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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on  
Government Services**

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Department of Digital Government and Service NL

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Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

## **GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Department of Digital Government and Service NL

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Chair: Paul Pike, MHA

Vice-Chair: Loyola O'Driscoll, MHA

Members: Brian Warr, MHA  
Chris Tibbs, MHA  
Jordan Brown, MHA  
Lucy Stoyles, MHA  
Scott Reid, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Evan Beazley

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Appearing:

### **Department of Digital Government and Service NL**

Hon. Sarah Stoodley, MHA, Minister

Sean Dutton, Deputy Minister

Gail Boland, Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Government and Services

Scott Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister, Regulatory Affairs

Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller

Kathy Dicks-Peyton, Director of Communications

Devon Ryan, Executive Assistant

### **Also Present**

Hon. Krista Lynn Howell, MHA, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA

Dave Hamlyn, Government Members' Caucus

Brad Russell, Official Opposition Caucus

Scott Fleming, Third Party Caucus

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's, substitutes for Paul Pike, MHA for Burin - Grand Bank.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Krista Lynn Howell, MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, substitutes for Brian Warr, MHA for Baie Verte - Green Bay.

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

**CHAIR (Gambin-Walsh):** Okay, we're going to call the meeting to order.

I'm just going to announce the substitutes here first. Substituting for MHA Pike is myself, MHA Gambin-Walsh; substituting for MHA Warr is Minister Howell; substituting for – no – you're here. Okay. Because we had – Lela Evans was substituting for MHA Brown. No?

**J. BROWN:** No, the other way around.

**CHAIR:** The other way around. Okay.

I just want to make sure the Committee is okay that if one of the independents does come and they wish to ask questions, that we'll allow them some time at the end. Everyone's okay with that? Okay.

We'll have a break, probably about an hour or so in, we'll see where we're to at that point in time.

Also, if you could please not adjust the chairs. I know it's hard to remember but they're adjusted for the MHAs. There's water at the end here.

The first thing I would ask is the Members of the Committee to introduce themselves and then I'll ask the minister to introduce her staff. This is only an introduction of her staff. Following that, I'll ask the Committee to move the minutes of the last meeting, then I'll ask the Clerk to call the first subhead and

then the minister can speak about the department if you wish.

Oh one more thing. If your light is not coming on, just wave your hand like this. Okay?

So we'll start over on this size.

Minister Howell.

**K. HOWELL:** Krista Lynn Howell, MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

**L. STOYLES:** Lucy Stoyles, MHA for Mount Pearl North.

**L. O'DRISCOLL:** Loyola O'Driscoll, MHA for the District of Ferryland.

**S. REID:** Scott Reid, MHA, St. George's - Humber.

**D. HAMLYN:** Dave Hamlyn, Government Members' Office.

**S. FLEMING:** Scott Fleming, Researcher, Third Party Caucus Office.

**J. BROWN:** Jordan Brown, MHA, Labrador West.

**B. RUSSELL:** Brad Russell, Office of the Official Opposition.

**C. TIBBS:** Chris Tibbs, MHA for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**S. STOODLEY:** Sarah Stoodley, Minister of Digital Government and Service NL.

**S. JONES:** Scott Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Government and Service NL.

**G. BOLAND:** Gail Boland, Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Government and Service NL.

**S. DUTTON:** Sean Dutton, I'm the Deputy Minister of the department.

**B. STEELE:** Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller.

**D. RYAN:** Devon Ryan, Executive Assistant.

**K. DICKS-PEYTON:** Kathy Dicks-Peyton, Director of Communications.

**CHAIR:** Okay, I'd like to ask for the adoption of the May 6 minutes.

Moved by MHA Stoyles.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**CHAIR:** I'll ask the Clerk to call the first subhead.

**CLERK (Beazley):** For the Digital Government and Service Newfoundland and Labrador, Executive and Support Services, 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

Minister.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

Thank you everyone for being here. I'm very pleased to be here with our team, Digital Government and Service NL. We provide a range of services to people across the province. We joke that we are the lint trap of government. If it doesn't fit within one of the departments, it's probably ours.

We do a lot of very important work, don't get me wrong. I don't mean to make light of all of it, but we end up with lots of ancillary responsibilities. Everything from licensing; inspections related to public health, public safety, environmental protection; vital documents: birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates; health and safety of employees in our workplaces; consumer interests; financial services; and

then Motor Registration is one of our largest divisions. We do, obviously, driver testing, driver licences, vehicle registrations, photo ID cards. We are also responsible for road safety, driving safety on our public highways. We have a number of programs where we try to improve that.

Originally, our department was created with the aim of consolidating, where possible, licensing, permitting, inspecting, regulating functions within the government and providing a single-window access point to the public for those services. We try and have a good, streamlined online presence. But also you can walk into our Government Services Centres where, maybe through different doors, but we try and have most of those public-facing services available in one place to residents.

We have over 150 pieces of legislation, standards and codes of practice which give us the authority to carry out these responsibilities.

We have a budget of \$28.4 million. We also bring in a significant amount of revenue to the province; \$8.2 million, which is noted in our Estimates, but we also bring in \$111.4 million and that goes right into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. That would be from things such as motor registration fees, deed fees and issuer fees.

Obviously, we're Digital Government and Service NL, so the digital part we try to work very closely with the OCIO and across departments to make sure that we maximize the number of services online for residents, as well as having a good user experience, making everything as easy to use as possible, which we have a big long list and tons of room for improvement, but we're slowly chugging a long at that.

We also oversee Occupational Health and Safety, which is responsible for the health and safety inspection and enforcement programs. So that involves the code standard of practice for health and safety

working conditions and all of these costs are recovered from WorkplaceNL. So there's offsetting revenue for all these expenditures. That would be through the fees that employers pay through WorkplaceNL.

We also have the Office of French Services. I'm also Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs. We have a small team who do French translation, French language training for the provincial government and also provides support in my capacity as Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs.

We're also responsible for the King's Printer, formally the Queen's Printer. We do all the printing services for the provincial government, the public and the Health Authority.

I want to give a particular shout-out to the King's Printer for budget time; they do all the printing of the budget documents. I understand they stay up most of the night printing all the budget documents on Budget Day to make sure that we're all here and the very important document of the budget is ready and available. So I just want a special shout out to them who stay up all night, every year the night before the budget. They work just in the basement. It's a very impressive operation they have there.

I think most people in this room and anyone listening or watching would have interacted with our department at some point. I also just want to thank all of our staff for their professionalism that we strive for when dealing with the people of the province.

I'm happy to answer as many questions as – we're an open book.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** MHA Tibbs.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you very much, Minister, for the introduction.

I just have some general questions starting out here. Are you still applying zero-based budgeting?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes.

**C. TIBBS:** Are there any errors in the published Estimates book that you're aware of?

**S. STOODLEY:** Not that I'm aware of, no.

**C. TIBBS:** Have any positions been eliminated? What are they if there have been?

**S. STOODLEY:** To my knowledge we have not eliminated any positions.

**C. TIBBS:** The minister said during Estimates last year that there were no new attrition targets. Has the attrition plan been cancelled?

**S. STOODLEY:** We have no attrition targets this year.

**C. TIBBS:** Minister, how many people are employed in the department?

**S. STOODLEY:** That's an excellent question.

We have, including the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation, 468 staff members.

**OFFICIAL:** That would be positions.

**S. STOODLEY:** Oh, positions, sorry. We have 404 filled roles at the moment.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

How many retirements have occurred in the last year?

**S. STOODLEY:** Just a second. I do have that here, unless someone has it sooner than I can put my hands on it.

**B. STEELE:** There were 11 retirements.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Ms. Steele.

Minister, how many vacancies are not filled in the department? I think you just said, but I –

**S. STOODLEY:** Oh, sorry. So it's a bit complicated, but I think there are 64 open roles that there's no one in right now. We're not actively recruiting that number.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Minister, how many layoffs have occurred in the department in the last year?

**B. STEELE:** We had 44 end of employments and resignations combined.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Ms. Steele.

Minister, how many new hires took place in the last year?

**S. STOODLEY:** So we had 37 new hires or people new to government.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

How many contractual and short-term employees are in the department?

**S. STOODLEY:** So we had 95 people on short employments and that also includes the students.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

How many employees are working from home versus in the government office itself?

**S. STOODLEY:** I don't believe we have any staff permanently working from home. There might be the odd accommodation, but, in general, no one is working from home.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you.

Did your department receive any funds from the contingency fund? If so, how much and what was it used for?

**S. STOODLEY:** We did not receive any contingency funds.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

In the minister's mandate letter, she was directed to increase the "number of services delivered online by 75 per cent" by 2022.

Was this target met and can you outline which services were added, if there was?

**S. STOODLEY:** I think we have doubled that target. So we have far exceeded that target. I don't have the list in front of me, but the areas where we exceed the target primarily were in financial services licensing. So now you can apply for your real estate agent licence online, you can renew all those licences online.

I feel like every few weeks there's a new online service being added. I should have brought my list, sorry. But I can get you the list.

**C. TIBBS:** Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

Minister, we'll start off with 1.1.01 with the Minister's Office, Transportation and Communication. Last year, \$29,900 was budgeted but only \$11,000 was spent. Can you explain this, Minister, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** I would assume that we didn't travel as much. I've been only attending what I think is the most important things.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to 1.2.01, Salaries.

Last year, the department went over budget by \$85,800 and this year we see a further increase budgeted. Can the minister explain this, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** 1.2.01 and that was Salaries?

**C. TIBBS:** Yes.

**S. STOODLEY:** So that's the negotiated salary plan. We also added a contractual director of Digital Government and then all the negotiated salary increases.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Employee Benefits, last year the department went over budget by \$132,200. Can the minister explain this, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes, so this is more of an accounting thing but my understanding is that this includes all of the workers' compensation charges for all of our department. They group it all into this line item.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to Purchased Services, last year the department went over budget by \$40,000. Can the Minister explain this, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes, so there's a new kind of FTP at Digital Government. All the ministers of digital government have been getting together now twice a year, and so we are now formally starting kind of a FTP, so they're calling it the Digital Trust and Credential Program. We're a big part of that and so we agreed to pay \$10,000 a year and I believe this is a four – we have prepaid three years worth.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to 1.2.02, French Language Services.

Can you quantify the workload or demand for translation services? The minister indicated last year that with COVID-19 demand was down for these services. How was it down?

**S. STOODLEY:** I can speak, I guess. They do a range of translation. So we recently

just, I think, launched our Motor Registration websites in French and we're working on a new Road Users Guide. So the guide when you get your licence permit, all the rules of the road, you know, the team are working on translating that in French.

So in addition to all the normal government translation that they do and working with the federal government, when they have time available they work on some of those bigger, meatier projects for us. So we try to maximize the use of their skills.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to Salaries, last year the department went over budget by \$13,400. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Are you still at 1.2.02?

**C. TIBBS:** Yes.

**S. STOODLEY:** Okay. That would just be these approved salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Moving on to Professional Services, last year the department went under budget by \$34,300 but the budget remains the same for this year. Can you explain this, Minister, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Sometimes when our translation needs exceed our staff capacity, we have an agreement with the federal government and we pay the federal government for extra translation. We didn't need that, but I think it's important that we keep that so that we're able to meet the demand of when other departments might need French translation as well. We kind of coordinate that.

**C. TIBBS:** Makes sense. Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to 1.2.03, Administrative Support, Purchased Services, the department went over budget by \$168,100

last year but only has \$100 budgeted for this year. Can this be explained, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Absolutely. We've been working on this big death registration project. Essentially, it is concluded now. It's like an electronic system that doctors, funeral homes and everyone has access to so when someone passes away there's a medical record that follows online. The federal government paid for this. My understanding is that this is paid out of the Purchased Services line item and the \$100 allows us to keep this line item open.

**C. TIBBS:** Okay.

Property, Furnishings and Equipment under the same heading, the department spent \$74,000 that wasn't budgeted last year. Can you explain this, minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes, there was an ongoing Motor Registration dealer web upgrade and that cost was put in this line item, which was \$76,000 – we're projecting it's going to cost \$76,000.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

**CHAIR:** MHA Brown.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Chair.

I have some general questions there first. Has the department considered or are working on any amendments to the legislation to end no-fault evictions?

**S. STOODLEY:** To end no-fault –

**J. BROWN:** Evictions.

**S. STOODLEY:** Evictions?

**J. BROWN:** Yeah.

**S. STOODLEY:** Right now, there are different ways of getting evicted. Anyone can get evicted with a certain time notice. At

the moment, no, we're not considering a change to that.

There's a balance between the tenant's rights and the landlord's rights, obviously. I don't think it's feasible to have a system where, as a tenant, you can stay in a property forever. I don't think that would be a palatable solution. You just have to give a certain amount of notice.

**J. BROWN:** No, I'm talking about no-fault evictions, where the landlord gives no reason, just evicts you. Legally in this province you can do that.

**S. STOODLEY:** Within a certain time, yes.

**J. BROWN:** Yeah.

**S. STOODLEY:** It'd be difficult, so no, we're not.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**S. STOODLEY:** I'm happy to debate the policy objectives, but at the moment no we're not.

**J. BROWN:** No, no, I'm just want to make sure I understand it was the no-fault. I know sometimes someone can evict somebody for damage or something like that. I just wanted to make sure that you understood what I was asking, that's all.

**S. STOODLEY:** I mean, I do. We've a lot of different types of landlords and I think that landlords have an expectation that if they want to, let's say, change the use of the property that they're not tied to having a tenant for an undetermined period of time in their property.

**J. BROWN:** No, perfect. I understand.

**S. STOODLEY:** Okay.

**J. BROWN:** I just wanted to make sure that you understood what I was asking is all.

What kind of savings has the department realized by increasing the number of services provided online? What average dollar value have you saved by switching to online from services?

**S. STOODLEY:** I don't think I can give you a dollar value. What I say is I think we are freeing up capacity to better help people in person. Just to be clear, this Estimates binder, the only cost that we pay for Digital Government side is that one director of Digital Government. We are spending OCIO money. The MyGovNL team is in the OCIO budgets. They pay for that team.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**S. STOODLEY:** So these Estimates, other than the director of Digital Government, don't include the IT money. So we hear from a lot of seniors and a lot of people and they think it's very important to still be able to access in-person services and phone services, which I agree completely.

We're trying to still service the public. For example, we did realize some efficiencies. We redid our lottery licensing and our residential tenancy team, we restructured that a bit. I think I talked about that in last year's Estimates. Applying for a lotto licence online as well as doing your real estate licence online and renewals of those online allowed us to hire an additional residential tenancies adjudicator. So we are kind of repurposing the value that we're getting.

**J. BROWN:** All right.

Many seniors, people with disabilities and low-income people still have poor access to technology; what measures are being taken by the department to ensure that a lot of services will still remain in-person for these individuals?

**S. STOODLEY:** As I mentioned just a moment ago, we are not planning any reduction in in-person services.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect, thank you.

Last year in Estimates, you mentioned the department received some information from Rothschild regarding the value of potentially selling off the registry system to be done privately. Has the department considered any of this to move the registries to a private system?

**S. STOODLEY:** So we have not made any change from what I would have said last year in Estimates.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect, thank you.

Has the department engaged in any new projects or initiatives regarding cybersecurity for the government or Crown agencies?

**S. STOODLEY:** There would be nothing in Digital Government and Service NL related to cybersecurity. That would be more for our OCIO Estimates.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, perfect.

Can we get an update on the use of road safety cameras in school zones and for speed traps?

**S. STOODLEY:** Absolutely. It's not going fast enough in my opinion. I am becoming more involved. We have a pilot going to launch hopefully soon. I committed publicly to having some speed cameras this year and I'm confident that we will achieve that. Some logistics, legal things we're working out. But it's not going as fast enough as I'd like and I'm trying to do whatever I can to move it forward as soon as possible.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect.

When it comes to the *Buildings Accessibility Act*, will any of the amendments or anything being worked on now currently by the department improve building accessibility in this province?

**S. STOODLEY:** Well, my mandate letter asks me to bring changes forward. So we are working in the pursuit of my mandate letter and I cannot speak to where the status of any changes might be.

**J. BROWN:** When changes were made to the PUB act for giving you the ability to look into stuff for the PUB, have you actually gone and made any requests to the PUB to look at some of the decisions that were made, particularly around the five cents added on for the closure of the North Atlantic or anything like that? Have you made any actual investigations using that power?

**S. STOODLEY:** I have. That really bothers me. That is a personal pet peeve of mine. I went to see the Public Utilities Board. I was very unhappy with them. I told them exactly how I felt about the five cents. I asked them why is there still five cents?

I can't remember exactly what they said but nothing has changed in the marketplace that they did not feel like – I don't want to put words in their mouth, but I did not receive a satisfactory answer in my opinion. There is an ongoing gas price review that we've changed the laws so that I could make them do. So they're working on that right now. It's not going to be completed within the timeline that I feel is acceptable, but I voiced that to them and I continue my daily struggle with challenging the Public Utilities Board.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect. Thank you so much, Minister.

Currently under the system, is it fully implemented now that the insurance companies have to report to Motor Registration when an insurance policy is being cancelled?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes.

**J. BROWN:** Is this fully implemented at this point in time?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect. Thank you so much.

Can we have an update on the chemical testing pilot project for private well water?

**S. STOODLEY:** Oh, that's an excellent question.

**G. BOLAND:** That's a pilot project that we're delivering on behalf of another department.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**G. BOLAND:** Sorry, but the particulars of that, I would not be able to advise. The kits come to our GSCs, people come by and they pick them up. They proceed with the testing procedure and they drop it back to the GSCs.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, you're the front of the shop, but there's someone else in the back shop.

**G. BOLAND:** Yes.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, no worries.

That will be the Department of Environment?

**G. BOLAND:** Sorry?

**J. BROWN:** Department of Environment?

**G. BOLAND:** Yes.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, I'll ask Bernie, thank you.

When do you expect the work to be completed on the funding announcement back in February to expand access to high-speed Internet to surrounding communities? I'm filling in for somebody so this I know is not your department. That's something in Estimates I asked already.

That's the end of my questions for this section. Thank you so much.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** MHA Tibbs, do you have any additional questions for this section?

**C. TIBBS:** Not for this heading, Chair.

MHA Brown, finished with this heading?

**J. BROWN:** Thank you so much.

**CHAIR:** Okay, I ask the Clerk to recall the heading.

**CLERK:** Executive and Support Services, 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.2.03 carried.

**CHAIR:** I ask the Clerk to call the next heading.

**CLERK:** Regulatory Affairs, 2.1.01 to 2.2.03 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** 2.1.01 to 2.2.03 inclusive, Regulatory Affairs.

MHA Tibbs.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Chair.

Some general questions under the current heading. What is the current wait time to have a hearing at the Residential Tenancies Board and what is the current caseload waiting to be heard?

**S. STOODLEY:** I have that here. No, I don't. You go ahead, sorry.

**S. JONES:** So in the past year, the residential tenancy officers received 1,382 applications of which closed 1,235. There are still 147 remain in various stages of processing. The average time from application to hearing has been reduced down to 36 days, because we are fully staffed with the four residential tenancy adjudicators.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Sir.

Under Salaries, Minister, the department underspent by \$190,200 last year. Can this be explained?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yeah, so we had vacancies and delays in recruitment. Then this was offset by the negotiated salary increase and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Transportation and Communications, the department underspent by \$18,100. Can this be explained, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** So we underspent due to lower travel requirements related to residential tenancies hearings and conferences. The majority of hearings are now conducted virtually. We give that option of having a virtual hearing, so most people choose that.

**C. TIBBS:** Makes sense.

Under Purchased Services, the department overspent by \$21,000. Can this be explained, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** So this was as a result of debit credit card fees for online services. Then we had higher than anticipated association fees.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under 2.1.02, Pensions Benefit Standards, Salaries, the department underspent by \$13,800, but this year we see a budgeted increase. Can this be explained, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** The increase reflects the negotiated salary increase. You're talking about 2.1.02, right?

**C. TIBBS:** Yes.

**S. STOODLEY:** Okay.

Then we had a vacant administrative officer position for a portion of the year, which was then also offset by the salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

We'll move on to Consumer and Commercial Affairs – it is continued – 2.1.03, Commercial Registrations. Under Salaries, the department underspent by \$105,800 last year but this year the budget is increasing. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** The increase in budget is due to the negotiated salary increases. Then the underspending is a result of vacancies in clerk typist III positions throughout the year, which was then offset by salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under the same heading, Purchased Services, last year the department overspent by \$168,200. Can this be explained, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** This was a result of higher than anticipated debit credit fees with online transactions related to deeds, registration and we reprofiled costs for our armoured vehicles, like cash pickups. So that is now moving – no, sorry, can you clarify the armoured cash pickups? Thank you, Bonnie.

**B. STEELE:** So the increase was the debit credit card fees but then we increased the budget for – we charged the cost off for the reprofiling of cost for secure cash pickups. These were originally charged off to Transportation and Communications, but should really reside within the Purchased Services portfolio.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you.

Minister, what are the current rates on credit card and debit purchases?

**S. STOODLEY:** The Department of Finance has an agreement with the vendor. I believe they're actively looking at options. I don't have the rates.

So that would be the cross-government contract for all of government in terms of those rates and the more we do online, obviously, the more those fees go up.

**C. TIBBS:** Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to 2.2.01, Vital Statistics Registry, can you give us an update on the death registration project? I know you touched on it earlier.

**S. STOODLEY:** It's completed and live: Death Notification Project.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Salaries, last year the department overspent by \$177,700 and this year the budget is increasing. Can this be explained, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Sorry, which one was that?

**C. TIBBS:** Salaries under Vital Statistics Registry.

**S. STOODLEY:** The increase is the salary plan and salary increases and then, the past year, there was a retirement payout and then the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Purchased Services, last year the department underspent by \$13,100. Can this be explained, Minister, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Our registrar got married and was changing her name and so we didn't reorder more certificates with her new name on. We used up all the certificates that were left with her old name on prior to ordering new certificates with her new name. That was her idea.

**C. TIBBS:** Pretty frugal. Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

Under Revenue - Federal, last year revenues were \$16,800 higher than budgeted. Can this be explained, Minister, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes. The revenue reflects a higher number of deaths reported through the national routing standard. This submits records to Stats Canada, Service Canada and CRA. Then we also got revenue from Elections Canada reporting.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Moving on to the King's Printer, 2.2.02, Salaries, last year the department underspent by \$43,200. Can you explain this, Minister, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Sure. So overall, we had some vacancies. We didn't have as much overtime as sometimes we do, offset by the salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Supplies, last year the department underspent by \$49,500. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** They had fewer requirements for printing and we reprofiled some money to buy some feeder replacement trays and a new round

cornering machine, which shows up then in Property, Furnishings and Equipment.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Purchased Services, last year the department underspent by \$49,000. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** So this is a lower copying, printing charges.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Property, Furnishings and Equipment, last year the department overspent by \$74,700. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** We bought four replacement feeder trays and a new round cornering machine.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under 2.2.03, Collection Services, how much outstanding debt is owed to the government at this point in time?

**S. STOODLEY:** Excellent question. I'm going to defer it to Scott.

**S. JONES:** I don't have the precise number on me right now. It's an ever-changing number, but it's in excess of \$300 million.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Scott.

How many people or businesses owed this debt?

**S. JONES:** Again, I don't have the precise numbers. The system doesn't necessarily – it's multiple systems so it's hard to consolidate all the information but, for individuals, it includes all individual that would owe government on fees or taxes, or students that have defaulted on their student loan or anybody that owes money for payment of business fees to commercial registry or the Department of Finance.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Scott.

How is this trending? Is that an increase or a decrease? Where are we going with this?

**S. JONES:** Well, during the COVID period, because of some of the exceptions and the allowances we gave for individuals and businesses that were experiencing financial difficulties, we didn't actively collect during that period. So the balances didn't really move at that point in time and may have even increased somewhat with interest. But, this past year, we have become more actively involved again in collections, including our objective this year has been to protect the Crown's interest through statement of claims issues. So that's what has been our focus this past year.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Sir.

Under Salaries last year, the department underspent by \$250,200. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

So this is due to vacancies and delays in recruiting collection officers, offset by salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Purchased Services, last year the department overspent by \$8,200. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** This is due to higher than anticipated legal statement of claims filed through the courts related to collections. So the cost associated with those.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

I'm good, Chair, under that heading.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

MHA Brown.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you so much, Chair.

Can we get an update on how the integration of Consumer and Financial Services worked out? Have there been any significant savings with the merger of these heads?

**S. STOODLEY:** I think it's gone pretty well. Using the restructure, we're able to hire an additional residential tenancy adjudicator.

I don't know if there's anything else you want to add?

**S. JONES:** The reorganization, including, as the minister mentioned, the implementation of a new online servicing, has allowed to broaden the scope of the various licensing officers as well to not focus on one specific licence because they don't have to take a full paper-based product all the way through. We're able to improve service and improve timelines with applications from that point.

Again, as the minister said, the amalgamation of the Consumer and Financial Services division into one unit was able to reallocate the financing salary dollars to be able to get an additional residential tenancy adjudicator, and we are also able to hire a manager of residential tenancies, which all resulted in significant reductions of wait time for residential tenancy hearings.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect, and it leads perfectly to my next question. Has there been an increase in staff and funding to the residential tenancy? I guess you just answered that one, two new appointments.

Has the department considered making it mandatory for landlords to go to mediation before an eviction of a tenant? Has that been in a discussion or anything like that within the department?

**S. STOODLEY:** That is not something that has been brought to our attention that I'm aware of, so no.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Minister.

Have there been any reports brought to the department accusing a business of price gouging in the last year, and if so, how any investigations have been into businesses doing price gouging?

**S. JONES:** There has been no price gouging. The department has received, or Consumer Affairs staff received a couple of complaints potentially about high prices, but nothing that would validate price gouging.

**J. BROWN:** All right, perfect, thank you.

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you. Just for clarity, I know we say price gouging, but the word in the legislation is an unconscionable act. It's a bit of a higher standard than I think I was gouged.

**J. BROWN:** Yeah, from the nomenclature (inaudible).

**S. STOODLEY:** Yeah.

**J. BROWN:** No, thank you so much for your clarification, Minister.

Back in January, the department recommended to insurers and brokers that the end of the practice of best terms pricing by the end of July. Right now that's voluntary and the department is merely recommending customers to do their homework and whatnot. Are we going to see any legislation around the outlawing of this practice?

**S. STOODLEY:** At the moment, the bulletin should be satisfactory. But if we find that it's not, then we'll certainly take stronger action.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect. Thank you so much, Minister.

How many files have been resolved this year and how much money has been collected by the province's outstanding debt and how much is your target to recover this year?

**S. JONES:** So we don't have specific targets. A lot of it is we're dealing with individuals or companies that, just by the nature of collections, are resistant to paying. As I've mentioned a few minutes ago, most of our efforts this past year is shifting our strategy so that we can protect the Crown's interest in the debt owed through statement of claims. That gives, depending on the legislation it relates to, an extra six to 10 years to allow us to work with debtors to establish payment arrangements. So that's our focus, is to get that because that will also be an impetus for the individual to contact us, which is what we've found in the past, to work on a repayment arrangement.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect, thank you.

That was my final question for this subhead.

Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Okay, do you have any –?

**C. TIBBS:** I have one more.

**CHAIR:** One more question?

**C. TIBBS:** Yes

**CHAIR:** Go ahead, MHA Tibbs.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Chair.

Scott, you just brought up the \$300 million that's owed. Is there any way later on we can get a breakdown of where that money is owed from? Like, we always hear of drivers owing \$15,000, \$20,000 in fines. Is there any way we can get a breakdown of exactly where that money should be coming from or where it's owed from?

**S. JONES:** First, I just want to mention, fines collections is the only thing that's not part of – it's still part of the Department of Justice.

**C. TIBBS:** Oh, okay.

**S. JONES:** But, I mean, we can get you a breakdown of the collection portfolio that we have. Again, qualify the fact that it's multiple systems and they'll speak to each other.

**C. TIBBS:** I can only imagine the logistics of it, but yeah that would be great if we could get that. Thank you.

That's it, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Okay, that's it?

All right, I'll ask the Clerk to recall the subheading.

**CLERK:** Regulatory Affairs, 2.1.01 to 2.2.03 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 2.1.01 to 2.2.03 inclusive, Regulatory Affairs, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.2.03 carried.

**CHAIR:** I'll ask the Clerk to call the next subheading.

**CLERK:** Digital Government and Services, 3.1.01 to 3.4.02 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** 3.1.01 to 3.4.02 inclusive, Digital Government and Services.

MHA Tibbs.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Chair.

I'll start off with some general questions, Minister, please.

Last year, the minister characterized motor vehicles as a challenging work environment. Can the minister outline any steps taken to make this division a better place to work?

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

We have a lean expert in the King's Printer and so they lent their time to Motor Registration. We believe that has led to improvement. To help alleviate some of the bottleneck from COVID during COVID and after COVID, we changed the photo requirement from five years to 10 years to reduce the number of appointments. That, hopefully, alleviated some things for staff. As well as we have a new appointment management system. When residents get an appointment and show up at a branch they get a number, so that system should help things work more smoothly.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

What type of volume is the division seeing at the various locations in-person and online?

**S. STOODLEY:** I don't have that on me, but we can certainly get that for you. Unless, Gail, do you want to ...?

**G. BOLAND:** Yeah, sure. In terms of online, we have extremely high percentages of people going through MyGovNL to renew their vehicle registrations as well as their driver licences. That's like probably 95, 98-plus. In terms of in-person service availability, we are enjoying a little bit of a slow season as I can say I guess right now. In most of our locations – and this was as of last week – you're able to get an in-service appointment within a few days to a week, maybe, max here in Mount Pearl, our highest volume, of course.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Gail.

Does the minister have any data on wait times for the issuing of documents either online or wait times in person? I know we just said a couple of days, but for getting documents?

**S. STOODLEY:** My understanding is there's no kind of wait time other than the processing time for a document to be issued in the mail and received in the mail. I do know when there are urgent needs we are able to accommodate that in many instances.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

The Greene report recommended privatization and in last year's Estimates, the minister said evaluation of these services were at Cabinet. Can we get an update on if there are any plans to privatize?

**S. STOODLEY:** I don't have any update in addition to what I would've said last year in Estimates.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Salaries, last year the department underspent by \$455,500; this year the budget increases. Can the minister please explain this?

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

So the increase would be the negotiated salary increases and then the decrease this year, we had vacancies in our highway enforcement officers positions, some clerical staff, a driver examiner position.

We do find the Motor Registration has a high turnover. You know, it's not the easiest job helping people with vehicle transactions and stuff. We do find some people come in to Motor Registration and then they might look for another internal government job, so we do have a relatively high turnover.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Transportation and Communications, last year the department overspent by \$40,000. Can the minister please explain this?

**S. STOODLEY:** Sure, thank you.

We had higher postage charges. So we had an extra \$30,000 in driver's licence card printing and then we had an extra \$10,000 in travel costs for driver examiners in Labrador and the Northern Peninsula.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Supplies, last year the department underspent by \$60,800. Can the minister please explain?

**S. STOODLEY:** Thank you.

The decrease is we had less of a requirement to buy regular licence plates. So we issued Come Home Year licence plates that were purchased last year.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Property, Furnishings and Equipment, last year the department overspent by \$53,200. Can the minister please explain this?

**S. STOODLEY:** The overspending was we bought replacement printers, some computer monitors from ergonomic equipment, a few laptop replacements, two Tapley brake meters and an iPhone that needed an upgrade.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Grants and Subsidies, this year this line item is expected to increase by \$54,300. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** So we have some US membership fees and that's the exchange rate increase estimated.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Permitting, Inspection and Support Services, 3.2.01, Support Services: Minister, will the department start posting bus safety inspections online as they happen as opposed to batching them up and posting them by season in real time?

**S. STOODLEY:** That's an excellent question. The way the bus inspections work is we inspect 100 per cent of buses at the start of the school year and before school starts and then we have a cycle of all the other bus inspections. So the bus inspections for the September group are placed online and then there's kind of a rolling rota. My understanding is we will soon be placing the rest of the inspection results online.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Salaries, last year the department underspent by \$395,200. Can the minister explain this please?

**S. STOODLEY:** Sure. So we had vacancies due to hard-to-fill positions, which would then be offset by the salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Transportation and Communications, last year the department under spent by \$88,100, but this year the budget remains the same. Can you explain this, Minister, please?

**S. STOODLEY:** So we had lower postage costs and due to the positions that we're not able to fill, we had lower than anticipated travel costs for inspection services.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Purchased Services, last year the department overspent by \$15,900. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** One of our hard-to-fill positions, we recruited from out of province, so part of the government HR policy is they were given some relocation expense costs. So those are in this line item.

**C. TIBBS:** What position would that have been, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Design approval technician.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Revenue - Provincial, last year revenue collected was significantly lower than anticipated. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** We had less revenue because some of our inspections that we do, people pay for, depends on the type and reason for the inspection. So we had fewer inspections that people had to pay for, essentially.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under heading 3.2.02, Regional Services, Salaries, this year the budget is increasing by \$291,300. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** That would be the negotiated salary increase.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Last year, under Revenue - Provincial, the department collected far less than what was anticipated. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** So the decrease in revenue, we had people submit online electrical permit requests and that goes into Consolidated Revenue Fund. Whereas, when they sell a permit over the counter, it's recorded as revenue. So the money, because it's online for some reason, goes into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Occupational Health and Safety Inspections, 3.3.01, Minister, how many investigations were undertaken and what are the various statuses of those investigations?

**S. STOODLEY:** Gail, please.

**G. BOLAND:** I would not be able to advise you of the status of the investigations. We have up to two years to complete our investigation and file any charges with the court.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Gail.

How many businesses or institutions were found to not be in compliance regarding health and safety conditions last year?

**G. BOLAND:** One moment, please.

Sorry, I don't have that number on hand at the moment.

**C. TIBBS:** Okay.

**G. BOLAND:** It is available online and I thought I had it, but I don't. My apologies.

**C. TIBBS:** Okay, (inaudible).

**CHAIR:** MHA Brown.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Chair.

Going back there a bit. It was mentioned there was a lot of turnover in Motor Registration, partly due to the challenging work environment there. Are there any programs or any work being completed to mitigate some of those challenges and is there any retention and recruitment plan being done by the government to increase employment in those areas?

**S. STOODLEY:** I guess when I say it's a challenging work environment, you can imagine what it is. If I was working there, I'd

sit there and people come with a range of issues and you can help them as best you can and you might not always be able to help them. I think sometimes the general public aren't always the nicest in dealing with. When you go to a store now there are signs up to be nice to workers and I think part of the problem is that the general public is not always that nice to workers.

I'm not aware of, I guess, any systemic issues, other than the fact that it's a government job that deals with general public and I think some people come into that job and then once they're in that job, they can look for other internal government roles and then they can transition. So I did mention that we had a lean review recently, which hopefully improves some of the work processes and we have a new system for streamlining people when they come in to a Motor Registration office.

So I don't think it's any more difficult than any other type of customer-facing role. I think it's just the nature of dealing with the public now. If anyone wanted ...

**S. DUTTON:** I guess one thing from one year to the next, we looked at, in 2021, one of the difficulties in the time to fill was the time of processing some of the paperwork. So we asked the Public Service Commission to prioritize Motor Registration requests for staffing action to make sure that we move those quickly. We're in a number of competitions where we're seeking to fill multiple positions at the same time, so there may be a number of clerk IV or clerk III positions and then we'll run multiple competitions at once to help deal with the cleanup and also for converting temporary to permanent.

I should also note that one of the reasons for the vacancies is that the weigh scales in Goobies has been closed, so we did not fill vacancies at the Goobies weigh scales at that time. So as that project is nearing completion, we have done a staffing process to hire a number of positions for the

Goobies scales. Now that may result in some folks moving from other locations and then we'll have to go back and backfill those roles as well. But as all the weigh scales are operational, we should have a better result on filling the positions in our HEO cohort as well.

**G. BOLAND:** I'd just like to add as well, from a recruitment perspective, we're also working very, very closely with the Association for New Canadians and using those strategies as a way to identify suitable employees.

**J. BROWN:** Excellent, thank you. I got the multi-answer. It's awesome. Perfect, thank you so much. I really appreciate that answer actually.

Has there been any talk or anticipation of upgrading the IT systems at Motor Registration for even more efficiency?

**S. STOODLEY:** The Motor Registration system is kind of a really old system. In my mandate letter, it tasks us with looking at a plate-to-owner system rather than a plate-to-vehicle system which we have. That requires a completely new, fundamental change in the way our system is built, so likely a new system.

That is something that we're always looking at. I don't know if I'd frame it as efficiency but a new system would give us a lot more flexibility and more revenue-generating opportunities, like we could sell vanity plates, you could get Sarah – I wouldn't do that, but you know, that type of capability. I don't know if efficiency – I don't think the system is maybe slowing us down from an IT, building new things perspective but –

**J. BROWN:** Just antiquated, I guess.

**S. STOODLEY:** I mean, it still works. It's still a powerhouse. I don't want to disrespect the system; it's probably listening. No, it's not listening.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Minister.

Right now, how many highway enforcement officers are currently hired by the department and how many vacancies are in the highway enforcement officer program?

**G. BOLAND:** We have 11 highway enforcement officers on the Avalon; one of which is vacant. Three in Goobies; one of which is vacant. As Sean had just said, we're working through that because we're hoping that the Goobies weigh scale station will be open soon.

We have six in Grand Falls-Windsor; there is no vacancy there. We have five in Pynns Brook, one vacancy. Two in Port aux Basques, with one vacancy. One in Happy Valley and one in Labrador West.

**J. BROWN:** All right, perfect.

Since the new legislation came into effect last May, has there been a larger uptick of people registering all-terrain vehicles?

**G. BOLAND:** Not that I'm aware of, but that doesn't mean to say that there isn't. I just don't know off the top of my head.

**J. BROWN:** No worries. Thank you so much, Gail.

Could we have an update on the work in progress towards installing the new electronic logging devices on commercial vehicles and when do we expect implementation of the requirements in this province?

**S. STOODLEY:** Right now, they are required for any company that goes across provinces. They're not required yet for any company that only operates in Newfoundland and Labrador, but we are working on that. I don't know when the date is.

**G. BOLAND:** We committed to some time during 2023 to have provincial carriers mandated to do ELDs as well.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, thank you so much.

Since the launch of the Insurance Validation Program, has there been an increase in number of people caught without mandatory insurance?

**S. STOODLEY:** I guess the process for the Insurance Validation Program is that when someone renews their vehicle in person or online in MyGovNL, they can't finish that process without having an active, valid insurance policy. So, at that point, the system would say please call your insurer. Most people, I think, would call their insurer then. Maybe they have a typo in their policy number or just get the new policy number from their insurer and put it in and it's fine. So we haven't heard any issues with that.

I think, with that process, we are successfully stopping anyone without a valid insurance policy from renewing their vehicle. Motor Registration would also be getting a feed from the insurers of who cancels and then we would be reaching out to those people to say hey, you need to have insurance. Let us know what your insurance is. I believe they get an email for that and then there's a process that we follow up, which would then – I don't know if we've reached the point where we're cancelling people's registration but we will.

**G. BOLAND:** When this was initially determined to be a priority, which was prior to my coming to the department, I understand there was an automobile insurance review under way and that's when this came up about Newfoundland and Labrador being one of the provinces with the highest rate of uninsured drivers in Atlantic Canada. At that point, I think it was quoted to be estimated around 13 per cent. Happy to say that now it's around 5 per cent.

**J. BROWN:** Excellent. It's great to hear that the project is working.

Right now, how many inspectors are currently employed in the department under the Occupational Health and Safety?

**G. BOLAND:** With Occupational Health and Safety, just in terms of officers, not the administrative or management personnel, we have 17 officers working in the greater Metro. We have three in Grand Falls-Windsor, five in Corner Brook and two in Labrador.

**J. BROWN:** Right now, how many vacancies are currently in the department for officers?

**G. BOLAND:** Four.

**J. BROWN:** All right.

I know in my district there seems to be a high turnover of officers. Is there any recruitment or retention plan or anything to try to get those people to stay?

**G. BOLAND:** Yes, we are trying to work through various types of strategies to keep people to stay. The two people, for example, right now who are stationed for Labrador have not been successful in securing a place to stay. So we've set up a rotation where there's an officer up in Labrador at all times, but they're rotating. We're looking at various options.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect, thank you so much for that.

That would be my last question for this section.

Thank you so much.

**CHAIR:** In respect to the fact that there is just one individual behind the scenes working, we're just going to take a short 10-minute break.

Recess

**CHAIR:** Okay, folks, we'll restart and we'll start with MHA Tibbs.

**C. TIBBS:** Perfect, we'll go back to 3.3.01, Occupational Health and Safety Inspections. Just one question there. Are there any updates on the Come By Chance investigation?

**S. STOODLEY:** The investigation is ongoing.

**C. TIBBS:** Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

Under Salaries, last year the department underspent by \$566,200. Can you explain this please, Minister?

**S. STOODLEY:** Sorry, still under Occupational Health and Safety Inspections?

**C. TIBBS:** Yes, Ma'am.

**S. STOODLEY:** We had vacancies in hygienist and OHS officer positions, and that was offset by salary increases and the recognition bonus.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Have these vacancies increased the average time it takes to complete an inspection?

**S. STOODLEY:** No.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under Revenue - Provincial, our understanding is that the money for occupational health and safety inspections is 100 per cent recovered from WorkplaceNL. Why do we see an expense of \$86,300 in total here?

**S. STOODLEY:** Can I defer to Bonnie?

**B. STEELE:** That's a timing difference in the billing and receipt of revenue. So the revenue includes one quarter of the last fiscal plus this year. So we'll pick up the other \$86,000 on the next billing.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you.

Under Financial Assistance for Digital Government and Services, 3.4.01, Assistance to St. Lawrence Miners' Dependents, how many dependents are being supported here or are still eligible to be supported?

**G. BOLAND:** There are currently 26 recipients and that fluctuates from one year to the next.

**C. TIBBS:** Sure. Thank you, Gail.

Has the department considered changing the rules for motor vehicle inspections? For example, inspections are only required when a vehicle is sold currently. You know, you could be driving around for 12 years with the same car unless it's sold and you have it, an inspection is not required. We all know that some of these cars should not be on the road. Are there any plans in the future to change this?

**S. STOODLEY:** It's not something that we're working on. I lived in the UK and we had mandatory – MOT we called it. I don't even know what that stood for. We had an older car and every year we had to go pay a garage to inspect it and give us a sticker for our windscreen. We had to pay probably 40 pounds; it would be \$80 for that inspection every year. So I agree with you, there's the other side of adding cost and administrative burden to all the residents of the province. That would not be on the top of my list to implement.

**C. TIBBS:** Sure.

**S. STOODLEY:** Right now, based on the information that I have.

**C. TIBBS:** Sure.

I know in PEI, they do it every year, I believe. But there can be a happy medium there. It doesn't have to be every year; it doesn't have to be 10 years. We could look at something like three or four or five years down the road sort of thing. There are cars on the road that should not be on the road still.

Minister – oh, sorry.

**S. STOODLEY:** I would say there are mechanical rules about your vehicle. I'm more familiar with the exhaust ones. You're not allowed to have an exhaust that's modified or don't work properly. There are rules around tires. I'm not an expert in that but there are kind of basic mechanical rules that your vehicle has to meet a certain condition of.

The RNC, when they find someone who they suspect the vehicle, or the RCMP when they come across a vehicle, they don't suspect meets the equipment regulations, they can send them for a mandatory inspection.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

We're not suggesting by any means it should be yearly because right now everybody finds it pretty difficult financially, but I'm sure there can be a happy medium in there somewhere.

Minister, is the plate-to-person for motor vehicle registration being considered?

**S. STOODLEY:** It is absolutely. It's in my mandate letter. To do that we need a new Motor Registration system, which is currently not budgeted for and would be a very expensive project. Which I think we need to do, but it is not something that we're starting this year at the moment.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Is there a price tag on that right now?

**S. STOODLEY:** No, it's a multi-million dollar project. We have a few different systems – and this is more of an OCIO discussion. But we have a few systems on the same type of mainframe technology and so, right now, we're moving the student aid system – that's the smallest system on the mainframe – to a new, modern system. That's kind of our first, not a test project, but our first example. The price tag would depend on the scope of the project and we haven't done any of that work yet.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

I'm not sure if this would go to Justice or whatnot, but do we have a number of how many tickets were given out for no helmet offences on Side By Sides this past year since the legislation was brought in?

**S. STOODLEY:** That's not something that we would keep track of. I'm interested, but that would have to come out of law enforcement, yeah.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

Under 3.2.01 again, provincial revenue, what inspections do people or businesses have to pay for? Which type of inspections are down over this period of time, and could we get a break down of that, whether it be buses or cars or vehicles?

**S. STOODLEY:** One second. If we're talking about –

**C. TIBBS:** Just because the revenue's down half a million dollars.

**S. STOODLEY:** Yes. This is not vehicle inspections; this is more elevator inspections, boiler pressure vessel inspections. There are some instances where if we require an inspection we will go and do an inspection. Certain times a commercial business might need an inspection on an expedited timeline.

Whereas we would pay to send someone to do an inspection that we want to do on our time frame, but let's say a company wanted an inspection in two days' time, they would then pay for the travel for that expedited inspection and pay for the inspection. So that's kind of the inspections; it's for boiler pressure vessels and elevators.

**C. TIBBS:** Thank you, Minister.

I'm done, Chair.

**CHAIR:** MHA Brown?

**J. BROWN:** I'm done as well, Chair.

**CHAIR:** You're done as well.

Okay, I ask the Clerk to recall the subheading.

**CLERK:** Digital Government and Services, 3.1.01 to 3.4.02 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 3.1.01 to 3.4.02 inclusive, Digital Government and Services carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

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.'

Carried.

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

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

**CHAIR:** Okay. So first, I just want to ask the minister if she has anything further to say.

**S. STOODLEY:** No, we've got a list of things to send you. So thank you very much. I believe we have some binders for you as well.

I just want to thank all of the team for all of their hard work and, obviously, most of them who aren't here with us, thank them for their hard work and thank you for your very important questions.

**CHAIR:** MHA Tibbs, do you have anything further?

**C. TIBBS:** No. Good job, Minister. I appreciate your answers and your team's answers as well. Keep up the good work.

**CHAIR:** MHA Brown?

**J. BROWN:** Yes. Thank you, Minister. Thank you, staff, for coming out this evening and doing this and I also look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Evan, for clerking. I thank the Broadcast staff for this as well.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

So the time of the next meeting is Wednesday April 26, at 5:30 p.m., to consider the Estimates of the Department of Labrador Affairs.

I ask for a motion to adjourn.

**L. STOYLES:** So moved.

**CHAIR:** MHA Stoyles.

This meeting is now adjourned.

Thank you very much.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.