. What's the reasoning for that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Sorry, was that 2.2.01 or ...?

MR. BROWN: Yeah, sorry to make you go back.

MR. HEFFERNAN: 01, Vital Statistics?

MR. BROWN: Yeah, 01, Vital Statistics Registry.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Okay, sorry. What was your question again?

MR. BROWN: The doubling of the budget for Purchased Services.

MR. HEFFERNAN: There's an \$80,500 increase here which reflects current costs associated with the death registration project.

MR. BROWN: Okay, so this is tied in with the project from the federal government?

MR. HEFFERNAN: That's correct, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. HEFFERNAN: There's an increase here of \$80,500 for this particular area.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Under revenue for this, it was budgeted last year for \$50,000 and \$50,000 from the federal and provincial governments. We see \$716,000 there for this under provincial revenue, but we didn't see an increase in the federal, we saw a decrease in federal. What's the reasoning behind all this?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The increase in actuals there was a result of an increase of \$666,951, which reflected the federal funding that came in for the joint death registration project of \$635,000, plus \$31,950 there in revenue realized for records transferred as part of the National Routing System, which is a way they share vital statistics information across the country.

MR. BROWN: Okay and then under the provincial government I guess we didn't get an uptick in people purchasing records? Because under provincial it was only \$20,000 compared

to budgeted for \$50,000. Is that a reasoning, that people are not purchasing services?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The variance there is a result of lower demand for what's called express delivery of certificates from Vital Statistics, so there was a lower demand for getting something in a faster way.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

I noticed that there's an increase from the federal government budgeted. Is this still part of the death notification project?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes, that's correct. There's \$80,000 there for 2020-21 as a result of the death registration project.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

The Queen's Printer: I noticed that the revenue was significantly down than what was budgeted in the actuals. What was the reasoning for that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Reduction in revenues here due to a greater reliance on digital and a noticeable decrease in products being purchased by the university, so things like books and copies of legislation.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MS. STOODLEY: One thing I've learned on this front, I didn't realize people bought legislation. That's a thing that people do. Universities buy pieces of legislation. This is like the bookstore of the government.

MR. BROWN: Yes, because everything we have it usually says Queen's Printer on it.

MS. STOODLEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Yes, it's a fair assertion there.

Those are all my questions for this section.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Are you done?

Okay, we'll call the vote for this particular section.

Shall 2.1.01 to 2.2.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion has been carried.

On motion, subheads 2.2.01 through 2.2.03 carried.

CHAIR: I ask the Clerk now to call the next subhead.

CLERK: 3.1.01 to 3.4.02 inclusive.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, Motor Registration: I know this summer there was a lot of – all you had to do was listen to *Open Line*, basically, and you'd hear a lot of complaints about Motor Registration. I know there were some glitches that were in there. Have they all been addressed?

MR. DOODY: We've learned through the uptake of online services that citizens need some assistance navigating that. Most of the issues that we were hearing from citizens was being able to access the telephone service. The telephone service that's there now and has been in place, the software is very limiting and restrictive. We are actually in the process of upgrading that and allocating more resources to help citizens navigate and ensure they can get in. That complaint from citizens is in the process of being rectified.

Originally, our big pressure point when we first returned to service was written testing for the youth who want to get their driver's licence. We have been working through that backlog and we're now up to date on written testing. You can get an appointment in Mount Pearl for a written test tomorrow. We're also working to put that service in additional formats so people will be able to take that test online as well if they choose to. We've been working through those issues as they come up and we're dealing with every client complaint as it arises.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

A lot of the complaints were due to getting proper appointments in the system. Is that working properly now, too?

MR. DOODY: Yes, it is. The appointment booking tool is working quite well. Again, related to that was back to that teleservice piece, so citizens who were having trouble navigating the booking tool. They were reaching back in to government through the teleservices network and, of course, that is where they were running into problems.

The booking tool is working perfectly. Originally, that was only in the Mount Pearl centre. We have since rolled it out across the province, so citizens are using that tool in all 11 offices provincially.

MR. K. PARSONS: Most of the complaints that I received as MHA – as you know we get lots of calls and stuff like that – was to do with wait times; you'd call and it could be a month before you could get an appointment.

Is that the way it is today? Do you have time frames now of what the wait times actually are?

MR. DOODY: Yes, so I didn't check it today but as early as the beginning of this week you're about a seven-day wait to get in to Mount Pearl. In most other offices across the province it's within one or two days.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

I also received – I hate to tell you about all the complaints.

MR. DOODY: No, no, that's fine.

MR. K. PARSONS: I'm sure you heard them all before anyway. I did receive some complaints about people that did access the service. They said there were only two booths open or three booths open. Is there a problem there with the amount of people we have working there to deploy? Is that the reason why the wait times are so high?

MR. DOODY: No, as we had said earlier in the beginning, we were still providing services throughout COVID through other service channels that we didn't previously use, so email

and things of that nature. We also had a set-up where people could go online and pay for a vehicle transfer, but they still had to send us in documents.

Originally, when we went back to in-person services, we still were trying to work through the backlog of that service, the service that we had provided through COVID. As a result, as we started to redistribute resources, we had taken some off other – so we had limited how many people could have counter appointments initially. But now, daily in Mount Pearl, and it's mostly due to spacing, half of the wickets are open. That's for the safety, that's to maintain social distancing requirements for staff and also for the public that are coming in.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

One of the things I know we've asked lots of times about in the House and always a suggestion when we come up to speak about anything when it comes to Service NL, it's about plate to owner. I'm just wondering: Where are you to with this and will we be seeing this plate-to-owner system in place?

MR. DOODY: We are actively working with our Atlantic counterparts on potentially using a system that's in existence for them. We were working with them prior to COVID and that was moving quite well, but of course with COVID things got delayed. All of our counterparts in the Atlantic provinces had taken a different service philosophy than ours, so they weren't providing a lot of services throughout the beginning of COVID. They are now trying to get their services back online. Although we haven't determined what type of solution we are going to use, we're still exploring our options. But we are actively pursuing a solution.

MR. K. PARSONS: Because I think that's something that's been on the go, as you know, for a very long time.

Under the highway enforcement officers, how many highway enforcement officers are there currently?

MR. DOODY: There are currently 32 highway enforcement officers.

MR. K. PARSONS: Are there any vacancies?

MR. DOODY: Yes, there are 10 vacancies.

MR. K. PARSONS: Are you planning to hire any more or is it just –?

MR. DOODY: Yes, recruiting is always ongoing. Highway enforcement officers, in particular, especially in rural communities, we struggle to find the right skill set, but we are actively recruiting.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

I'm not sure where it's to now, but I know that there at the weigh station there were some issues there and that it was shut down for a while. Is everything up and normal? The one there in Foxtrap.

MR. DOODY: Foxtrap?

MR. K. PARSONS: Yes.

MR. DOODY: Yes, normally some refurbishment takes place at those scales periodically from time to time. This year a vehicle had run into a pole at the scale, so it was closed for safety reasons until that had been rectified.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay. And everything is okay there now and they're working okay?

MR. DOODY: Everything is okay there, yes.

MR. K. PARSONS: All right.

Can you update us on the highway cameras and where are they to?

MR. DOODY: Digital Government and Service NL, of course, is responsible for the *Highway Traffic Act* and we had passed legislation to enable the use of image capture systems. We are currently drafting regulations to allow them to be used.

Digital Government and Service NL wouldn't be responsible for the procurement or the deployment of those systems. They would fall to other entities, such as law enforcement agencies; Department of Education, for example, if they

were going to install them on school buses; and Transportation and Infrastructure, if they were going to deploy them in construction zones.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Outstanding fees for unlicensed, unregistered and uninsured vehicles, do you have any idea what the amount that currently exists for outstanding fees are for unlicensed vehicles?

MR. DOODY: From an outstanding fines perspective, I don't have that number. That's something that would be tracked by the Fines Administration Division of Justice and Public Safety. From outstanding fees, we would only be able to look at the difference between how many vehicles are registered year to year, and there has been no significant change in the amount of vehicles being registered annually.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

I know last year there was a plan for a pilot project to set up a system where people can contribute time and service in lieu of money. What's happened with this plan? Or did anything happen?

MR. DOODY: Again, that initiative actually was being led by the Department of Justice and Public Safety, so they would have to respond to that.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Also, there's an ATV review on the go. When can we expect to see results for the motorized vehicle legislation to be renewed?

MR. DOODY: We had commenced the review some time ago and we originally were focused on just changing legislation to make helmets mandatory for snowmobiles, because they're not. While that consultation was ongoing, we had received a report from the Child and Youth Advocate and they had asked for an extensive review of the legislation. That has been completed and consultations are done. There were extensive consultations done as well. So we are just moving that through the Cabinet process now.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

I have a question now that came up only last week, there was a news report that came out about the licensing and inspection of trailers. Can you explain? I was wondering if it was all trailers, utility trailers or is it just trailers that are, say, homemade trailers?

MR. DOODY: We have implemented new inspection criteria for motorcycles and for light trailers under the official inspection station manual, so we updated the manual to have criteria there. Most trailers and motorcycles are not – there's no mandatory inspection program for those like there is for vehicles when you sell them and that type of thing. It's really just for on-demand inspections. So the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, or law enforcement or someone who is designated as a peace officer, under the *Highway Traffic Act*, can order an inspection if they deem the vehicle to be unsafe or they feel there's something mechanical.

The main reason for doing that is that we've learned through doing motorcycle blitzes, with combined highway enforcement officers and law enforcement, that we may have the technical expertise in our highway enforcement officers that our law enforcement officials may not have. So they really are limited on enforcement when there's infractions related to motorcycles. For vehicles, if they think it's unsafe, they can already order an inspection. This was really to put another tool in the tool box for them to be able to send a light trailer or a vehicle for inspection if they deemed it to be unsafe or if there was something mechanically (inaudible) –

MR. K. PARSONS: I think a lot of people thought there was going to be an inspection for all trailers, to tell you the truth.

MR. DOODY: Yeah, that was actually –

CHAIR: Mr. Brown.

MR. DOODY: Sorry.

MR. K. PARSONS: (Inaudible), okay.

MR. BROWN: Thank you.

Most of the questions that I was going to ask, the hon. Member there also asked.

We did hear that access to the uninsured fund was removed from owners to combat uninsured vehicles. What happened there with the uninsured vehicle fund?

MR. HEFFERNAN: I'll ask my ADM to correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that was a part of the insurance review and it was removed as a part of that because I think uninsured drivers had access to that fund and a part of the changes was to remove their access to that fund in case of –

MR. BROWN: Yeah, okay. Just for clarity.

I know the department was mandated to take steps to consolidate services to increase efficiency and savings. Has this ever happened, or it is currently ongoing or is it something that's no longer ongoing?

MS. STOODLEY: I know that's a part of my current mandate letter that we are just getting started on. We don't have anything ...

MR. BROWN: Okay, so that's a new thing.

MS. STOODLEY: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MS. STOODLEY: Unless anyone else wants to add anything? Okay, thank you.

MR. BROWN: I know there was another thing, too. It was the *Radiation Health and Safety Act*. A review of the legislation was supposed to be undertaken. Is that currently coming up very soon or is it still in the research phase?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The consultations and all of the work has been done and we're going through the Cabinet process now. I think that will be feasible in the very near future.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Another thing, too, is the new driver's licences for the province. Where are they currently being manufactured? Are they done in the province or are they done out of the province?

CHAIR: Alan Doody.

MR. DOODY: The licences are currently being produced in Burlington, Ontario. For at least the last 10 years, 15 years, this has been a joint initiative with the Atlantic provinces, so there's been a joint RFP to go out and find a company to provide driver's licence services. The company that produces those licences out of Burlington, Ontario, of course, was the successful bidder. There's no vendor in Atlantic Canada that actually produces those licences.

The central issuance of the licence was a – first of all, it's resulted in cost savings. The joint RFP also results in savings because the card production cost is lower. But there are all kinds of security benefits in the card. It's a laser-engraved card which is tamper-proof. The card is not mailed out unless it passes through facial recognition so that we know that the person in our database is the person who was in for service to get the card and that they go through all of those steps. So there are all kinds of added security measures.

Your driver's licence and your photo-ID card is used to travel within the country, and also the credential on your card is – we have reciprocity not just within all of the jurisdictions in Canada but with other countries. Of course, the security of that card is very important to ensure that citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, when they move from one jurisdiction to the other, that people trust that their identification is valid and that their driving credentials are valid.

MR. BROWN: It's funny that you say that; we actually had a gentleman reach out to our office today who actually received a card with the wrong photo on his card.

MR. DOODY: Really?

MR. BROWN: Yes. I'm sure you'll hear from one of my colleagues on that one.

MR. DOODY: Sorry, just want to confirm, wrong photo with –?

MR. BROWN: The photo that was received on the card was not the gentleman's photo.

MR. DOODY: But all the data was?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. DOODY: Yes, please let me know.

MR. BROWN: He asked me to ask that question. I'm sure you'll hear from them.

Under section 3.1.01, Professional Services, we noticed there was a budget of \$13,000 and nothing was spent, and there's only \$3,000 budgeted for the coming year. Was that a project or a service that just never got completed or done?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The reason for the variance there of \$13,800 was a result of a lower requirement for consulting services and training for our highway enforcement officers. Then the lower amount budgeted for this year, very similar: There's a decrease in the requirement for outside consulting services and there's an Atlantic province agreement where all of us contribute to consulting services. Just a lower requirement for consulting services.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Under Purchased Services, it's pretty consistent there. Is that for the driver's licence production and all those kind of things, outside services, we receive now?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes, that's correct.

MR. BROWN: Also, a question, too: The new driver's sticker initiative, are they coming from outside the province, too, or are they manufactured within the province?

MR. HEFFERNAN: We actually print those ourselves here. My ADM can correct me if I'm wrong, but we insourced that work a year ago, Alan, was it, or two years ago? We do the print of the actual registration and the stickers here.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Under Allowances and Assistance, what was the \$10,000 used for?

MR. HEFFERNAN: This was a settlement for a grievance.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies, what grants are issued from this department?

MS. STEELE: The grant line here covers \$10,000 for SafetyNL for the Lids for Kids program, and then the remainder of the balance is for a number of registration fees, membership fees for the Canadian Vehicle Safety Alliance, Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators and International Registration Plan.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Revenue - Federal, what would be the revenue federally that this division would receive?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The revenue here from federal is revenue received from Transport Canada for the National Safety Code program.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Provincial revenue would be all the fees and services for people's licensing and registration and all of that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: It's actually for expedited service delivery for their driver's licence.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

3.2.01, Support Services, what are the Purchased Services used from this division?

MR. HEFFERNAN: I think the majority of Purchased Services here are for secure cash pickup services.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

The \$9,000 there for Professional Services, what would be the Professional Services used in this division?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Those are for per diem costs for our Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board and the Appeal Tribunal.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

The *Buildings Accessibility Act* review, would that fall under this?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Is that review completed there now?

MR. DOODY: Yes, the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board have completed a review of the act and they are in the process of making recommendations to the minister.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Is there any timeline on the estimated completion of that?

MR. DOODY: Once the minister receives the recommendations, then there will be a decision made on when and what changes should be made to the act.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

Section 3.2.02, Regional Services – I have 20 seconds, so I won't be able to complete that yet.

CHAIR: Mr. Parsons.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay. I would have let you ask your question. Anyway, I'll continue because Jordan and myself are on the same page, I think.

Section 3.2.02, I'm just looking at the salary line. There's over \$121,000 that was spent less last year, but then we go up to \$520,000 in this year's budget. Can you explain that?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The variance last year was a reflection of vacancies throughout the year. The increase this year is a result of the 27th pay period, which accounts for \$269,400 increase and then \$128,800 for regular salary plan adjustments.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

I'm just curious: Under Supplies, what's included here? There was a decrease, too, of \$17,000. What's included in Supplies?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Looks like, to me, the Supplies here are just office supply costs. The decrease there was a result of reduced office supply costs. They tend to vary from year to year.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

The provincial revenue there, what's included in that? There's a large variance there from what was actual and what is today.

MR. HEFFERNAN: There was a large reprofiling of electrical permit revenue, which used to show up in this account. It now shows up in the current revenue account. There were also some impacts there as a result of Snowmageddon or Blizzard NL and COVID.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Let's go to section 3.3.01. Is there now a full complement of OHS workers now throughout the province and including Labrador?

MR. DOODY: The Occupational Health and Safety Division currently have 15 vacancies that they are actively recruiting. There are occupational health and safety officers in Labrador and there are also officers that fly in to Labrador. Normally, though, when we end up posting jobs on the Island, often the officers that are in Labrador apply for those competitions and leave, so it's always in perpetual motion.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

If you could explain the Salaries for me, over \$555,000 last year spent than what was actually budgeted. The whole line there, could you just explain that to me, please?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Last year we had six occupational health and safety officers and three hygienists that were vacant throughout the year, so the lower cost of \$555,000 was a result of vacancies.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Under Employee Benefits, what explains the \$131,000 increase in the actuals?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Sorry, did you say a hundred-and-something thousand?

MR. K. PARSONS: No, sorry, it is \$13,000, isn't it? Yes.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Oh, the increase, yes. There was an increase there for higher workers' comp charges.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Under Supplies, why is there a steady decline? It seems like there was a decline there in what was budgeted last year than what was spent this year and then there's a decline this year.

MR. HEFFERNAN: There was a lower than anticipated subscription cost for Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – or their inquiry services, sorry. Then this year we did a rightsizing just to reflect reduced subscription costs related to inquiry hearings.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

In Professional Services, again, there's a steady decline there. What's included here, too?

MR. HEFFERNAN: There was a rightsizing of expenditures here as well. That should have been charged into Purchased Services; the same thing for the new year. There's an increase there of \$50,000, which reflects rightsizing the expenditures and moving them over from Purchased Services.

MR. K. PARSONS: Would that explain the next line, of the increase in the – yes, okay.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, on the provincial revenue, is this all related to recouping from workers' comp? Or WorkplaceNL, I'm sorry. It is?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Yes, that's correct.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Section 3.4.01: How many people are currently receiving assistance through this program?

MR. HEFFERNAN: There are currently 43 participants.

MR. K. PARSONS: Forty-three?

MR. HEFFERNAN: Forty-three, yes.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

MR. HEFFERNAN: Forty-three beneficiaries, sorry.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, go to section 3.4.02. I'm just wondering, on the Grants and Subsidies what's included? Can you explain the \$7,000 increase in the actuals?

MR. HEFFERNAN: The \$7,000 increase reflects a \$10,000 payout that we had of a grant related to a court-ordered penalty, which was offset by a \$3,000 reduction in regular assistance requirements. These things are used for things like promoting occupational health and safety in the industry and supporting meetings in the industry. I think there was an initiative with the St. John's Regional Fire Department to do an occupational health and safety training manual as well.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay.

Under Revenue - Provincial, what's included?

MS. STEELE: The revenue here are the expenditures recoverable from WorkplaceNL. The difference is just a timing difference from the receipt of the funding that was there from one year to the next, related to the fourth quarter of '18-'19.

MR. K. PARSONS: All right, that's it for me.

CHAIR: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: I have one question there.

CHAIR: Okay.

MR. BROWN: With the Occupational Health and Safety office in Labrador West, I know a lot of businesses complain to me that the clerk that works in that office is only from, I think, 9 to 12 o'clock and she doesn't work in the afternoons. I get a lot of businesses calling me complaining that they can't reach out to that office during those after times. I was wondering if there's any consideration for improvements to that office when it comes to hours of operation.

MR. DOODY: First, if any business needs any assistance there is a 1-800 number and a

provincial number they can phone to have that assistance provided. With regard to that employee only working partial days, I'll actually have to investigate on that. I wasn't aware that was actually ongoing, so I'm not sure what the reasoning for that is. There's a full-time position there, so I'm not aware they were only working partial days.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, there's an individual there and it seems that after 1 o'clock that individual is not there.

MR. DOODY: If it's the officer –

MR. BROWN: It's not the officer, it's a clerk apparently.

MR. DOODY: I'll get back to you on that.

MR. BROWN: Perfect, thank you. I appreciate that.

I'm done, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Mr. Parsons.

MR. K. PARSONS: I have one more question.

Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division was removed from this department. Is there a reason for that?

MS. STOODLEY: I'm not aware of the reason. I believe that was the prerogative of the Premier's office when they were reorganizing the departments.

MR. K. PARSONS: Okay, thank you.

That's it for me.

CHAIR: Thank you.

We'll just wait a few seconds now for the Clerk to get back. She's distributing the minutes from the last meeting.

Okay, we'll call the vote.

Shall 3.1.01 to 3.4.02 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion has been carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 through 3.4.02 carried.

CLERK: The total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion has been carried.

On motion, Department of Digital Government and Service NL, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of Digital Government and Service NL carried without amendment?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

The motion has been carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Digital Government and Service NL carried without amendment.

CHAIR: We do have some minutes that the Clerk has just distributed around, so I'm just looking to have a motion that those minutes be accepted.

Mr. Bennett.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: Minister, would you like final remarks?

MS. STOODLEY: I just want to say thank you to the department and thank you to the

Committee Members and the staff for joining us this evening. I won't make this any longer.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you so much.

Mr. Parsons, would you like to say anything?

MR. K. PARSONS: Yes, I'd just like to thank the staff for your answers tonight. Very informative. Like I always say about Estimates, it's a great time to come and learn a lot about the departments. I'd like to thank you for all the work that you've been doing.

I'd like to thank the ministers behind me for having the patience to listen to us tonight, because I know they were listening very attentively to all the questions that were asked. I hope they learned a little bit tonight too. I'd like to thank our staff members that come out and do a great bit of work to get us prepared for this. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you. Mr. Brown?

MR. BROWN: Yes, thank you.

I just want to thank the staff. It's wonderful to see you there. I know I talk to some of them on the phone and stuff pretty frequently, especially Alan there. I know they're all in good hands. There's a nice Labradorian in the back there, so I know they're all in good hands over there.

I want to thank you all for coming out, it's appreciated. I know it's after hours and you guys are just trying to keep us informed and in line. Like I said, I think my fellow Members here of the Committee – I know they're taking notes. They're probably all ready for the quiz after. Anyway, they're all good.

Thank you, everyone, and thank you, Madam Chair, for leading us through this.

CHAIR: Thank you so much.

Can I now have a motion to adjourn? Mr. Andrew Parsons.

Good night everyone. Thank you.

On motion, the Committee adjourned *sine die*.