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

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Department of Justice and Public Safety

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Honourable Perry Trimper, MHA

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Chair: Derek Bennett, MHA

Members: David Brazil, MHA
Jim Dinn, MHA
Paul Dinn, MHA
Elvis Loveless, MHA
Pam Parsons, MHA
Scott Reid, MHA
Sarah Stoodley, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Elizabeth Murphy

Appearing:

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Hon. Andrew Parsons, MHA, Minister
Danielle Barron, Director of Communications
Chief Joe Boland, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
Dan Chafe, High Sheriff
Joanne Chidley, Manager, Policy Analyst
Lesley Clarke, Media Relations Manager
Neil Croke, Manager of Public Safety and Enforcement
Mark Fleming, Executive Assistant
Andrew Green, Departmental Controller
Thomas Hayward, Manager of Budgeting
Iain Hollett, Director of Public Prosecutions, Assistant Deputy Minister, Criminal
Jennifer Mercer, Deputy Minister
Pegah Memarpour, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning
Megan Nesbitt, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety and Enforcement
Shelley Organ, Chief Executive Officer, Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal
Rolf Pritchard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Legal Services
Joanne Turner, Director of Court Services, Provincial Court
Kendra Wright, Assistant Deputy Minister of Courts and Corporate Services

Also Present

Steve Crocker, MHA
Alison Coffin, MHA, Leader of the Third Party
Lela Evans, MHA
Megan Drodge, Researcher, Official Opposition Caucus
Paul Lane, MHA
Ivan Morgan, Researcher, NDP Caucus

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

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

MS. P. PARSONS: Order, please!

Okay, I think we're all ready to start.

CLERK (Murphy): The first item of business is to elect a Chair.

Are there any nominations for Chair?

MS. P. PARSONS: Any nominations for Chair?

Mr. Derek Bennett.

CLERK: Mr. Derek Bennett.

Okay, are there any further nominations for Chair?

The first order of business is to elect the Chair.

So, we are looking for a nomination for the Chair.

MS. P. PARSONS: Which MHA Derek Bennett.

CLERK: Mr. Bennett.

He's not here, but he can be elected in absentia.

MS. P. PARSONS: All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MS. P. PARSONS: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: Now, you conduct the election of the Vice-Chair.

MS. P. PARSONS: Now, we will conduct the election of a Vice-Chair.

Any nominations? Anyone?

Can I nominate someone?

CLERK: Yes.

MS. P. PARSONS: I'm going to nominate MHA Conway.

Do you accept?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes, I accept.

MS. P. PARSONS: All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MS. P. PARSONS: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

I will be substituting tonight for MHA Derek Bennett. I understand there are a lot of first-time people here tonight, in this process for the first time, so we'll all bear with each other and get along.

Elizabeth.

CLERK: So the first thing to do is to ask people to introduce themselves.

CHAIR (P. Parsons): Okay, so what we will do is we will start on this side with the department and we'll have everyone introduce themselves.

We'll start here.

MR. CHAFE: Dan Chafe, High Sheriff.

MR. BOLAND: Joe Boland, Chief of Police, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

MS. MERCER: Jennifer Mercer, I'm the Deputy Minister.

MR. A. PARSONS: Andrew Parsons, MHA, Burgeo - La Poile, Minister of Justice and Public Safety.

MR. GREEN: Andrew Green, Departmental Controller.

MS. WRIGHT: Kendra Wright, Assistant Deputy Minister of Courts and Corporate Services.

MS. BARRON: Danielle Barron, Director of Communications.

MS. CLARKE: Lesley Clarke, Media Relations Manager.

MR. FLEMING: Mark Fleming, Executive Assistant.

MR. PRITCHARD: Rolf Pritchard, Assistant Deputy Minister for Legal Services.

MR. HAYWARD: Thomas Hayward, Manager of Budgeting.

MS. NESBITT: Megan Nesbitt, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Safety and Enforcement.

MR. HOLLETT: Iain Hollett, Director of Public Prosecutions, Assistant Deputy Minister, Criminal.

MR. CROKE: Neil Croke, Manager of Public Safety and Enforcement.

MS. CHIDLEY: Joanne Chidley, Manager, Policy Analyst.

MS. MEMARPOUR: Pegah Memarpour, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning.

MS. TURNER: Joanne Turner, Director of Court Services, Provincial Court.

MS. ORGAN: Shelley Organ, Chief Executive Officer, Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal.

CHAIR: Okay. We'll start over here.

MR. LANE: Paul Lane, MHA for the District of Mount Pearl - Southlands.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Helen Conway Ottenheimer, MHA for Harbour Main.

MS. DRODGE: Megan Drodge, Researcher with the Official Opposition caucus.

MR. P. DINN: Paul Dinn, MHA, Topsail - Paradise.

MS. COFFIN: Alison Coffin, MHA, St. John's East - Quidi Vidi.

MR. MORGAN: Ivan Morgan, Researcher, NDP caucus.

MS. STOODLEY: Sarah Stoodley, MHA for Mount Scio.

MR. CROCKER: Steve Crocker, MHA, Carbonear - Trinity - Bay de Verde.

CHAIR: Okay.

Sorry, did we get you there?

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

CHAIR: Is that everyone?

So the minister has 15 minutes to introduce his Estimates, the Member speaking immediately in the reply to the minister has 15 minutes and all other Committee Members have 10 minutes to speak. Members may also be referred to in Standing Committees by their name, rather than by their district or portfolio, and may speak as often as they wish.

So we're ready to begin.

CLERK: The Members should identify themselves (inaudible).

CHAIR: And identify themselves before you speak, please.

CLERK: So you start with the first subhead.

1.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

MR. A. PARSONS: So I guess I'll kick off. I know I have 15 minutes; I don't plan on using it, except to say that I'm surrounded by the brains of the Justice department, and so glad to have them all here. Some of them have been to a few of these Estimates; some, this is their first time.

The reason we have such a big crowd here is that I think it provides a better opportunity to ask questions as it relates to policy, decision-making, expenditures, just about anything from people that are actually doing the work, whether it's the chief of police or running the court services. Thankfully, I've got Andrew here to – because Andrew actually does all the hard work of explaining how the money is all put there.

I'm happy to answer as many questions as you put forward. If we want to delve into policy or anything like that, by all means. And ready to roll.

CHAIR: Okay. So the next person to speak, it's a go.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I'll just make one comment in regard to your opening statements, Minister. I can see that you have a great group there and contingent, and I would just ask – this is my first time as well, so bear with me, I may ask questions that perhaps may not fall in line, but I'll do the best I can. And I know this is all in the spirit of learning as much information as possible.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. A. PARSONS: I appreciate that. So I don't actually have much to say about the Estimates itself. I figure the best thing is that if you guys have questions, we'll do the line by line starting with 1.1.01.

Given that I've been through a few these, maybe I can give some background in really what I've seen Oppositions do, or what we used to do. I think you get – is it 10 minutes on the clock? So you have 10 minutes.

So, basically, what we've done is do the full block of 10 minutes.

Can we just use first names here?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes, absolutely.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, Helen's going to go first for 10 minutes, you might get into the

second or third one, then when your 10 minutes is up, then it goes to Alison. She has every ability to backtrack and go ask questions that haven't been answered, same with independents, whatever, but it's a lot easier doing that than trying to – you get into a flow once you get your 10 minutes, and it's easier to stay in that.

If we go past something and you want another crack at it later, by all means go back and just make sure you get the questions you want to ask no matter what the time is.

I'll throw it back. I don't have much to say, I blabbered on for a few minutes in the House today, so let's just answer the questions.

CHAIR: And, again, just feel comfortable, it's an informal atmosphere. Just identify yourself before speaking, everyone. Okay?

Okay, you can begin.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Under Minister's Office, that's 1.1.01, under Salaries, can the minister please explain why salaries are forecasted to increase by \$11,400 in '19-'20?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah. So what happened there is previously in this role, as both minister and Government House Leader, I've had, like all ministers had, an executive assistant. Plus, under the caucus, we had a – I'm trying to think what the name was – House Leader assistant.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: The person that was doing that role, Devon Ryan, actually ended up going over to Health and Community Services.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: We were – I'm trying to remember now – partway through a session at the time. Instead of bringing somebody in to go through the retraining and learning and everything else, it was just decided that Mark Fleming would continue on as House assistant and the executive assistant, and then what there was, there was a change in salary to – so, basically, it became – actually, if the other salary, and I don't have the numbers here exactly, if the other salary was \$40,000, we said we'd cut that

to \$20,000 and that would be the corresponding raise for taking on that entire new role.

So, the difference between this year and last year is last year I had two people working with me every day; this year I have one doing both roles.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Executive Support, specifically Salaries, looking at fiscal '18 to '19, there's a large increase from the budgeted amount of \$859,300 to the revised of \$1,385,000.

So can the minister please explain why this occurred?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

That would've been severance coming from different changes in positions there.

Maybe what I can do is, I've got Andrew next to me; he can probably provide a little more clarification as to different moves.

MR. GREEN: There was some retirement expenditures. We carried two deputy ministers for a short period of time as a transition, and we had an unfunded media manager position, which was right-sized in this budget cycle. So, we never had the funding for it last year but we kept it in an unfunded ADM, which we've right-sized in this budget.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

So that accounts for the increased difference of about \$525,000?

MR. GREEN: Yes.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah, okay. Thank you.

Under Salaries as well, comparing the budget of '18-'19 to the budget of '19-'20, the salary envelope is increasing to \$1,054,400.

Can Andrew please explain that or -?

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

We funded the media manager and ADM position, and it's less from attrition. There's been attrition applied across all of our departments proportionately, so there's little allocations in every division. If you see in some divisions they might have a \$1,700 reduction, that's attrition. In this division, we had a \$10,000 reduction in attrition.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

And under Employee Benefits, I see that Employee Benefits went over budget by \$1,200. Why was that?

MR. GREEN: That would be the additional deputy minister Law Society fees.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Looking at Transportation and Communications, from '18-'19 the budget was \$34,200, the revised increased to \$46,000 and the budget for '19-'20 is being set at \$37,000. Can Andrew explain that please? That's under Transportation and Communications.

MR. GREEN: Some of that is phone-related expenditures for landlines and mobility. Then we had FPT travel for the executive, and we hosted an FPT, which had some expenditures in there as well. Some of the other expenditures would fall in Supplies and Purchased Services for hosting that FPT.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could just give us some context here.

FPT being federal-provincial-territorial meetings, as the first one we hosted, it was in November. So usually when you go you send up a team of three to four people. Where we hosted this year, the hosting fees in terms of booking the rooms, having the convention hall, entertainment, whatever comes with it. That's why you saw a pretty big change there from what it normally is.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, I see, thank you.

And under Supplies, we see that it went over budget from '18-'19 by \$16,500.

Can one of your explain that too, please?

MR. GREEN: Same thing.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Same thing?

MR. A. PARSONS: That would be the same thing.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Same thing.

MR. A. PARSONS: It still comes with the federal-provincial-territorial.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

And Purchased Services, that also went over budget.

MR. GREEN: That would be like –

MR. A. PARSONS: Hang on a second, (inaudible).

MR. GREEN: Oh, sorry.

Rental fees for facility, or if you had some Eastern Audio, if you had some expenditures related to that, they would've been part of the FPT. They go in Purchased Services.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Under Administrative and Policy Support, 1.2.02, under Salaries, can you explain the variance in the Salaries?

You see that last year, there was \$1,449,100 was budgeted; however, only \$1,095,000 was spent. You see that's a difference of approximately \$34,000. And then we see in '19-'20, the budget is increased to \$1,783,000.

Why the variance there?

MR. A. PARSONS: That would've been from the delay in the commencement of the Drug Treatment Court. We had some savings there because it didn't get off the ground, I think, until December 2018. The same with the Family Violence Intervention Court. There was money put to the side because we were looking at, hopefully, getting it off the ground in Central, that didn't end up getting spent. I believe during the same period, there would've been job vacancies in different positions from time to time where you saw savings.

That's why you also see the increase there going up to \$1.7 million and change because now you have the – not only is the Drug Treatment Court up and running for the full year, our plan is also, again, to have the money there for the Family Violence Intervention Court, allowing for the expansion.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Now, I understand that there were two: the Labrador Family Violence Intervention Court and the central Family Violence Intervention Court.

Is that what you were referring to there?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Both of those? Yes.

I'm just wondering, I notice last year, the intent was to have four Family Violence Intervention Courts, or at least that's what was referred to.

That has not happened, has it, or can you provide an update?

MR. A. PARSONS: No.

So, in the original mandate letter, it was for four regional Family Violence Intervention Courts. The St. John's one is up and running, Western is up and running, Central – the phrase that our former deputy minister used when we were doing Western: there was some sand in the gears. So, we decided against delaying the expansion.

It's not purely a departmental move. We also have to work with the Provincial Court judges in figuring that out.

Central will happen this year. As I've said before, when I first got here, there was planning on putting it in Clarendville, which I didn't, personally, feel was Central. I felt that it would be Gander or Grand Falls-Windsor. Again, you got to work with the chief judge on that and work with the court staff to figure that out.

Labrador, it was planned to have it in mandate but, as you get into it, we've had greater issues just in terms of infrastructure in the Labrador Provincial Court which didn't make it feasible. That's still our goal, though, is to have regional family intervention courts in all those centres.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Legal Information Management, the Salaries last year, \$471,600 was budgeted but only \$383,400 was spent. Was that because there was a position left unfilled, perhaps, for a portion of the year or some other reason?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, the same thing. It would have been vacancies there.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: Do you know who? What was the position that was vacant?

MR. PRITCHARD: Thank you.

There were a number of vacancies in Legal Information Management. There are actually two components in Legal Information Management. There's the law library and there's the registry. There's a vacancy in the law library and there were some vacancies in the registry side, and the ones in the registry side have since been filled. But that's why it was lower last year.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Transportation and Communications, I notice that went over budget by \$2,700 last year. Andrew, can you explain that?

MR. A. PARSONS: That would have been Michelle O'Keefe having to travel to Labrador to do some work on behalf of the department, which would explain the increase there.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: And she is, Michelle –

MR. A. PARSONS: What's her technical position?

MR. PRITCHARD: She's the manager of legal information.

MR. A. PARSONS: Manager.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Under Supplies, last year from '18-'19 Supplies went over budget by \$40,000. Can the minister or can Andrew please explain what was purchased that wasn't budgeted for?

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay. Go for it, Rolf.

MR. PRITCHARD: Thank you.

That particular line in the budget is for subscriptions and so forth that are purchased and used in the library. They will vary from time to time and year to year depending on the particular projects or the nature of the research or the litigation that is taking place. They may be required to purchase particular software or different subscriptions for legal materials. It will vary from year to year and it can be difficult to predict at times.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

So primarily subscriptions to computer software?

MR. PRITCHARD: Legal periodicals and software.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Purchased Services last year went over budget by \$4,400. Can you explain what was purchased that wasn't budgeted for?

MR. GREEN: The Purchased Services expenditures there is mostly Xerox expenditures, but it went over budget based on shredding and document retrievals. So if things are out in storage, we have to pay expenditure to get it back if it's required.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

The Member's time has now expired, so we will move on. Next – just identify yourself here.

MS. COFFIN: There we go, thank you.

Can we go back to 1.2.01, Executive Support? I understand that a lot of your expenditures were a result of the FPT conference. Were you not aware of the conference a year ago when budget planning was happening? Usually these things, if you're hosting, you tend to know a little bit ahead of time.

MR. A. PARSONS: Actually, we took it over for the Northwest Territories. They had been planning to do it, couldn't arrange the hotel space, so we agreed on the last part of it to take it on and host it, which is why we couldn't account for it, as you suggest.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

Let's go to 1.2.02, Transportation and Communications, \$76,000 extra from budget to revised – what happened there?

MR. GREEN: This is the allocation for departmental postage expenditures, plus the landlines for our divisions.

MS. COFFIN: Uh-huh.

MR. GREEN: So our postage expenditures last year were \$355,000.

MS. COFFIN: So Transportation and Communications went from \$329,000 to \$405,000?

MR. GREEN: Yes, so then there's other – we have landlines to those, and then there's some travel for – so that line item includes all of our landlines and mobile phones for the finance shop and the policy shop, it includes travel for the finance shop and policy shop and it includes departmental postage expenditures.

MS. COFFIN: So it went up by \$76,000 over budget. What happened? Why did we see the overage?

MR. GREEN: It's based on the increase in postage expenditures. So costs in postage have increased by 17 per cent since 2013-14, and it's

mostly due to the increase in the stamps. Stamps have increased 48 per cent over that period of time.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

Let's see, Grants and Subsidies, there's an extra \$500,000 put in Grants and Subsidies over budget in the last year.

MR. GREEN: There was litigation expenditure – so in Civil Law, we have an allowance in assistance which pays for litigation settlements and there was a settlement for the Newfoundland Eastern School District. But based on accounting rules, because they are a grant, we had to move the money into our grants to pay them back.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, so they came in from another government department.

MR. GREEN: It came in through Civil Law.

MS. COFFIN: Can you tell me what the settlement was?

MR. A. PARSONS: Do you know which one it was?

MR. PRITCHARD: Many of the settlements that the Department of Justice engages in – in fact, most of them are subject to settlement privilege. And so it's a condition for both the litigants which would include the government entity and the plaintiff or the other defendant that you can't discuss the terms of the settlement publicly. We would be revealing settlement privilege, so you can't really speak about it in any more detail other than to indicate that they were settlement funds.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So the settlement was in favour of the Eastern School District and they were bestowed a sum for something –

MR. PRITCHARD: That's correct.

MS. COFFIN: – \$500,000.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

Did we get this one – the Supplies overages I had a look at.

In 1.2.04, Property, Furnishings and Equipment, we had a \$127,000 overage in the last year. I noticed it went back down again in Estimates. Can you explain to me what the overage was about?

MR. A. PARSONS: I think I can jump in there. That was the increase in the RNC police vehicle allotment. I think we got – the number is 16. So that's 16 new police vehicles and that's the slot that that would have found itself in.

MS. COFFIN: How many extra cars do they get for \$127,000?

MR. A. PARSONS: Four?

MS. COFFIN: Sixteen?

OFFICIAL: We get 10 to 12 a year.

MR. A. PARSONS: Ten to 12 a year and they got four new ones.

MS. COFFIN: Sixteen for \$127,000?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah. I thought it was 16.

OFFICIAL: We normally get 10 to 12 (inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, normally we get 10 to 12 a year. This year we got 16.

MS. COFFIN: Oh.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Good, way to go.

All right, let's talk about Salaries, Fines Administration, is that attrition, the \$16,200 that's down from *Budget 2019* to '19-'20 estimates?

MR. GREEN: Yes, it is.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So, does that mean that you have the same number of staff but one retired and you put a new junior person back?

MR. GREEN: No –

MS. COFFIN: It was just total attrition, and that was (inaudible).

MR. GREEN: There's an attrition allocation for the department and we just apply – we have to meet the attrition targets throughout the year.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. GREEN: We just proportionately applied it against each salary allocation.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So say for example –

MR. GREEN: There are no positions down in Fines Administration.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, all right, yeah, I'm sorry.

So across the whole department, you may have had three or four people from – you lost that many from attrition, but then you averaged out the salary cost across all salaries. Is that –?

MR. GREEN: We haven't met the target yet, so we're going to meet it – the money is taken, and then we have this fiscal year to find the positions that make up that allocation.

MS. COFFIN: Oh.

MR. GREEN: So the total allocation for us is \$450,000 and then we've applied that across the department. I don't know where – we have to have those meetings throughout the year.

MS. COFFIN: You have to find that attrition. Okay, all right.

Transportation and Communications, you saved money. You're down \$8,000 unspent. They got emails instead of letters mailed?

MR. GREEN: Their mail gets charged to the previous division. They do a lot of mail outs.

On the savings would be, there was some savings in contravention money that wasn't spent this fiscal year. We had a federal agreement for contraventions ticketing and they didn't spend all the money and it was allocated in different areas in the operating accounts.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

We have Property, Furnishings and Equipment, is someone without a desk for \$5,000? That's the attrition model, if we don't have the desk, we don't have to put a person in it?

MR. GREEN: No, people have desks.

MS. COFFIN: There's extra up on the fifth floor if you want, outside.

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, the federal revenue, we've got Amount to be Voted, federal revenue is down; provincial revenue is down.

Is provincial revenue down due to fines or is there another reason, like a lack of fines collected?

MR. A PARSONS: That would likely be the case when it comes to provincial fines. It could be for a number of reasons.

I don't have the stats right here as it relates to the number of tickets handed out. We did see last year across the *Highway Traffic Act* a significant increase in different ticket amounts, which could have corresponded. If you know that you have to pay \$100 for a cellphone fine and now it's gone up to \$500, you might have fewer fines if more people are driving without the phone.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, so the budgeted number, provincial revenue, \$920,000, that was how much you expected to earn in revenue by tickets?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. COFFIN: All right. We need to talk to the RNC. We'll get there.

Federal revenue, we're down by \$100,000 there. What happened there? Are the feds not giving us money?

MR. GREEN: There was an allocation for a federal-provincial agreement on cannabis ticketing for \$100,000 and the agreement never got signed last year. We didn't spend the money

and we didn't collect any money, or we didn't get the money back from the federal government.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So there was supposed to be the ticketing in place, the ticketing didn't happen, therefore you didn't get the money. Okay, all right.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could just jump in for a second.

The person that handles fines just gave a few notes here that I think would be helpful for the process. Just sort of a summary of what they did over the last year talking about salary differences, training periods and late payment penalty amounts have decreased because of delays in keying tickets that require us to remove the late fees when notices are late.

Ticket processing fees have decreased since a high of \$967,000 in 2016. The high was a result of the increase in the fee from seven to nine per ticket in September 2016. The ticket processing fees for 2018-19 dropped directly related to fees for the City of St. John's, which decreased from \$577,000 to \$389,000. So that would be related to the stories you hear on the news about the City of St. John's with their meters, all the meters are broken so they are hauling in less.

We were doing the processing for them and we charged them more for that, but there was fewer of those going through.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: The total receipts was roughly the same as the year before, \$10.4 million.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: The provincial victim fine surcharge has gone up over the last three years. There's an increase in that from 15 to 30 per cent in September 2016. So that amount has gone up, but that's a little more context to go with the Fines Admin side.

MS. COFFIN: Of course.

We won't do a five second question, hey?

MR. A. PARSONS: We can come back, that's not a problem.

MS. COFFIN: Oh, no, there's more. I have more questions, don't you worry.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired and we're going to move on.

Next speaker.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Under 1.2.04 Administrative Support, how often is a vehicle replaced? You were speaking of the new vehicles for the RNC.

MR. A. PARSONS: Which section was that again? Sorry, I missed –

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: It's 1.2.04.

MR. A. PARSONS: Admin Support?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah, Admin Support.

MR. A. PARSONS: The RNC vehicles.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: It really depends on the usage of the vehicle. The chief might even be able to jump in on this, but in some cases, when it hits X number of kilometres, that's one thing.

We had an issue a couple of years ago where we had to go out and rent vehicles for a while because there was a manufacturer's defect with a number of the vehicles. I think we ended up in litigation on that one, if I recall correctly.

In some cases it depends on the usage. It's not the kilometres that's the issue, it's just where they're being driven and how they're being driven, but maybe the chief can jump in and provide some background as well.

MR. BOLAND: Some of our fleet is patrol services, which is frontline 24-7. The vehicles are operating constantly and that's the highest demand. So, if you're asking for years of service, that vehicle is probably three to four years.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. BOLAND: Then you have a Criminal Investigation Division vehicle, which is basically a 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, even though they do some weekend work, but those vehicles could be six, seven or eight years in service.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I see. Thank you.

What is the current size of the RNC fleet, including cars, trucks, snowmobiles, ATVs, et cetera?

MR. BOLAND: I think it's 150 in total.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Do you have a hope to add more or increase more vehicles this year? There's always a wish, I guess.

MR. BOLAND: Do I have a need for more vehicles? Is that what you're asking me?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MR. BOLAND: I would say that in our Patrol Services section, there is a demand for that part of our fleet and we would hope to increase, not necessarily the size of the fleet, I think the size is accurate, but some of the age of that fleet would need to be replaced.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under 1.3.01, Fines Administration, with respect to Salaries, comparing '18-'19 to '19-'20, there's a \$16,200 reduction in Salaries. Can Andrew Parsons please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Attrition.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Attrition.

So getting back to attrition, you mentioned that the total attrition target this year is approximately \$450,000, I understand, but what is the attrition allocation in terms of number of positions?

MR. GREEN: That is yet to be determined.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. GREEN: So we just have to try to make up the \$450,000 through vacancies or targeting retirements. I think there are rules around we are not allowed to lay people off, we have to target a vacant position or a potential retirement.

MR. A. PARSONS: My understanding of how this process works is that Finance would work with departments to figure out attrition targets for each department, the department gets it and then you have to work within the department over the year to figure out do how you come to that number, where do you find that – again, going by the rules Andrew said about no layoffs. I don't think – there was no loss of positions over the last year, was there?

MR. GREEN: We had attrition targets for '18-'19 that we met, so it was \$570,000 in '18-'19.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MR. GREEN: And we eliminated nine vacant positions.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Can Andrew Parsons please give an update on how many people work in the Fines Administration division?

CHAIR: Okay, just a reminder, if we could identify ourselves before speaking every time, please, for Broadcast Centre purposes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Right now, Fines Admin has a staff of 15: seven financial collection officers, three clerk IIIs, two clerk typist IIIs, two clerk IVs and a director. I think one of the FCOs is actually vacant and they just had the job competition and will be filling it hopefully within two or three weeks, pending security notice – clearance.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Last year in Estimates, it was mentioned that there was going to be a bilingual clerk hired. Did that occur?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, I think there was under the financial collection officers.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Under Fines Administration, continuing on with that, you mentioned there had been an agreement with the federal department regarding cannabis, which was not signed. Can you please give some background on that and if there was a delay that was under the Fines Admin?

MR. GREEN: In budget prep for *Budget 2018*, we were preparing for new cannabis legislation and we had some concept federal-provincial agreements that we and other provinces and territories were working with. One of them was with respect to the ticketing offence, and we would have had a potential federal-provincial agreement in place for ticketing expenditures related to actually purchasing the tickets.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. All right, thank you.

With respect to Revenue - Provincial, last year \$920,600 was budgeted, but only \$725,100 obtained. Can Andrew Parsons please explain why the budget estimate was \$195,500 more than what was collected?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes. The \$920,000 would have been the estimate based on what was the projected. As I discussed earlier, where there was a decrease in fines received from the City of St. John's due to meter issues that they had, there was a decrease there. I guess in some ways it was counteracted by the increase in the processing fee from \$7 to \$9, but what you eventually ended up with was \$725,000, so there was a decrease there.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Can you provide an update of what is outstanding in terms of what needs to be collected in terms of fines?

MR. A. PARSONS: Right now, as of March 31, 2019, fiscal '18-'19, in this province, there is

about \$42 million in fines, penalties and surcharges outstanding. Last year, there was \$10.4 million in fines collected, which, if you look at the numbers, we're pretty consistent with getting around 80 per cent that's owed every year. Even though I don't have this number, I'll bet \$42 million – I'm willing to say I bet you about \$32 million of that is historical debt going back decades and decades, just cannot be collected; it's just bad debt. You're battling about 80 per cent there. We got \$1.5 million through CRA, so they managed to do that part.

I guess the stats that I'm using have been pretty consistent over the last number of years. The one big change was, in 2013, there was a decrease in the number of financial collection officers in that division. They dropped that down. You had a corresponding decrease in collection with fewer collection officers. We managed to go to six. We are actually now at seven. So the numbers have gone up, but we are still approaching that historical barrier.

But the \$42 million, that's not all in 2018-19. Like I say, there is a very big chunk of that – we could probably go to Finance to get the actual number. Eight out of 10 people are paying when they go to renew their licence. They are paying; they don't have an issue. It is the other two that choose to not pay. And a lot of them, especially the ones you see on the news, are people with significant records for driving without insurance, driving without registration, and they continue to do it. They continue to get fined. The fines get larger that are imposed on them. They did not have any money to pay the last one, so they are not going to have any money to pay this one, either.

Right now, we know that Supreme Court has talked about the concept of putting people in jail based on poverty is not a real reason. We just did some media this week on trying something new, not in terms of the collection, but in terms of paying off some of that stuff owing – a pilot project. That will be launched in the fall. But I got to tell you this is one of the things that have gone a long – when I was sitting on that side I was asking the same questions.

Then you get in and it is very hard when these people have – one of the good things, and I know Mr. Lane has just talked about this. We

just announced that, moving forward, we are one of the only few provinces – and we talked about this with the insurance, all the work we have done with the insurance companies. We are going to see plates going with people. That's one of the things that are moving towards.

There is a huge infrastructure cost in terms of having the system. But I agree with the concept, and that is where we are hoping to move. I think it is only us and New Brunswick that are the only provinces that are still not there. But what you are seeing now, these people are going out and buying the beater car for \$500. They will have insurance. Boom, they get down the road and they call and cancel the insurance. It is a big issue.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member's time is expired.

Now, moving on ...

MS. COFFIN: Thank you.

Since we are talking about fines, you have been quoted as saying collecting fines from people who owe large amounts is a bee in your bonnet. Recently, you did announce that you are looking at the concept of allowing people who owe large amounts of money in traffic fines the option of community service to work off that money. A number of concerns about that – first of all, how would it actually work in practice? How would community service be valued? What types of community service would you do? What kinds of matching programs might happen? And how would that work be supervised?

MR. A. PARSONS: We did announce the fines option program. It's actually going on in a number of other provinces. The Auditor General, actually, identified it about five years ago in saying it was a possible option and allowable as something we could do.

So what we're going to do is it's going to be monitored under our probation officers – the Probation department within the division. We are still in the final stages of figuring out what

are the community groups that want to apply to be a part of this and who are interested individuals that want to be a part of this. I can say, from a personal anecdote level, I've been contacted by multiple people who say, look, I'm in this spiral now that I can't get out of. This is something that I'd like to try. I cannot get out of this right now.

We've had some issues when they call in and want to get on a payment plan. They'll say that's fine, but you have to come up with a down payment. Again, it defeats the purpose coming up with that down payment. They just don't have it. A lot of people don't have that means.

Without revealing some of the final details that we're working out, our plan is to have it ready for the fall, monitored by Probations and it's going to be a pilot. Some people, it's not going to work for; some people, it will. I can say that the other methods that have been tried, when we got in, were basically going to take people to court. When you have Crown attorneys going into court 28 times on one file and coming out with zero dollars collected, we haven't moved forward in that regard. It was, actually, a huge use of resources with no return.

In terms of the valuation, I might – this is where I throw Pegah out there. Pegah has been working on this policy for some time, so maybe you can provide some of the insight that I just do not know.

MS. MEMARPOUR: We are also, as the minister said, looking at various jurisdictions and how they are doing it and how it is working for them, and working with our Probation office to move forward, and working with the community groups. So we are still, again, in the final planning stages and consultations will be a huge piece of that.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, as a follow-up question then, what is the uptake rate you expect to have? I think you mentioned earlier that you had about an 80 per cent of people who pay fines, but you have an enormous amount that is not collected. What kind of rate or what kind of share of the outstanding fines do you expect to be able to recapture with this community service program?

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't know if we have an actual valuation of exactly how much money there is. It is amazing that you can come up with a significant number just based – we did have a top 10 list of the top 10 owing debtors in this province.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Which I would point out, for the record, are not all traffic fines. Some are illegal contraband, cigarettes, things like that which come with a significant fine. I think that would be valued differently and I don't know if that would even be eligible –

MS. COFFIN: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: – for this. In terms of the amount, again, I don't know if Pegah, that's something off top of the head.

MS. MEMARPOUR: I was going to say part of the pilot will be evaluating the number of people that come through and working with Fines Administration on seeing the people who can be part of that program and that'll part of the evaluation pieces program.

MS. COFFIN: Do you know how well it's working in other provinces?

MS. MEMARPOUR: Sorry, pardon?

MS. COFFIN: Do you know how well it's working in other provinces? Like what kind of recovery rate do they have?

MS. MEMARPOUR: I don't believe they have the stats on that –

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MS. MEMARPOUR: – presently, but that – stat collection is huge for us, so that'll be part of that pilot piece.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

Will there be an expectation that once you get the easier ones to collect, the ones that are harder to collect, obviously, are probably not going to go into this program, so very soon, once the easy ones to collect have been

collected, then we're left in a situation where the program is no longer working, and there's a lot of people with outstanding fines that would not have fit in the program in the first place – so would there be an expectation that once we reach that point that the program will be folded?

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't want to jump that far ahead, that's pretty far – I don't want to say that the program is so successful that it's now failed before we haven't got it off the ground.

MS. COFFIN: It could be so successful then you just say it's done, it's not failed, it actually worked, check.

MR. A. PARSONS: What I say is this: In sitting here in this House, this is one of those issues when I was sitting on that side, I used to ask a lot of questions about it. We got here, and it's a difficult nut to crack, there's no doubt.

MS. COFFIN: Mmm.

MR. A. PARSONS: One was tried when we got there, and we said let's continue on. There's people that have tried at this; let's not stop it. This is one of those problems – and again, this is not a Newfoundland and Labrador issue, this is an every single jurisdiction –

MS. COFFIN: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: – issue. So I want to try this. If it's not successful, we'll look at, you know, were there things we did wrong or was it just the process is wrong and then it's on to the next idea. I just want to try something new, rather than the age-old philosophy which sometimes people express: Oh well, let's just put these people in jail. And that's just a bigger cost on the system and you still have zero recovery.

MS. COFFIN: Yes.

I appreciate new alternatives, absolutely. Unfortunately, I don't want to spend a whole lot of money, or a tremendous amount of money on something just to try and see if it works. As a follow-up to that, government has tried many different approaches in the last decade or more, a consolidation of fines collection being the most recent attempt. How has that plan worked?

MR. A. PARSONS: I can't say that I'm following, to be honest with you. Consolidation of fines –

MS. COFFIN: No, this is still on my policy questions; I've gone over to this part.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, I think that's under the Department of Finance.

MS. COFFIN: Is it?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, I will move that question for when I have Finance.

MR. A. PARSONS: Save that for Tom.

MS. COFFIN: Excellent, he'll be delighted.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MS. COFFIN: Yeah, you can let him know (inaudible). Remember, I'm a teacher and I know cheat sheets.

Okay, let's go back over here: Civil Law, 2.1.01. I noticed that the Salaries from budget 18-19 to 19-20 has gone down. I assume that's attrition again?

CHAIR: Okay, I'm just going to jump in here. If people are finished on this subhead, we're going to call it. Because I noticed we've moved on to Civil Law and Enforcement here. Are there any more questions on the first subhead?

MR. LANE: Madam Chair, I haven't asked any questions yet (inaudible).

CHAIR: So we'll stay with this subhead.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay. So before we move on to the next subhead, maybe give everybody a chance to ask those questions and then we can move on to the next one. Is that okay?

CHAIR: Yes.

We'll start with the Member Lane here.

MR. LANE: Minister, on the fines thing, I just have a couple of questions on that as well. First

of all, as you say, the idea of the licence plate going with the individual, I really think in the final analysis that's going to be the best solution that we're going to come up with as it relates to this ongoing issue.

At least you will be able to identify the people that are doing this or hopefully the police will be able to identify them much quicker and get them off the road much quicker. I commend you for trying this new initiative. I'm a little skeptical about it I'll be honest, because I believe that anybody that would rack up that many fines and would be charged by the RNC or the RCMP multiple times for no licence, no insurance, no registration and then do it again and do it again and do it again, I got my doubts that these people are going to willingly agree to go paint some church fence or do some charity work for the Lions Club or whatever. They're probably going to tell you – they probably won't show up or will have no interest in doing it would be my initial thought.

Anybody who would be of the mindset of community service are probably the type of people who, (a), would have paid their fines when they had them and certainly they made have made a mistake once but they wouldn't be making it over and over and over and over again.

You might get a few off the list and I certainly appreciate the effort in doing that. And I hope we do get some off the list. At the end of the day, though, they're still going to have uncollected fines because it's not like money is coming in. You're just going to – a charity group or something will benefit from their toil, so to speak. The money will still be owing to the province if I read it correctly of what you envisioning.

MR. A. PARSONS: The money is worked off, we'll say, so it's deemed –

MR. LANE: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. LANE: Yeah, but it's not worked off in the sense that the money that's outstanding is still not going into government coffers. There is no money; it's just that we get them off the books

and hopefully some charitable group benefits, right?

MR. A. PARSONS: You can't get blood out of a stone.

MR. LANE: Exactly. I agree.

I wish you best of luck with it, but that's my comment. I really do think that, as you say, we do need to move in a direction of the licence plates and I hope that's going to happen.

We talked about the Family Violence Intervention Court. I understand in the other questioning we said that Central was supposed to happen and it got delayed and, of course, we have issues in Labrador. We have it in Western and we have it here. The first one, of course, was here on the East Coast.

I certainly acknowledge that I think it was a good move. I acknowledge the former Member for St. John's Centre who really, really pushed it. I have to give her credit for that one as well. I'm just wondering, how is that working? Is it working the way that you thought it was going to work and positive results?

MR. A. PARSONS: I can speak anecdotally. One of the biggest issues or challenges that came with the establishment of the court was convincing people to be a part of it. I guess one of the arguments for shutting it down back in the day was that the numbers just aren't there, but you know what it's like convincing people to do something differently than what they've been doing. The standard practice was to follow the paperwork, go into court and have it out that way.

We're seeing a lot more success. Plus, the fact is the more it gets known, the more uptake it gets because community groups get involved, different stakeholders are being a part of it. Right now, it's been a successful thing. You only have to talk to the people that are utilizing it, the parties that are utilizing it. I think it's much better than the traditional method. It's like anything. It takes some time to grow and, like I say, there's sand in the gear.

MR. LANE: Sure.

MR. A. PARSONS: The biggest issue with Central, quite frankly, was that, as I said, when we first got in I didn't think Clarendville was the viable option; we should go with one of the other two. That's not fully our decision. We cannot just go and we're going to do it here. We have to work with the judges; we have to work with the court staff.

I can't say it becomes a resource issue in the sense of – and, obviously, there's a cost to it; in one centre you might have two judges, in one centre you might have one judge. That one-judge centre is a better location for it, but then you have to work with the judges to ensure you have the judge coverage on those places, right?

I think it's a success. In fact, you're seeing more call now to do different alternate methods of court. You have the Mental Health Court, we have the Family Violence and we just started with Drug Treatment Court. My goal this year is to see the Drug Treatment Court go from Avalon to the rest of the province.

I think once we expand it, it's not going to be for everybody, it's one of those courts that nobody ever wants to see them fully booked. We don't want to see a Drug Treatment Court busting out of the walls, nor do we want to see Family Violence, but it's good for the people that are using it.

MR. LANE: Yeah, well, that's good. On the Drug Treatment Court, I absolutely applaud and support that initiative as well. I don't mind saying for the record I really feel, in the last two or three years, that when it comes to the Department of Justice, I think we've seen some very positive movement. I say that to everybody over there in a lot of different areas, which is good.

MR. A. PARSONS: It feels like you're about to hit us with a tough question now though.

MR. LANE: No, not at all – not at all. I did have a question, I guess, directed towards yourself or to Chief Boland.

We talked about fines being down and I just make the comment in passing that still – and there's no doubt I've been out on the Outer Ring Road. Actually, I saw yesterday there was a

police car had somebody hauled over, which is great. It was somebody on Team Gushue the other day which was good to see because everyone, of course, is thinking it's a 100 when it's really 80. They're finding out the hard way it isn't.

Still, when you go out on the Outer Ring Road, in particular, I have a tendency to have a little bit of a heavy foot from time to time. I freely admit it; I always have to be watching the gauge, right? But b'y, I tell you what, there's still cars whizzing by me like you're not even moving. I'm sure they must be going 150, 160 sometimes, and motorcycles as well.

When I see the fines down, I know that there's definitely opportunity to up those fines in certain areas for sure. I'm just wondering, in terms of the policing, the staffing that's dedicated to traffic enforcement and keeping our roads safe, has that changed in any way or we are maintaining the same levels that we have been in the past?

MR. BOLAND: What I would say, Paul, is that over the last three, four years, the number of tickets issued by the RNC in all our jurisdictions has been pretty consistent. What I will say to you is that from discussions I've had with municipalities throughout our jurisdiction, it is their number one concern.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. BOLAND: And it's something that the minister and I have talked about and we looked at coming up with innovative ways – there's only so much you can do with regard to education and awareness.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. BOLAND: At some point, it comes to enforcement.

MR. LANE: Yes.

MR. BOLAND: So, looking at the opportunities to increase our level of enforcement, for sure.

MR. LANE: Yeah, I agree and I mean I know municipalities – certainly in my district, St. John's, Mt. Pearl – they use those radar signs

and stuff. They work to a certain degree and sometimes speedbumps, but it still is a big problem.

I hear from people from my district and different neighbourhoods; Southlands Boulevard is one. Actually, I had a message from a constituent today asking me to reach out to the RNC and ask them to do some extra patrols. I said: guess what? I will do that this evening, right to the chief.

I appreciate that response. It is an ongoing issue and it's an issue that is certainly on the mind of a lot of people and families, particularly with small children, the safety of our streets.

I do have a couple of other general questions, but I think they may fall under a different category later. I'll stop for now and will get back in a little bit.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could just jump in before your turn is up, Paul –

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: – just on a couple of points that you make. Going back to the plate part –

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: – what I will say is that all that – one of the difficulties, too, is this whole silo approach sometimes; all that falls under Service NL.

MR. LANE: Yes, I realize that.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's been some of the challenges here. It's not a Justice decision –

MR. LANE: I know that, yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: – but let's just say we've assisted.

MR. LANE: You worked together on it.

MR. A. PARSONS: We've assisted.

MR. LANE: Yeah, for sure.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

The second part is when we talked about the new fines collection pilot program, I won't say that I share your skepticism, obviously, but what I'll say is I understand it. You know what? It's fair to be skeptical, although I've had some calls. It's hard to generalize. There are certainly some individuals that fall within the description you provide, which is they just continue to do it and it's the don't care part.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Whereas sometimes there are others who, let's just say you make a really bad decision when you're young and you carry those fines with you for a long time. Life goes on. You're working. You have to get to work. What are you going to do?

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: You have to be able to drive; you can't afford to pay the bills off. There are people that have reached out saying we want to take part.

MR. LANE: Good.

MR. A. PARSONS: But, like I say, it's a tough thing.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Maybe we don't end up any better off, but I'd like to think that we'd certainly try.

The last thing going back to the traffic part and the speeding, the chief and his team and the RCMP do a great job with the resources that they have. I always use the story I haven't walked into a community yet where they said we have too much enforcement – there's too much, we don't want any more. It hasn't happened yet. What I will say is that TW actually did their traffic camera program. That's something we're hopefully going to build off doing traffic cameras in construction zones because that's a bit nuts.

The other thing – it's interesting, we've look at the traffic camera system here. Alberta is about to get rid of theirs. When you're in Alberta driving and you get hit speeding and you get the

picture, it's become almost now it's too big of a cash cow. It's amazing. It's hard to believe. Here we are talking about trying to – I don't look at ticketing is about revenue generation. I look at ticketing is about safety but one of the things that comes with it – the only way sometimes you can convince people to stop doing a certain form of behaviour is by hitting them in the pocketbook. We see in some other jurisdictions where they're looking at it and saying this hasn't changed the behaviour. It hasn't done that, and we got this money coming, what else do we have to do? Like the chief said, I don't know how many times you got to educate people, but there it is.

MR. LANE: Thank you.

CHAIR: Any other further speakers on this particular section before we move?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

CHAIR: Okay.

Member Conway Ottenheimer.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Getting back to the plate following the driver, do you have a cost estimate in regard to that program?

MR. A. PARSONS: I've been told – this would fall under Service NL, so I wouldn't be the source of the best statistics. I've heard it's in the tens of millions. So I don't know – I've heard between 20 and 30. I can't tell you. I would suggest that you save that for Service NL and, hopefully, they can give you a better breakdown on cost, research, everything they've done. I fully support it; I think it's the way to go. They would be the crew that's responsible for implementation.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

With respect to the fines collection pilot program, you said that will be piloted this fall. How is that going to be financed?

MR. A. PARSONS: One of the things we have is probation is not going to be an extra cost there. That's why we didn't go to an outside group. There are some groups outside that

wanted to partner with us, but it would have been a significant cost to get the program up and running. What we're trying to do is use it with resources internally so that there's no cost.

Right now, there's no hiring, per se, so we've got Fines Administration who are already doing this work. We've got Probation who has already got the officers who are going to oversee this. That is one of the challenges because going outside if you're paying a big sum of money and, like you said, there's some skepticism, you end up spending a lot of money on something that's not successful, so we try to make it as cost favourable as possible.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

Any further speakers to this particular section?

CLERK: Section 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.3.01 carried.

CHAIR: Now we're moving forward to Legal and Related Services.

First speaker.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Under Civil Law, with respect to Salaries, in '18-'19 there was a savings of \$200,000 in the salary line. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, I think that would have been ongoing vacancies within the department – staff leaving and then having to fill it.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

And can the minister please explain how this year's budget of \$5,349,200 was calculated?

MR. A. PARSONS: This is one of those convoluted ones that I'll probably try my best to explain it, fool it up and you'll get the real answer now in a second.

So there's attrition, plus we had to take the ADM funding out of there and move it to the appropriate placement in Executive Support. So going back to those changes earlier we saw in Executive Support, basically this is Rolf, I guess. So if you have any issues with this, it is all Rolf's fault.

MR. PRITCHARD: It was the movement of salary for certain positions between Executive and Civil division. As it turns out, it was my salary, so I'm glad they put it somewhere.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Transportation and Communications went over budget in '18-'19 by \$42,800. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Labrador travel. We ended up having some cases up in Labrador – some prosecutions, I believe, was it –?

MR. PRITCHARD: The major issue with Labrador for the Civil division is the family unit and it's travel related to the family unit's lawyers in Labrador to cover a position where someone is on extended leave for the year.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So with respect to family law cases?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yes.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Professional Services, can the minister please explain what professional services are included here and please explain the variance in the line items? I believe there was \$1,277,000 increase.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

So this is for outside counsel for various cases. What I would point out is if you're looking at your revised 2018-19 – does yours say \$3.45 million?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: It does –

MR. A. PARSONS: It's actually supposed to be, I believe – am I right here, 2.42, the actual is? So we budgeted at \$2.173 million –

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: – and the actuals were 2.42. Am I right? So the revised was not as high – not like a million dollars over. We overestimated what the over expenditure would be. So it's over –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, it's every year. You can't tell what you're going to need, you know, in litigation funding depending on what cases come up. So going, historically, this is what was figured out. We ended up still being a bit over but this all comes down to outside counsel being hired for every former case you name.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Speaking of cases, with respect to the litigation of the tobacco health care cost recovery litigation, that case, how much is that costing us on an annual basis?

MR. A. PARSONS: So we have a contingency fee, historical one with – I think the firm is Roebothan McKay Marshall. They've been the counsel of record since, I'd say, 15 years – yeah, about 15 years or so. They also have counsel down in Missouri. I think they handle the American side. I don't even know – what we can do is we can get you – and I would put there for the record, now, any information that's requested by one group, we'll make sure to provide to everybody without any ask for it.

So what we can do is we can get you the exact number of what would have been spent on the tobacco file this year.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Do you know what the status is of the litigation now? When is it coming to trial?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'll toss this to Rolf who would probably have a better take on this. Where are we in the tobacco –?

MR. PRITCHARD: So what's happened with that litigation, there was a lengthy process involved in gathering documents from various government departments and providing them. So the documents have been filed. There are a number of different actions proceeding simultaneously across the country and there are some different sorts of motions and various delaying tactics by the tobacco companies occurring across the country.

There haven't actually been any developments in the last six months in the litigation. I think they're trying to settle some of these procedural matters. The documents are filed. So once these procedural matters are cleared up, things will start to move forward again.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. All right, thank you.

Can the minister please explain what matters required outside counsel over the past year, or there are too many perhaps?

MR. A. PARSONS: There are way too many. Some start new this year. Some have been going on for years. Some require outside counsel, mostly in Ontario. We've got a number here. What I could probably do is I can have a list provided of all the expenditures. Obviously, there are certain things, we both know, that are privileged, but –

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: – there's no reason you can't get the firm name and what the expenditure was for 2018-19.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Purchased Services went over budget by \$16,900. Can the minister please explain why? That's under Civil Law, Purchased Services.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yeah, I can speak to that.

As part of the ongoing process of litigation it's often necessary to purchase certain services. For example, if we conduct a discovery, there's a fee for that; also, the cost of transcription and sometimes there are witness fees. Those you can't really predict. It depends on if there are some trials coming up or certain matters have reached the stage where it's necessary for witness discovery or document disclosure.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Allowances and Assistance, \$6.1 million was spent last year. Can you please confirm that this is for settlement claims?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Last year in Estimates, I believe the deputy minister indicated that he was doing a review of the Civil division. What was the outcome of that?

MR. A. PARSONS: What we did over the last couple of years was we were looking at inside counsel versus outside counsel. Last year, we actually hired two new counsel – was it – in the Civil division? We hired two new.

The goal was we looked at what the expenditures were historically when it came to outside counsel and the argument was that we think we can get more value for hiring inside. We hired two new and I'd like to think the first year was successful because the budgeted over expenditure was estimated, based on historical data, to be 3.4 and we ended up spending 2.4.

So far that has worked. When you're going outside it's like there's that's significant cost. Some files are impossible, you just cannot retain the intricate level of expertise you need, but having the extra staff has certainly helped us with some files.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, the Member's time has expired for now. We'll come back.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

CHAIR: Any further speakers next?

Ms. Coffin.

MS. COFFIN: Yes, please. Thank you.

Professional Services, I noticed the budget from last year to this has gone up by a little more than \$700,000. What do we anticipate spending \$700,000 on?

MR. PRITCHARD: As the minister indicated earlier, of course, Professional Services largely, although not exclusively, involves purchasing services from lawyers. Broadly speaking, they fall into three categories; one is general. That's advice that's necessary for various government departments requiring expertise that maybe doesn't exist in the Department of Justice. For example, specialized trade advice, mining tax and those sorts of things – that actually accounts for about 48 per cent on average of the legal services that are purchased.

Thirty per cent of the legal services that are purchased are what we call AG funded counsel. Those are basically matters in which we have no discretion whatsoever, the court orders us to provide a lawyer for someone who doesn't qualify for legal aid in a family law matter or perhaps a criminal appeal.

We're also required to provide legal counsel for a program called judicial indemnification which is where judges require a lawyer, perhaps because they're appearing at an inquiry or there's been a complaint made against them. That accounts for about 30 per cent and then 22 per cent are matters related to litigation. That could be, for example, litigation that we're involved in the Province of Quebec where it requires a fluency in French or a matter where our lawyers are conflicted. That also includes funding for the purchase of expert witnesses, so that's sort of where that money goes.

MS. COFFIN: The extra \$700,000, though, where would that fall? That's an anticipated \$700,000 from last year to this year. Is there anything in particular on the horizon to justify that?

MR. PRITCHARD: No, there's nothing in particular. If you look at the spending on Professional Services over time, there's actually a downward trend. That number is sort of where we're comfortable in, in forecasting where things will lie next year, but there isn't anything in particular that we're anticipating.

If you look at the trend over a number of years, as the minister indicated, what we've tried to do is to hire lawyers internally to reduce our dependency on external counsel. So that's sort of looking at a number of years in sequence where they've gone. We're saying, okay, that's where we think it's going to come to rest in this fiscal year.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, so higher than last year –

MR. PRITCHARD: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: – and no longer on a downward trend.

MR. PRITCHARD: Well, down from what it has been in some previous years.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. PRITCHARD: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Okay then.

MR. PRITCHARD: But it's down, yeah.

MS. COFFIN: This is perhaps a good time now to talk about the counsel of choice provision and its removal from the *Legal Aid Act*.

MR. A. PARSONS: We should wait until – I think that would be under Legal Aid. Am I right?

MR. PRITCHARD: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

All right, we'll save that.

MR. A. PARSONS: When we get to the Legal Aid section, we can –

MS. COFFIN: No problem.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Let’s go here. Transportations and Communications we talked about in Sherriff’s Office. Did we talk about it in the Sherriff’s Office?

MR. PRITCHARD: No.

MS. COFFIN: No. Okay, let’s talk about the Sherriff’s Office. How come their transportation has gone up by \$130,000?

OFFICIAL: If you could just raise your hand there?

MR. A. PARSONS: It looks like he’s testifying.

MS. COFFIN: Oh, yeah. Here we go.

OFFICIAL: Yeah, there you go.

MR. CHAFE: Transportation and Communications in the Sherriff’s Office is primarily non-discretionary due to – we have circuit courts in Labrador as well as jury administration. Those cases come and go and we can never really tell, so primarily for Labrador and for jury administration.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, so it was an unexpected \$130,000. So, if people got stuck somewhere in a snowstorm for four days, that happens.

MR. CHAFE: Yeah, in Labrador that tends to happen.

As well as with the jury, we have jury coordinators that travel to where the juries occur. That would happen before and after the trial.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

That was an unexpected increase. Is there anything that we can do to avoid that type of thing? Is there any anomalous event that caused that?

MR. CHAFE: No. I mean 90 per cent of the Sheriff’s Office budget is non-discretionary just because –

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. CHAFE: – we have to provide security and we have to have jury trials. We’re pretty much at the mercy of the court system unfortunately.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, thank you.

Let’s see here. You saved a whole pile of money in Purchased Services. What was not bought? I’m seeing about almost \$300,000 not spent in Purchased Services?

MR. CHAFE: Under Purchased Services, I might have to defer to Andrew here, but that was due to the *Contraventions Act*, I believe. The *Contraventions Act* is in relation to the – I’ll let Andrew take that, actually, so I don’t misspeak.

MR. GREEN: When the *Contraventions Act* – when we received that funding a number of years ago it included money related to OCIO expenditures that weren’t required with respect to that act and so the money was never spent. It’s actually been removed from the budget now. That’s why it’s down.

MS. COFFIN: Oh, okay. That’s why we got the \$269,000 in the ’19-’20 budget.

MR. GREEN: Yeah. There was a \$142,000 reduction based on the *Contraventions Act* and we reallocated \$36,000 up to Transportation and Communications based on historical expenditure review. It’s not being spent in one; we’re moving it up to the other.

MS. COFFIN: Right, okay.

Purchased Services went down because the OCIO, the unspent stuff and then it went back up. Okay, that’s reasonable.

Again, we see another shortfall in federal revenue. In 01, federal revenue was down by \$200,000. What’s with the feds not paying up?

MR. GREEN: That’s the OCIO expenditures. They’ll only pay if we incur the expense.

MS. COFFIN: Oh. Okay, so that offset the other one. Yes, okay.

Now they're going to say that the \$252,000 that they were going to pay last year, they've gotten rid of that so now it's only \$109,000. What are the federal revenues anyway? What are they paying us for?

MR. GREEN: It's all contraventions. There's other *Contraventions Act*-related expenditures and perhaps Dan could explain.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. CHAFE: Sorry, what was the question?

MS. COFFIN: Just wondering what are the federal revenues for? Why are they giving us money under this? He mentioned it was contravention.

MR. CHAFE: The *Contraventions Act* is for us to enforce federal tickets. We didn't enforce them before.

When enforcing the federal tickets for the Sheriff's Office piece, we would only enforce the ticket if the money wasn't collected, much like the fines, if it was way past due. So that would've been our portion.

We had asked for funding to make our system – because it's a federal system, we would have to make all of our system bilingual. We were unsure how much that would cost and we're still in that process. We didn't spend it this year because we're so far down in the process – because, of course, you have to collect the fine first or try to collect it and it go into arrears before my office would then try to enforce it. So we're downstream.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, thank you.

I can go on to Civil Law and Enforcement, Support Enforcement. Purchased Services in Support Enforcement is up by \$12,000. What's happening there? What are the types of purchased services that they would require and why the increase?

MR. A. PARSONS: So what I have here is that covers the cost for service of incoming

interjurisdictional support orders, final orders, recalculation services, incoming provisional orders, as well as the cost for other documents and appraisal fees. Also, it covers the cost of printing and bank fees.

As you can see there, it looks like it went up about \$3,600 last year and I would assume Craig Scott, who is the director of Support Enforcement, is anticipating an increase this year.

Kendra might want to jump in.

MS. WRIGHT: This number is sometimes always a little higher. It's with respect to the banking fees, so the one thing that Support Enforcement does is we actually facilitate payments. We're not a bank, but we actually facilitate payments from the payer to the payee. So the banking fees tend to be high and they'll go up and down and fluctuate, so that's the increase there.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, interesting.

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy, Salaries were down last year. I see between 2018-19 and '19-'20 that there is a decrease, but I notice that there's \$150,000 unspent in '18-'19. What happened there?

MR. A. PARSONS: Two vacancies.

MS. COFFIN: You managed to save them through the attrition model, well done. At least one of them to keep, that's great.

In Employee Benefits, it went up by \$4,000, from \$3,000 to \$7,000. What kind of benefits is someone getting for \$3,000?

MS. WRIGHT: So all the ATIPP coordinators have the ability to be certified under IAPP, which is the International Association of Privacy Professionals. It is \$100 – so we pay the entire fee for all the ATIPP coordinators across government. It is \$100 US, so the money last year was actually allocated – it was only in Canadian.

MS. COFFIN: Exchange rate, yes.

MS. WRIGHT: So it's just the exchange rate, and we've put in that amount because we anticipate we want to cover as many ATIPP coordinators as possible. So that's why it also rises for this fiscal.

MS. COFFIN: Right. And then, of course, in Transportation and Communications they're doing things more by video conferencing? They get half as much money?

MS. WRIGHT: No – and also they do travel and they'll go to certain conferences. And this year they did save a little bit of money. They normally go to the Municipalities NL conference and this year they didn't go, just because they've been going every year. Municipalities NL felt that everyone was already engaged and educated, so they'll put that back on their list for next year. So it was just a savings.

MS. COFFIN: They missed a fun time.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Order, please!

The Member's time has expired. I think we're going to take a break.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could, yes, maybe what we could do, we're about an hour and a half in, maybe we could take just a quick 10-minute break to get a drink, use the washroom, whatever, and we'll come right back at 7:38. You like that – 7:38 by this clock.

CHAIR: Okay, 7:38.

Recess

CHAIR: We're good to go?

OFFICIAL: I think, yes.

CHAIR: Okay and now we're good to go.

Ms. Conway Ottenheimer.

CHAIR: I don't think your mic is on.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah, Helen Conway Ottenheimer.

CHAIR: There we go.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Under 2.102, Sherriff's office, Salaries, in '18-'19 Salaries went over budget by \$84,100. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Dan.

MR. CHAFE: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Okay.

There we go, yeah.

MR. CHAFE: Again, that would be primarily for overtime as it relates to court sittings. At the end of the day it could also be for travel for circuits as well.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Yet, this year Salaries are expected to drop to \$6,090,200. Why would that be?

MR. CHAFE: So under the *Contraventions Act* we were funded for a position, a bilingual clerk. We were unable to fill that position so it's a vacancy.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Now, I thought that the bilingual clerk position had been filled from –

MR. CHAFE: No, that's –

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Oh, okay.

MR. CHAFE: Yeah, so in each of the sections there were positions identified to do this work. In the Sherriff's Office if we were to enforce those federal tickets, we would need someone who was bilingual.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. CHAFE: There were multiple positions. We couldn't fill ours and we're still trying to fill it.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Are any positions being removed?

MR. CHAFE: No positions right now. No.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Under 2.1.03, Support Enforcement, under Salaries comparing '18-'19 to '19-'20, we see that salaries are being decreased by \$13,300. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Kendra.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Kendra.

OFFICIAL: Thank you.

MS. WRIGHT: Again, there's no change in the salaries or the position complement. This is just the attrition that's being applied to the Support Enforcement Division.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Under Purchased Services in '18-'19, \$75,600 was budgeted but only \$15,000 spent. Can the minister please explain the savings of \$60,600?

MR. A. PARSONS: Sorry, can you repeat which line was that?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: That's under Purchased Services under Access to Information and Protection of Privacy.

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh, okay.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Sorry about that.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: 2.1.04.

MR. A. PARSONS: So –

MS. WRIGHT: That's MNL (inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh, Kendra. That was the MNL one, right?

MS. WRIGHT: No, the Purchased Services is a different one. Normally, we do the IAPP training here in person. This is from the University of Alberta. We've had savings – sorry, there are two things here. We normally do the in-person training for IAPP which is the \$100 per person. We're currently paying \$100 per person.

Normally, they will come here and do the training but you need a minimum of 15 people. This year we only had eight people, so we didn't have to do the in-person training because there weren't enough people. That's not a reflection of the amount of people who want to do it; it's just that we already had the people trained and so this year there were only eight people who needed to be trained.

The second part is there were savings with respect to the certification at University of Alberta. We work with the University of Alberta to provide a five-course certification program in access and privacy, so we have money allotted for persons to take those courses. We didn't have as much of an uptake on it.

There are currently eight people enrolled in the sessions now and there are no summer courses being offered, which before, the money was based upon the full year, courses being offered in fall, winter and spring/summer sessions. There are no longer courses being offered in the spring/summer, therefore there's no uptake. That's why there's just been a decrease.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Now, this year there is \$63,500 budgeted. Can you please explain what Purchased Services are being planned?

MS. WRIGHT: That's the same. It's still going to be the coverage of the University of Alberta five-course certification program. Now, we have eight people enrolled this year, whereas last year we – it just depends on the uptake and the ebb and flow –

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MS. WRIGHT: – of the persons who want to be enrolled in it. At one point some people in some departments used to go through the CLD

program to get half of the cost paid. Here we have money now in our budget to help offset those costs.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Have the number of ATIPPs received in the last year increased?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

What I can say here is that in 2017-'18 the number of requests was 2,311. In 2018-'19 the number of requests was 2,416. As of today, this year, there have been 518, so they are growing every year since, especially since the new regime was brought in in 2015.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: What support is being provided to respond to the ATIPP requests?

MR. A. PARSONS: There's certainly a fair amount of training going on. It's an education amongst the ATIPP coordinators too. There's a suitable amount of pushback that's allowed. In some cases, if it doesn't fall within the rules, you don't have to provide that information. Sometimes when you have new officers, there's – it's like any job. As you get into it, you realize – you find ways to save time.

We've had a number of training sessions. We've got a new head of the department and I've had a couple of meetings myself with him to say: What are things we can do to make things easier? One legislative change that we brought in last session talked about changing the holiday date because when we get into the 10 business days (inaudible), that was one of the small issues they brought up. It wasn't a monetary issue, it was depending on – you had 10 business days, but it wasn't clarified how the holidays fell in there, so we made that legislative change.

We had added, I think, two floater positions. ATIPPA falls under us but every ATIPPA coordinator is under their own separate department, even though we're the coordinating body. Certain departments, I think, are more heavily burdened than others were. We put the floaters in and then, at the same time, people

were gone off on vacation, we need to fill those positions.

It's a big increase since 2015, especially when you remove the cost for it. That's something we have to look at, I don't mind saying. You talk about anecdote. I'm all for access to information – we all know that – but when you get people putting in requests saying: Can you please print me a copy of Andrew's Twitter timeline, that's just lazy. We shouldn't be using government resources to get you something. Go on your Wi-Fi and get the Twitter timeline.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's where we have to find a way to have a bit more pushback, because that's a frivolous waste of expenses, as opposed to the good requests for information we should get out there. We're also working – but it's difficult – on proactive release of information. That's something we're working on but we've got Sonja El-Gohary there. She's been doing a great job, as well as the coordinators, so onwards and upwards.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Currently, core public departments post their ATIPPs online, but the same is not necessarily true for all publicly funded entities. Has consideration been given to expanding the online posting of ATIPPs?

MS. WRIGHT: When you say publicly funded entities, what ones would you be referring to, just so I can have a general ...?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: For example, school districts and Nalcor.

MS. WRIGHT: I am going to have to get back to you on that one. We will get that information for you. I know currently – the way it works now is that ATIPPA, our coordinating office, attracts all the ATIPPA requests. So the numbers that the minister just provided with you now, we will make sure that – it is the responsibility of the ATIPPA office to be posting them online. We deal with core departments, so I'm going to find out the reason why.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MS. WRIGHT: I think basically everyone in those entities would have their own policies with respect to the posting, but we will get back to you on that one because that's a very good question.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Can the minister please give an overview of how proactive disclosure works within government? For example, how after are documents posted, and how is the decision made to post information, the process involved?

MR. A. PARSONS: This is one of those times when I wish Sonja El-Gohary was here.

There is a constant battle for figuring out what is there to put out there. One of the arguments has been about – we have heard questions about we are putting all this information out there, but is in an excessive or a useful format? What we are trying to figure out now – because proactive disclosure is great, but proactively disclosing information that people don't need or want is a whole different ball game. In certain cases, the proactive disclosure is fine, but you still have some privacy concerns with that.

When you look across government, when you look at orders-in-council, they are all posted on a fairly regular basis; certain reports, and everything else, are put out there. I think the list we are talking about is a bit smaller – may be a bit more intricate than that. All the ATIPs go out there.

I have not had put to me any specific requests on, okay, this is something I would like to see that is not put out there and we have to request it. I have not had that put to me. Because if I had it put to me, the first thing I would do is go to the coordinator or go to the department and say: Is there any reason we can't put this out there?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Do you know how many documents were posted in the last year? Would you know that without – ?

MR. A. PARSONS: I would not have that offhand, but we will put that in the list of things that we send over after – information to provide on a follow-up.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. Member's time has expired, so we will move on.

Next speaker, please?

MS. COFFIN: Let's move on to Criminal Law, 2.2.01. Transportation and Communications, they have a postage issue as well. They overspent by \$120,000 plus or minus a little bit, '18-'19.

MR. HOLLETT: The bulk of that would have been for travel-related expenses to cover off circuits in Labrador.

MS. COFFIN: How come it went up by \$120,000? What was the unexpected part?

MR. HOLLETT: There were additional circuits and, for some of the time, we were covering off from the Island as well.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

What caused the increase of \$50,000 from '18-'19 to '19-'20?

MR. HOLLETT: Sorry?

MS. COFFIN: There's an increase. Transportation and Communications, it goes from \$341,400 to \$394,200.

MR. GREEN: That was based on our historical review of travel expenditures are increasing in that line. So we reallocated some money from within Operating Accounts.

MS. COFFIN: The price of gas, carbon tax maybe?

MR. GREEN: And I'd just like to point out quickly on Transportation and Communications, the Department of Justice has over 1,100 employees that are required to travel for their

work, so that's why we have a large expenditure in these lines across.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah, I figured there had been. It's just nice to know where the estimations are off.

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Let's see, Purchased Services, we had a fair chunk that was unspent – almost \$150,000. What falls under Purchased Services – okay, do I see this? Support Enforcement, Criminal Law, nope. It may be over here. Purchased Services (inaudible) office equipment, training costs – so we didn't spend \$150,000 in office equipment?

MR. HOLLETT: Part of that was due to some of the cost that was going to be associated with cannabis ticketing; \$100,000 came out of there. And if you look down under the federal revenue, under 01, we're down \$100,000 there. So it's offset there for \$100,000. That was due to some of the cannabis ticketing which didn't get implemented.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So that's kind of similar to the thing we spoke about earlier.

MR. HOLLETT: Right.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, and then Purchased Services under the salary section, as well, I noticed it goes from \$252,000 – there's a pile unspent – down to \$174,000 now. Is that accommodating the federal revenue change as well? Is that what's happening there? It looks to be –

MR. GREEN: It's somewhat of the federal – it's a reduction of \$50,000 in the federal revenue that we anticipate to receive and we moved some of that money up into travel. So it's the –

MS. COFFIN: That's moved that way, okay, very good. And then my federal revenue question was answered. Other Legal Services – big old chunk in Legal Aid. So here's where we can chat about that question.

I noticed there \$100,000 out of a \$16-million budget that has dropped. That's not particularly

substantial. Is there any reason for the \$100,000 less?

MR. A. PARSONS: That's attrition on one position that is to be identified by Legal Aid. So it's not an actual loss of position, and Rolf can handle that, but that's what I think it's for.

MR. PRITCHARD: That's exactly what it is, yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Oh, so you capture attrition under Grants and Subsidies because the Grants and Subsidies capture bodies in Legal Aid, is that right? Okay, so that's just part of the – you have to take however much off your attrition model so it comes off (inaudible).

Since we're in Legal Aid now, let's go back to that question. Since we recently saw the legislation removing the counsel-of-choice provision from the *Legal Aid Act*, are you anticipating any long-term implications? Does this impact the accused person's right to a fair trial, and how does this square with cutbacks to Legal Aid as we've seen from the budget?

MR. PRITCHARD: I can answer that.

The removal of the choice of counsel was responded to by Legal Aid by the creation of a special defence unit in which they took some of their more senior lawyers who have specialized in defending more serious crimes such as murder. They created this unit and I think it has three full-time lawyers in it, and they primarily do these more serious crimes that previously people would've had a choice of counsel.

Now, the choice of counsel doesn't exist anymore.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. PRITCHARD: The director of Legal Aid has always had the right to select private counsel when it was necessary if there was a conflict or a shortage of counsel in a particular area, but that's just in special circumstances.

The removal of choice of counsel, however, is something that – there's a transitional period at Legal Aid, because at the time that amendment was made, there were actually seven murder

cases for which certificates had already been issued, so that'll take some time to wind down. But in the meantime their special defence unit is already up to strength and running, so there shouldn't be any diminishment of services available to people who require that kind of defence.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. A. PARSONS: Can I jump in on that one?

MS. COFFIN: Oh yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Two things. The blunt answer to it impacting a right to fair trial I would say is, no, not even close. The second part, I just want to make sure for the sake of posterity. So there's not a cut in the budget, per se, there's no change to the budget. It's just there's \$100,000 less due to attrition, but there are no positions lost, change in service.

MS. COFFIN: Yes, I understood that.

MR. A. PARSONS: I wouldn't want somebody to read it someday and –

MS. COFFIN: And say what happened here. No, I understand that there's an attrition model. Whenever you have salaries, it comes off the full salary amount. Okay, that makes sense to me.

Going back to this choice of counsel and the removal of that, do you anticipate that will result in cost savings?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, that's the plan going forward is that I think there would be some savings there. Again, we went through a pretty substantive debate on this, when you look at the cost of outside counsel versus the internal and looking at just the cost for these individuals, especially when we raised the rates of what we're paying the private counsel.

Those rates in the last number of years – we had a debate here where we raised the legal aid rates that we were paying to outside counsel. I think you will see savings down the road. Part of this but not – it's funny, it wasn't timed with the Legal Aid branding, but to me there's a perception issue, too, here that has nothing to do with money. When you have these counsel

saying – or I guess clients saying – I've got legal aid, I've got nothing, I mean it just was not true. It's a garbage argument. Legal Aid has some of the best lawyers out there.

There's a perception thing there that's always bothered me. I've had a chance to work with Legal Aid lawyers and see them. If anything their biggest issue is, like everywhere, they have big caseloads and lots of travel, so it's difficult. So people coming in and based on nothing but their perception, based on absolutely – not even talking to a lawyer to say: Well, I don't want a legal aid or I want my own choice of lawyer. It's like, well, pal, you want your choice, you go for it and you're going to have to pay in certain cases.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah and I understand that. I know some very good lawyers who were in the legal aid program.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah. It's just nice to see how this kind of gets billed out.

Let's see, so the budget increase is there. Commissions of Inquiry, let's move on to that. In '18-'19 there was \$500,000 unspent and then we're seeing almost a million taken out of the budget from next year. What was happening there?

MS. WRIGHT: With respect to the budget for the Muskrat Falls inquiry – so in Budget 2018 we used a model that we had used to build the budget initially. So we worked with what staff would they need, location, lease space, we went through it all.

At the time, we built a number for this past year of \$20 million –

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MS. WRIGHT: – which this year they didn't need to use that amount. This year, we were able to rightsize what they actually would need. When you actually look at some of the budget numbers there it's just basically they were allotted a certain amount of money and they spent what they required.

MS. COFFIN: They needed less. Okay.

MS. WRIGHT: I think they were under in most sections, and so what we did for this year's Estimate is we just rightsized it for a nine-month period because –

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MS. WRIGHT: – the report is due on December 31, 2019.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah, they doubled their Supplies. I mean that's a lot of stickies, I think.

MS. WRIGHT: Under Supplies –

MS. COFFIN: Under Commissions of Inquiry –

MS. WRIGHT: – \$60,000 –

MS. COFFIN: – they go from \$60,000 to \$120,000.

MS. WRIGHT: No, Supplies would've been –

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible.)

MS. WRIGHT: Yeah and there would've been travel. Initially, when we built the budget –

MS. COFFIN: Yeah.

MS. WRIGHT: – I believe there were two trips to Labrador. In fact, if you look at their schedule online, there were four trips to Labrador. There are certain things that it's very hard to ship items, so they end up having to purchase items.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah.

MS. WRIGHT: It really kind of works itself out, but that would have factored in there, too, with respect to four trips to Labrador.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah.

And I noticed it went down the next year, so we have the number of file folders or whatever the supplies were that's there.

MS. WRIGHT: That's correct.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MS. WRIGHT: Yeah, and a lot of binders so ...

MS. COFFIN: One more thing. I notice that the minister's mandate letter included a public inquiry into the Humber Valley Paving scandal. How come that inquiry has not been struck yet and will it?

MR. A. PARSONS: When I first got my mandate letter back in December 2015 there were three on there: There was the Humber Valley Paving, there was the Dunphy inquiry and there was the –

OFFICIAL: Burton Winters.

MS. COFFIN: Winters.

MR. A. PARSONS: Well, search and rescue, that's right. It was so long ago.

At the time, we made the decision to lead off with the Dunphy inquiry. We didn't proceed with search and rescue right away because at that point the Senate had been doing their own parallel investigation and it seemed kind of foolhardy to go and maybe duplicate that work. Humber Valley was – we were going to do Dunphy first. Haven't having done one of these, they're pretty intensive coming up with the terms of reference and everything.

Since then, we made the decision, obviously, to go ahead with the Muskrat Fall inquiry, which wasn't on the original mandate. Since that time, there's been a decision to move forward with possibly children in care with the Innu inquiry, so that's something. We're still actively working on search and rescue. We've got Muskrat that's ongoing right now and we have the Innu where we're working with the Indigenous governments, as well as the federal government.

Quite frankly, the Humber Valley one just did not get done because we had so much going on. I think that now, given the period of time that we've passed, I don't think that's a priority compared to the other inquiries that we are doing and still have to do. Maybe it's not my decision to say whether we actually ever do it or not, but I don't think it's something that I think is worth – personally, I don't think it's worth pursuing at

this juncture, given the passage of time, given where we are in terms of expenditures and everything else and given the amount of time since that took place.

I don't see it going forward, given that we've still got two left to strike and do and they're pretty significant. When you're talking about children in care and search and rescue, those are two big ones. And the fact that both of them are going to involve jurisdiction in Labrador, so just the travel and communications you see there, it's going to be – it's not like doing it in St. John's where you have most of the parties. Having been involved with these now, it's a pretty costly venture.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

The Member's time has expired. We can come back.

And so the next speaker.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, I don't have any lines by lines. I've got basically three question areas here and then I have to depart.

My first question relates to Her Majesty's Penitentiary.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. LANE: I'm just looking for a little update or whatever. I think as you've said in the House of Assembly today, if I'm not mistaken, I thought you said five years out or four years out – I don't know if it was you or the Minister of Transportation, one of you – for the new penitentiary, assuming that it goes ahead.

MR. A. PARSONS: It's going ahead.

MR. LANE: The minister is saying it's going ahead.

In the meantime, I guess I'm just wondering from a program perspective if you can give us any update as to what's been happening in that regard, the issues, as we know, of mental health

and addictions and so on at Her Majesty's Penitentiary. A lot of what we've heard from family members of inmates – and we've had some deaths there as well and we've had a couple of reports, *Decades of Darkness*, and then there was the other one that Marlene Jesso did.

I'm wondering what progress or what are the plans to at least put some programs in place? I understand it's challenging to put those programs in place in that facility and we really need a new facility, but I mean if it takes five years, that's five years that we should at least be doing something, to some degree, as best we can until we have a new facility. I'm just wondering if you can comment on that.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

I apologize; I may jump back and forth in terms of going to different notes here.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: I've got one – and I know that the fellow sitting over there for Transportation and Works would love to be able to answer some questions, but he'll have to wait his turn until tomorrow.

In terms of the timeline of HMP they did the value-for-money analysis. It was completed September 2018. I think it came to about 11 per cent savings doing it in that model. Am I right there? Okay.

The timeline I have here – and Neil Croke has been working on this tirelessly, so he can jump in when I fool it up or miss something. This year, September 2019, will be issue RFPs for external advisers. The RFQ will go out next spring 2020. The RFP would be issued fall of 2020 and construction start would be spring of 2022, which puts you in 2024 –

OFFICIAL: 2024, yeah, around there.

MR. A. PARSONS: – around that for entry.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's the timeline right now. Given that it's been the same model used

for long-term care and everything else – and they've stuck to their timelines pretty good, right – we haven't seen a lot of delays there so we're confident that can happen.

MR. LANE: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: One of the issues we talked about – and you're talking about treatment inside.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: What we've done – and a couple of things; we're actively moving treatment inside from Justice to Health.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: That was (inaudible). We were working on it anyway. The Jesso report comes out and says you have to do this. We've since been able to expedite it in the hopes of having it done this year. It was going to be a much longer process but we're making it happen faster.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Right now, when you look at what's going on inside, the different programs inside, we got John Howard in there, Canadian Mental Health Association, Turnings, there's a MIMOSA program that's offered which is Moderate Intensity Management of Offender Substance Abuse. When I was first going down to the prison all these inmates were telling me, I got MIMOSA and I was like, MIMOSA? The MIMOSA program is something – actually, there's a pretty big demand for it.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: The Canadian Mental Health Association has a Justice Program, there's safety training programs going on down there, first aid, traffic control, different things like that. Pre-release programs that we do in the – just in terms of the recreation, we've had yoga down there, woodworking, the different things that are getting done out in the community now that are coming from the shop down there.

There's been huge library services. We still have ABE. We've had First Light which was formerly the St. John's Native Friendship Centre which is now First Light. They've been in there providing cultural services and supports. We have Stella's Circle in there. There's a lot going on. The issue is space,

MR. LANE: Yes, I understand that.

MR. A. PARSONS: One of the big issues that prevents a lot of what's going on in HMP is you combine the increased numbers, lack of space and the greater number of incompatible prisoners more so than ever before.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: It's becoming very, very hard to manage when you've got the prison that's sort of making it difficult.

MR. LANE: Yes, I understand.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just putting people outside; it's easy to say we can do that, but let's say that it can lead to difficulties.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: I didn't mention I was down there and saw that St. John Ambulance had the canine program down there; SPIRIT Horse is gone back there now. Erin Gallant runs SPIRIT Horse bringing in the equines. What else? Am I missing anything?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: There's a lot going on.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: We're trying to do more and hopefully, when we get the increased space, that's going to increase the numbers. When you talk about the mental health services, we did manage to get an extra mental health counsellor position, I think, or –

OFFICIAL: Nurse.

MR. A. PARSONS: – mental health nurse. So, you had this wait-list. We've cut that in half

now, right? Do we want it better? Of course we do, but that's an issue that people face outside as well. When it comes to access to certain services

—
MR. LANE: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: — we face wait-lists in certain areas. Mental health services are an issue inside and outside, but we recognize that the prevalence of mental health issues inside is huge.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

Okay, well, thank you, Minister. I appreciate that. As I said, I understand we're challenged for space and the age of the facility, the condition and so on, but it's important, obviously, that for however long it takes before we have a new facility, we have to at least try our best to offer the best programs we can. I know that's a concern that's been raised publicly on a number of occasions, so I do appreciate that we're seeing some progress in that regard.

I'm going to ask one more question and this relates to the Muskrat Falls inquiry. I certainly will be asking more questions of the Minister of Natural Resources, but it kind of ties into what I had asked about last year, I believe, when we were talking about this and talking about the budget and the inquiry.

At the time what the ask was: Would there be anybody that would be watching what's going on?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. LANE: My thought at the time was there should be somebody from the RNC or the RCMP Commercial Crime that's following this inquiry and then investigating whenever something came up that may have potentially warranted an investigation. Somebody from your department, from a civil liability point of view, they see something coming out that warrants that; someone from an HR point of view to hand out pink slips, which we'll get into that with the other minister.

Anyway, the point is: Are there any investigations, either criminal or civil? Is there

anything at all being looked into now, as a result of what's come forward thus far in the inquiry?

MR. A. PARSONS: What I would say to you — and I'll wait for Kendra, Rolf or Jim to kick me if I say something wrong —

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: — so (a) it's in the Terms of Reference. There is no inquiry that goes out there and says our purpose is to find civil or criminal liability.

MR. LANE: I understand that.

MR. A. PARSONS: We get that.

MR. LANE: I understand that.

MR. A. PARSONS: But, at the conclusion —

MR. LANE: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: — of an inquiry, depending on what comes out of it, if it is a criminal issue, then the police — whether it is the RNC or RCMP — have every right to investigate if they have any evidence that there is something of criminal wrongdoing.

The same when it goes to civil. If we find something out that's of such a nature that we feel the province might have to do something about it, we can make that assessment then. I don't think it is a good idea to do that mid-inquiry without even having the final report back from Justice LeBlanc.

MR. LANE: Right.

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm no different than anyone else. I see what comes out in the news, I watch and I say, wow, but we can't go off half-cocked and say, we're going to start a side-by-side investigation of this thing that's going on. We might end up overtaking the inquiry when we have the inquiry going on for a reason.

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: I don't think you need a specific person that's sat there watching it every day even though I know there are lots of people

doing it. When it's all said and done one of the things you do an inquiry about is to look back and see what happened, prevent what's going on or prevent that from happening again in the future. But if there is something of a criminal or civil nature that we found of concern, we have no problem having it looked into by the appropriate authority.

MR. LANE: Okay, so I guess the answer is: Once it's concluded someone will look at it. I'm going to say about a year ago I contacted the RNC myself and spoke to the RNC's solicitor about it. Basically, I was told that there would have to be a specific – someone would have to actually physically go in to the office, lay a specific complaint about something to investigate.

MR. A. PARSONS: And it's –

MR. LANE: To which my thought was, well, I mean, that's why you have investigators. I mean –

MR. A. PARSONS: But we're not – I mean, right now –

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: – we're not even done the witnesses yet.

MR. LANE: No, I understand.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's my understanding.

MR. LANE: I understand. It will be once it's complete –

MR. A. PARSONS: I think you have to wait for it to be finished and have a look at it on its whole.

MR. LANE: – then we'll see what happens.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MR. LANE: Yeah. Okay.

Anyway, I just think it's absolutely ridiculous what's gone on and I'm sure a lot of people agree. That's it, other than the only other question and then I'm done, Madam Chair.

Maybe the chief of police can just give a brief comment, if he would. A concern I've heard from a number of people about in schools and everything is the issue of drugs. I'm just wondering. I know there was a task force at one point. I think we dedicated a millions bucks or something in a budget. I don't know if it was last year or the year before to some – I thought it was a drug task force or I thought it was joint RNC, RCMP. Maybe the timelines are –

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh, you're talking about CFSEU. Yeah.

MR. LANE: Yeah, there was something I know.

I'm just wondering if we have just a comment as to where we are in terms of do we have a drug investigation unit, do we have any joint forces? I know maybe you can't disclose it because we don't want the criminals to hear, I don't know, but what can you comment on the drug situation?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'll make a quick comment before –

MR. LANE: I'll put it that way.

MR. A. PARSONS: – I toss it to the chief because I defer to his experience and his knowledge. What I would say is there was a joint force, the CFSEU, made up of RNC, RCMP working on big drugs, exploitation.

MR. LANE: Yes.

MR. A. PARSONS: There was a decision made to disband it.

MR. LANE: I remember that.

MR. A. PARSONS: Maybe the chief can talk about what led to that because we're thinking there's a positive reason to go to that and it might tie into one of the issues brought up.

MR. LANE: Okay, that's what I was talking about, that joint – yeah.

MR. BOLAND: Yeah and it goes to speak to just what your –

MR. LANE: Yeah.

MR. BOLAND: Paul, it goes to just what you're speaking to.

If you look at CFSEU and you look at the RCMP's federal mandate, they're basically the same; they look at organized crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. Some of the things that we were seeing in our playgrounds, schoolyards were a much lower threshold and so it's more of a mandate for the RNC, even though we still work hand in hand with the RCMP on bigger files, and even on some of these – not less significant, but smaller, in investigative terms.

So we have now street crime units. We have two separate ones that work in the Northeast Avalon area. We also have ones in Corner Brook and in Labrador. Now, the ones in Corner Brook and Labrador are more in and out.

So I think that answers your question.

MR. LANE: So they're kind of dedicated to drugs and stuff like that to deal with those issues?

MR. BOLAND: They are dedicated – so you take the school principal who has a problem with somebody coming into the schoolyard selling then these files get handled. They wouldn't fit the mandate of CFSU or the RCMP, where you'd have to have an outlaw motorcycle gang or organized crime.

MR. LANE: Okay, thank you. I'm done.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, any further speakers to the section?

Seeing no further speakers ...

MS. COFFIN: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Oh, we do have a speaker down here.

MS. COFFIN: (Inaudible) Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 2.3.04.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. COFFIN: Let's see. Let's start over here.

Doctor Matthew Bowes – Chief Medical Examiner of Nova Scotia – in his review of the province's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner offered a list of recommendations for the office involving using more resources. Estimates show the real increases in salaries where Bowes spoke to the physical infrastructure, equipment, information management system and staffing levels of the office have important deficiencies.

Can the minister give an update on how the implementation of these recommendations is going?

MR. A. PARSONS: Maybe what I can do is talk about just the genesis of this. This was perhaps the first issue I had to deal with when I came in – was that tragic situation where we had a loss of evidence that led to a charge dropping. Dr. Bowes came in, we got a report – we'll get into the details, but I think the best person – I got Joanne Chidley here, who's been really handling that and just overseeing it, spearheading it, doing it. So there have been some hires in that department.

So I'll let Joanne talk about the work she's been doing.

MS. CHIDLEY: So Dr. Bowes's report came out with 65 recommendations for improvement. Currently, we have 43 in progress or completed.

The information management system, which you mentioned, we are in the process of consulting with a software vendor from California who specialize in medical examiners and coroner-specific software. So we're hoping to procure that in the fall.

Staffing levels have also increased. We were approved for two full-time equivalents for pathologists. Currently, we're sitting at 1.5 FTEs, and we're currently recruiting for the other 0.5, and hope to have somebody hired in the fall. We're also recruiting for medical examiner's investigators, which were in the report as well, hoping for the fall as well.

MS. COFFIN: Thank you.

Let's go to Salaries. I've noticed the Salaries have gone from \$500,000 – we saw about \$69,000 that were unspent '18 to '19. Then we're seeing Salaries go up to \$1.09 million in '19-'20. Is that as a result of the recommendations?

MR. GREEN: Yes, it's a result of recommendations and the reduction in the revised amount was based on the new CME that came into that role later in the year. The old CME was paid out of Professional Services, so we moved the money from Professional Services in the budget up to Salaries.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. GREEN: We've also added some funding for the investigators, as Joanne alluded to, and there's some funding for an IM analyst to help implement that new information management system, once purchased.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So we expect to have that in this fiscal year then?

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Good news.

Okay, so I see Purchased Services – Purchased Services and Professional Services, let me go over here. What's the difference? Professional Services of the CME – the autopsy room is rather expensive. Look at that.

We see a drop there, a budget decrease in Purchased Services. What else are we not going to have – \$50,000 worth of less autopsy room and instruments? You have to use autoclaves less I guess with ...

MR. GREEN: There was a one-time funding last year put in the budget of Purchased Services, which includes the expenditure for transportation of human remains. So when a fatality happens, they have to get the body to a medical examiner's office or hospital. We had one-time funding in there last year and it was removed this year based on historical expenditure review. It wasn't as high as we thought it would be.

MS. COFFIN: Right. Okay, that's good to hear.

Property, Furnishings and Equipment, there was an increase of \$29,000 and a little bit. Is that your IT system?

MR. A PARSONS: Would that be where we have new hires then, obviously, we need the PFE to go with that – am I right there?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A PARSONS: Software system.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, because they got a pretty cool office for \$63,000.

Let's see, what else do I have here? Under Human Rights, we saw a drop in Supplies but increases in Professional Services and Purchased Services, with bigger increase being in Purchased Services. What's happening with Human Rights? What do they get to buy? That's a big chunk for advertising, meeting rooms and office accommodations.

MS. WRIGHT: Under Professional Services this is where you're going to see all the costs incurred for the board inquiries, the cost of the commissioner, the Commission members and the adjudicators.

MS. COFFIN: Yes.

MS. WRIGHT: And the number of hearings for the boards of inquiries has increased, therefore, causing an increase in –

MS. COFFIN: You get an increase in that, of course.

MS. WRIGHT: – adjudicators and certainly we've seen an increase in time over the length of these boards of inquiry. They might have gone – at one point, this whole system was designed so instead of using the court system you would try to navigate yourself through these –

MS. COFFIN: (Inaudible.)

MS. WRIGHT: – self-represented and now, all of a sudden, they're turning into people bringing lawyers. There are no longer one or two days, they're turning into a little bit longer.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MS. WRIGHT: So you're seeing that in the increase in Professional Services. With respect to Purchased Services, this was an increase in the cost of transcriptions.

MS. COFFIN: Wow.

MS. WRIGHT: So the Human Rights Commission currently is trying to address that and so what they're going to do is that they're just going to record the hearings on a go-forward basis and provide the recording to the adjudicator to listen to. On a case-by-case basis, if it's going to be required to be translated, they'll look at that.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MS. WRIGHT: But they're going to try to cut down on that cost by just providing the audio version of the recording.

MS. COFFIN: Right. Because it went up by a little over \$27,000, so they're saying, well, let's cut back on the transcription services.

The same for Professional Services, it's the extra \$20,000 revised over budget. So you're trying to get that back down again, I guess. Is there no accommodation for what you expect is everybody brings a lawyer and we stay here for four days instead of two, right? I've been in enough quasi-judicial –

MS. WRIGHT: And with this number too it depends. It's the ebb and flow of how boards of inquiries, how many matters, how many complaints are going to the Commission and then sent on to a board of inquiry. So they are always hopeful that they're going to mediate many of the files and try to resolve in that manner.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MS. WRIGHT: However, you know, this year it tended to be that more went to board of inquiry and it cost more. But looking at that – not that there's no guarantee but they will have to –

MS. COFFIN: We could have a lot of inquiries. We might have two.

MS. WRIGHT: That's correct.

MS. COFFIN: Or you might have neither one. Okay, that's quite reasonable.

Legislative Counsel, I noticed that in Salaries there was a substantial drop in Salaries from budget to revised last year.

MR. A. PARSONS: Vacancies.

MS. COFFIN: Wow, okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: One lawyer.

MS. COFFIN: Does that mean that a whole pile of work that didn't get done?

MR. A. PARSONS: No, I will say that with Susan King there, it is amazing how she gets it done, even when she doesn't have the support around her.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: I have nothing but good to say. I can say as a House Leader there's nothing that I was aware of that we never got in due to anything in this shot. A lot of times the issue is on the departmental end, various departments trying to figure out what they want, but in terms of the drafting, never an issue.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, good to hear.

Okay, I think that's it for my questions in this section.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I have to go back to Criminal Law if that's okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: 2.2.01, Salaries. In '18-'19, Salaries were under budget by \$340,000. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. HOLLETT: That was basically due to three things: There was the attrition factor that

was applied; there was a vacancy factor, we had a few positions not filled over the course of the year; and the third one would be at times when senior lawyers left or were appointed to the bench they were usually replaced by lawyers at a junior level.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

This year, when compared to Budget '18, Salaries are expected to drop by \$122,000. Can the minister explain or you explain why, please.

MR. HOLLETT: I think, again, that's the attrition factor.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. HOLLETT: It also has to do with an expectation that junior lawyers are replacing senior lawyers on a go-forward basis as well.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Professional Services, in '18-'19 this line item went over budget by \$20,000.

MR. HOLLETT: Professional services for us usually relate to two things mostly; one is if need to bring in outside counsel because of a conflict. Usually, we hire a private practice lawyer to cover off our annual general meeting to cover off bill provisions so other Crowns can do professional development together at once. That's one area.

The second area which comes in under Professional Services is expert witness fees for court cases; hiring expert witnesses, principally doctors, to provide expert testimony. It's difficult to estimate how many court cases over the course of a year would require an expert witness. Last year, we ended up spending more for expert witnesses than we had budgeted.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Moving to Legal Aid, 2.3.01, how many lawyers are now practising at Legal Aid?

MR. PRITCHARD: They've about 65, 70 staff lawyers.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

And the legal aid caseload currently?

MR. PRITCHARD: I don't know if this answers your question but in the current year they had 7,900 applications that they received for legal aid. They would've closed approximately 4,000 or 5,000 files – just let me check that. Sorry, so the number of cases closed in the current year was about, yeah, 7,000 and – closer to 6,500, actually, and the number of applications was around 7,000.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Seven thousand? Okay.

Is there a wait-list? Would there be a wait-list?

MR. PRITCHARD: Not that I'm aware of.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: No.

MR. A. PARSONS: I think, depending on the location, there's nobody that's sitting there approved for a lawyer and hasn't seen the lawyer because they're on this wait-list. The biggest issue is once you get in – getting it or not getting it, but usually you're there and you're getting service and then it depends on the area. If you're out west or you're out my way, you're not seeing them or having access as often as you are in, say, St. John's, just due to travel.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Commissions of Inquiry; are all of the remaining costs here for the Muskrat Falls inquiry?

MR. A. PARSONS: Kendra.

MS. WRIGHT: Is your question related to in the 2019-'20 Estimates?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MS. WRIGHT: That column?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MS. WRIGHT: That's the amount that's budgeted for the remainder of this year to see the completion of the Muskrat Falls inquiry. That's correct.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Is there money allocated here for an inquiry into search and rescue in the province? That one is set out in –

MR. A. PARSONS: That one is under 2.3.03.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Other Inquiries, okay.

Under Other Inquiries, last year there was budget provisions made but the Estimate does not show any funding.

MR. A. PARSONS: Last year we had – tell me if I have this right. It's where we had estimated having to do the – was it the Innu? Yeah, so we had put money aside for the possibility of doing the children in care, the Innu inquiry, but given the fact that it required working with the feds to make that they play their role, we didn't actually start the inquiry or do the terms of reference. That part is still a process that's working.

I guess further, too, when you look at the search and rescue inquiry, we've got money put there, we anticipate doing it, but we've been in consultation specifically with counsel for the family, as well as working on what's the scope of this search and rescue inquiry. We had to wait until we had the report back from the Senate.

We're not just doing this inquiry based on that one tragedy. That being said, we've made sure to talk to that family and their counsel because we want to make sure they play a role, but we have to do it on search and rescue as a whole. It might not necessarily be the same scope of inquiry as, say, Muskrat or Dunphy. That's what we're trying to figure out.

We have money there, we anticipate doing it, but we're still in the working-it-out phase.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah, thank you. I understand.

Under Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Revenue - Federal, I just have one question there. Can the minister please detail the agreement or program through which \$152,400 will be collected in federal revenue?

Thank you.

MS. CHIDLEY: We applied for a funding allocation for the information management software, as well as an information management analyst to help implement the software into the office. That's what the federal funding is for.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

There are a couple of other points, questions. Bowes expressed concerns about the office's security system. How have these been addressed, these concerns?

MS. CHIDLEY: This year we have put in security cameras, so we are able to see the main office into and out of the morgue, as well as where forensic tissue is stored. We've also addressed infrastructure issues that have potentially led to security issues.

Do you have any more specific about the security?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MS. CHIDLEY: Okay.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Has the mortuary freezer been fixed, the lock issue?

MS. CHIDLEY: Yes, that's the infrastructure.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes? Okay.

MS. CHIDLEY: Yeah.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Is there a new autopsy room or have changes been made to the existing room?

MS. CHIDLEY: They have done a renovation on the room and they have changed out the autopsy table. I'm not sure about the rest of the room for right now, but ...

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: What I would say, if there's any specific requests, what we can do – even if you guys want to put it in an email – we can get it down to the staff there. If you have more specific that we don't have here, we'd be more than happy to go out and get the information from Dr. Denic and the crowd down there.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

With respect to Office of the Public Trustee, under Salaries, last year the salary line item went over budget by \$26,100. Can the minister or someone please explain why this occurred?

MS. WRIGHT: So there was a position that was unfunded, it was a clerk position and this position is required – the Auditor General had mentioned that when you are dealing with financial transactions, you really should have a two-step process of check and balance of sorts. So there's a financial officer and then we put in a clerk III position, which is unfunded in the 2018-19 budget, but we funded it, so that's the overage – you'll see, through savings and vacancies, we ended up being over to the tune of about \$20,000, but it was actually a clerk III position. The position is still there and we continue to fund it.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

MS. WRIGHT: And we'll have to assess – obviously, this year, we'll manage vacancies and just look to rightsize the budget for next year.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Under Revenue - Provincial, could the minister please detail how this revenue is generated and what contributed to \$1.3 million more being collected in '18-'19 than anticipated?

MR. A. PARSONS: So this revenue comes from when, we'll say, estate files are handed over to the public trustee whether it's families asking them to do it or being asked by counsel to do it or, in some cases, they go there from the courts and they're ordered to do it. This is basically estimation and, most years, they seem to go over what the estimate is. It's hard to figure out what it's going to be.

What I will say, though, is some credit has to go to the new public trustee. I think it was in the last year that we made John Goodland officially the trustee. Having done a bit of that back when I was practising and coming in and asking questions – this, to me, is something where we can do more and public trustees, whether it's in Australia or other places, this is somewhere where you can grow it and make it better. John has taken that on and is willing to do more.

They've done a good job down there; we've encouraged that. I don't think that was there before, that encouragement, or that desire to do that, but the new trustee and his staff have done a lot.

You'll see it there; it's gone up to \$2.1 million. We're basing it historically as a million there now. I'd love to see that be \$2 million, \$3 million but it's hard to exactly estimate it, but I will say that – I think there were some changes as well. What are the changes we just made with the guardianship?

MS. WRIGHT: That will be the impact. The court came out with a decision with respect to looking to expand the role of the public trustee into guardianship. That is a court decision right now and we will work with John's mandate to figure out exactly how that may impact his office.

But with respect to the revenues, as you know, estates go up and down and they fluctuate. At any time, he could be administering an estate worth \$3.5 million. It could be \$100. It is always going to go up and down, so that number will always vary with respect to his revenue.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

CHAIR: Next?

All right, seeing no further speakers for this section ...

CLERK: Subhead 2.1.01 to 2.4.01.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.4.01 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.4.01 carried.

CHAIR: Now we will move on to the section for Law Courts.

First speaker.

MS. COFFIN: Law Courts, let's see, Purchased Services, I see an increase of \$63,000 revised over budget, and we see an increase in the Estimates for this year. What is behind that?

MR. GREEN: The increase in the Estimates for this year is based on a review of historical expenditures, so we just move money around within the Operating Accounts to fund an increase in Purchased Services.

The revised number reflects some unpaid expenditures from the previous year that came in late to the courts that were paid, and I think there was an increase in transcription-related expenditures.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. The transcription moved through both of those? Yes? The transcription moved through both the revised and the Estimates for the next year, okay.

Provincial Court: Big jump in Salaries there; a spike of almost \$3 million between budget and revised, which goes back down a little bit to \$9.9 million in the Estimates for this year. What was \$3 million -?

MR. A. PARSONS: Every four years we are ordered, constitutionally I believe, to get a tribunal that reviews judges' salaries. I see Ivan

- you remember we were talking about this. What happened was this year we got the impact.

When we came in, in 2015 - and I think that last one, and Rolf knows more about this, is 2013 to 2017. So we got the report. The report, I think, it was late when we got it, then we had to table it in the House and we made the decision. In that case, they were calling for increases and we said, no, that's not something we want to do. It ended up going to court, and the long story of it - there's no way around it, really. We ended up paying the increased salary - what did they get over four years?

MR. PRITCHARD: Fourteen per cent over four years.

MR. A. PARSONS: Fourteen per cent over that period of time. So that is where you see we got hit with the retro pay this year -

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. A. PARSONS: - and then, on an ongoing basis with the increase, you will see, that is why it has gone from the \$9.3 million to the \$9.9 million and you can anticipate, in the very near future, the next tribunal report being tabled here in this House, which would cover 2017 to 2021.

MS. COFFIN: Right. Okay.

So the annual increase was about \$600,000 -

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes. That's right?

MS. COFFIN: - but then you go over the three years - yeah, it is a little bit higher, but ...

MR. A. PARSONS: But it is not just salary. There are other things that go in there - other benefits, there are education benefits, there is -

MS. COFFIN: You have to put in your pension contributions, of course, and the unfunded -

MR. A. PARSONS: And what I would suggest - because it is probably something of interest to you - you can get the report and go through the provincial side, the judges' association, their request, the tribunal report, and where they got something, where they did not get something and where the totals were. So that is available.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. That is interesting.

Does that align with public service compensation at all?

MR. A. PARSONS: No.

MS. COFFIN: I did not think so.

MR. A. PARSONS: Which might have been an argument that we made, but –

MS. COFFIN: That would be the first one, really.

Transportation and Communications, we saw a big jump there between budget and revised.

MR. A. PARSONS: That is circuits. So travel for people going up to Labrador, I think, was one part?

OFFICIAL: Yeah, backfilling in Labrador.

MR. A. PARSONS: Backfilling in Labrador. So we had to take people from the Newfoundland section, bring them up to Labrador to fill in at the court, fly back, and that was ongoing for some time to fill in –

MS. COFFIN: You had a position vacant there, did you?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah. Somebody had left, was it?

OFFICIAL: There are a couple of positions vacant.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, people leave and then before we can go through the process of filling, we have to make sure there is somebody there doing that.

MS. COFFIN: Of course. Yeah, right to a speedy trial and all.

Did we save it in Professional Services, the \$132,000?

MR. GREEN: The Professional Services allocation was the money allocated to spend on the new judges' tribunal. That money was not supposed to be spent or allocated in Provincial

Court. They should not be paying for their own tribunal; that is actually expensed out of Civil Law. It was incorrectly budgeted in that line last year. And it should be a Civil Law expenditure, and the expenditures did occur in Civil Law.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

What about Purchased Services? Is that the same thing? Purchased Services went down by a little more than half a million between budgeted and revised, and then we see Purchased Services about \$315,000 different between '18-'19 and '19-'20.

MR. GREEN: Cannabis ticketing would have had an allocation in Fines Administration, Criminal Law and Provincial Court. We didn't spend the money and we've reduced that by half in Provincial Court. The other was the *Contraventions Act* money that we've alluded to earlier in similar activities.

MS. COFFIN: It comes in to three jurisdictions.

MR. GREEN: It's just not being spent as much, so we've made a reduction.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. All right, that's interesting.

Grants and Subsidies –

MR. GREEN: And that would be reflective in your federal revenue as well.

MS. COFFIN: What do you get for \$3,000 in Grants and Subsidies for court judges, annual grants to the Canadian association? I guess that's their dues in the association? You're smiling, okay.

MS. WRIGHT: It's a grant for two associations: There's the Chief Judges' Association and then there's the Association of Provincial Court Judges; each are at \$3,000. You'll see before we only had it allocated for one of the association registration fees and now we've rightsized it again so that we have both in there.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah. I know it's a little tiny thing; I'm just like what do judges get for \$3,000, right?

MS. WRIGHT: It's just an annual grant that's provided. Most jurisdictions are allocated a certain amount of money that they pay in.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MS. WRIGHT: It's \$3,000 to Newfoundland and Labrador for those two.

MS. COFFIN: It's just to be part of the association so you get the update on: By the way, we have this new mandate or whatever. Okay.

Revenue – Federal; that's dropped because of the same reasons again? All right, that one was pretty easy.

Okay, we're good.

CHAIR: Good? Okay.

Good?

MS. COFFIN: Yeah.

CHAIR: Moving on.

Okay, next speaker.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Human Rights, 2.3.05. Last year, the Salaries line item went over budget by \$40,900. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Which one is this? Human Rights?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Human Rights.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, go ahead.

MS. WRIGHT: Last year, there was a position added to the Human Rights Commission, which was the articling student, so that's the salary for the articling student.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Great, thank you.

Just a couple of general questions regarding Human Rights. Is there a wait-list of cases at this time?

MS. WRIGHT: With respect to wait-lists, I understand – I just want to go back to my numbers. Right now, I just understand that, for example, the specialists each have approximately 50 files, and so certainly they're just working through them and working through their investigations. The mediator currently has 75 files and then the solicitor who was assigned for the board of inquiries has approximately 65.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Waiting?

MS. WRIGHT: Absolutely there would be a wait in getting them through and then getting the board of inquiries assigned to the adjudicators, but there's a new chair. They're meeting next week. There are meetings, so I think the files are moving forward now and they're starting to get assigned and dates being set.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So the number of adjudicated hearings scheduled to be heard would be 65?

MS. WRIGHT: Approximately. That's what was provided to me by the executive director.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

And what would the total number of complaints be, do we know that, before the Commission?

MS. WRIGHT: Yeah.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Human Rights.

MS. WRIGHT: I was provided with that today and, of course, I'm going looking through my files, but the number of – yeah, the inquiries that come in through intake?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah.

MS. WRIGHT: It was about a thousand.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Supreme Court, section 3.1.01, Salaries, last year the salary line item went over budget by \$14,200. Can the minister please explain why?

MR. A. PARSONS: Retirement-related expenses.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: There's a salary savings of \$70,300 this year – the explanation?

MR. A. PARSONS: I know it is attrition, I'm just wondering if it's just attrition.

OFFICIAL: It's just attrition.

MR. A. PARSONS: Just attrition.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Just attrition. Okay, thank you.

With respect to Supreme Court, Revenue - Federal, can the minister please detail where this revenue comes from; for example, through what agreement or program?

MR. GREEN: The federal revenue; so the Family Justice Services division was restated into the Supreme Court during this budget cycle. They get a federal agreement which is similar to all the other federal agreements.

In the revised amount we had not reflected the accounts receivable in the previous year. We received an amount and then we set up the receivable. We recognized the additional amount, so we have two amounts for last year and then we should clean it up going forward, only receiving one amount.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, the Member's time has expired.

Anyone else, any other speakers for this particular section?

I'm seeing no further speakers, okay.

CLERK: 3.1.01 to 3.2.01.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 to 3.2.01 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 through 3.2.01 carried.

CHAIR: Now moving to Public Protection.

The first speaker, please.

Ms. Coffin goes first.

MS. COFFIN: Oh, I get to go first? Lovely.

Let's start with Professional Services. We saw an increase in Professional Services from budget '18-'19 to revised of about \$34,000.

MR. A. PARSONS: Where is this?

MS. COFFIN: And then that number was cut in half for '19-'20 in the actual budget. There was a jump and then there was a decrease in the budgeted amount. What's behind that?

MR. A. PARSONS: That's RNC Professional Services?

OFFICIAL: RNC?

MS. COFFIN: Page 211, 4.1.01.

MR. A. PARSONS: Is that Purchased Services?

MS. COFFIN: Professional Services, I'm sorry.

MR. A. PARSONS: Professional, sorry. Okay.

MS. COFFIN: We can chat about Purchased Services.

MR. A. PARSONS: Professional Services shortfall due to legal fees relating to disciplinary hearings and the hiring of an external consultant. The Purchased Services savings are due to delays in cannabis training, but I think it's offset, isn't it?

OFFICIAL: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

OFFICIAL: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, so it went from \$80,000 to \$115,000 under Professional due to the legal fees for disciplinary matters.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. A. PARSONS: Now, you'll bring it back down to what you anticipate it to be. Then, the Purchased, obviously, is much higher; it went to \$2.3 million, down to \$2.1 million and back up to \$2.5 million.

OFFICIAL: That's cannabis.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's the cannabis training. We didn't do all the cannabis training that had been anticipated, which was why there was less spent, but I assume there's more training anticipated for this year.

MS. COFFIN: Right. Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: Especially with the oncoming – there's going to be more changes, possibly, with cannabis edibles and everything else coming later on in 2019.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

Property, Furnishings and Equipment, \$300,000 less, budget to revised, and then pretty much the same for Estimates for this year. Who's not getting a desk or a horse or a gun?

MR. A. PARSONS: Go ahead.

MR. GREEN: There was an allocation in last year's budget related to the cannabis training agreement, which wasn't signed so we didn't incur the expenditures.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

What would they have needed for \$300,000?

MS. MERCER: It's training for drug recognition experts, standard field sobriety testing –

MS. COFFIN: Property, Furnishings and Equipment?

MS. MERCER: Yeah, that's where we put the \$300,000 training allocation from the federal government.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. And Purchased Services is different then?

MS. MERCER: Andrew, do you want to want to jump in there? I think that's (inaudible).

MS. COFFIN: Because we have Purchased Services that we spent a little less.

MR. GREEN: The allocation would have been spread across a couple of lines for that cannabis agreement.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

MR. GREEN: Again, when we were doing the budget in 2018, we didn't have a lot of information where this was going to go. We just said maybe we might need to purchase equipment, so we parked money in Equipment. We put money in Purchased Services. As we got through and we saw the evolution of where we would be with it, we then decide if – this expenditure may never ever be in PF&E; it depends on where the expenditure is.

MS. COFFIN: Right. Then that's the money that we're seeing down out of the federal revenue. There is \$300,000 coming out of Property and then there's almost \$300,000 coming out of Purchased Services, and that's the reduction in federal revenue. That's the same thing for the \$277,000 for the Estimates as well.

MR. GREEN: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

The RCMP, they are seeing an increase of \$2 million in Professional Services. What's that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Is that cannabis too?

MR. GREEN: The Professional Services line for the RCMP is the provincial policing contract. That's where we pay for the RCMP.

MS. COFFIN: Did we get an extra \$2 million worth of value?

MR. GREEN: They had expenditures related to retro-salary increases from the previous year. So the RCMP, similar to the judges, had salary increases with Treasury Board of Canada back to 2015.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. GREEN: So we had to pay for some of those, and there was some reconciliation of expenditures. The way the contract works is the first bill that we receive in the new year is actually the previous quarter's invoices with the reconciliation amount of actual expenditures, so there was an increase in the reconciliation from actual expenditures from the previous year.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

Let's go back to the RNC. Civilian oversight of the RNC, we know that it's needed and it's been needed for a while. The minister has said that a first priority is establishing a SIRT, which has taken a very long time to do. Can you give us some timelines on the civilian oversight?

MR. A. PARSONS: So that would be under 4.1.04. Because it's not just RNC – the RNC, while it does have the RNC Public Complaints Commission, which is another heading later on, the SIRT will cover both RCMP and RNC. It has been some time coming. In fact, I think we promised it two years ago, in terms of drafting the legislation, which we delivered. Now, we're very close to making a hire of a director. That'll happen soon. Once the director's in place, then we can work on filling out the office, with the hopes of having it done in 2019.

That's something that was promised. We have delivered it. One piece of advice I got: We had all the SIRT directors in the province here a while back. I said: What would you tell somebody who's trying to do this? He said: Take your time. Because a couple provinces rushed it, didn't finance it properly, and it ended up being a disaster. So I anticipate the new SIRT director being hired – it's not completely within our control in the sense of, you know, you got to deal with – I don't know if it's HRS or the Public Service Commission. I'm talking within a month or two months, that type of deal, that's how close it is.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: After that we have admin staff, we got seconded officers, the physical location of the office, so TW would be working on finding a location for them – you guys are everywhere. So the good news is that the legislative side of it is already done, so we don't need to draft the legislation that they operate under, that's done and in place.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, good.

Moving on to Adult Corrections, 4.2.01, we're seeing a \$2 million increase, revised over budget, which went back down again and we added about \$400,000 to that after. What's going on there? Did they –?

MR. A. PARSONS: Sick leave and overtime.

MS. COFFIN: Oh really? That's a lot of OT. They're in very stressful positions. Has that been accommodated in the Estimates for '19-'20?

MR. A. PARSONS: Plus there's one retirement and attrition. There's always a goal to try to work to keep those numbers down, working with the union, working with management. You know, I'd love to say that it's 100 per cent going to be accomplished, but I'm also realistic in the fact that it's hard in that environment.

I think we will see some changes going forward into the future, especially with the creation of the new HMP, I think, which might be a contributing factor here. Because that may also change staffing models, who knows? If you're having greater capacity, that's going to probably change some of the staffing needs, we'll say.

MS. COFFIN: Well, greater capacity would suggest greater staffing requirements.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

While at the same time you have a facility down there that was not designed for 21st century Corrections, so it's affected us there. When you have a new design that may make it better for correction oversight, but at the end of the day if you have increased capacity there's likelihood you're going to need increased staffing.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah, exactly. Those things tend to go hand in hand. If nothing else, the cleaners, we need more cleaners if we have more square footage.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

MS. COFFIN: Transportation and Communications actually dropped by \$60,000 from budget last year to this year?

Are you transporting less or communicating less?

MR. A. PARSONS: One second now.

MR. GREEN: That was done as a historical analysis of Transportation and Communications, just move the money around within the activities. I think the expenditures may go up or down depending on the reasons, so we moved it back to approximately \$500,000 for this year and it might be \$560,000 or it might be \$450,000.

MS. COFFIN: Right. Where would you move that from if you find that you need extra money?

MR. GREEN: I think we've increased Supplies –

MS. COFFIN: Supplies were overspent by almost \$400,000 last year.

MR. GREEN: So with respect to the correctional officer, they're entitled to a uniform allocation. They have a six-year cycle and we don't budget for the increase or decrease. It's a different rate every single year, and last year was the highest uniform allocation. So we incurred significant expenditures over budget based on the high uniform allocations.

MS. COFFIN: They have a six-year cycle, so the six-year cycle is everybody gets a new uniform on the sixth year. So if you come in on year four, you get two years out of that uniform and then everybody gets – no, every six years you get a new set of uniforms?

MR. GREEN: Every year they get an amount of allocation for uniforms and it fluctuates. This year they had to buy winter gear, so it was

winter coats and boots and stuff, so they're the highest expenditures.

MS. COFFIN: Okay. So in six years when they have to buy winter gear again we can expect another spike? Am I getting my head around this right?

MR. GREEN: I think they buy winter gear every three years.

MS. COFFIN: Right, which is fair – I'm pretty hard on winter boots; I understand that.

Professional Services, an extra \$500,000 there and a slightly higher budget for next year. What's included there?

MR. A. PARSONS: Is that the catering?

MR. GREEN: No.

MR. A. PARSONS: No?

MR. GREEN: (Inaudible.)

MS. COFFIN: Yeah (inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh, okay.

Medical assessments, and that was stemming – is that stemming from the Jesso ...?

OFFICIAL: It's the expenditures –

MR. A. PARSONS: The expenditures for the Jesso report.

OFFICIAL: Okay.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: The Jesso report itself was about 200 to 250; the rest came with the medical, dental –

OFFICIAL: Optometrist.

MR. A. PARSONS: – optometrist. What else am I missing? Did I get it?

OFFICIAL: No, that's it.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's it?

MS. COFFIN: Okay, thank you very much.

MR. A. PARSONS: Psychiatry services.

MS. COFFIN: Right.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

MR. A. PARSONS: Mostly psychiatry.

CHAIR: Sorry, Minister.

Good?

Moving on to the next speaker.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could, Helen, we are at 9 o'clock which means we are three hours in. Traditionally, this is when we would stop. I mean, we're so close, so I just wanted to put that out there that I want to make sure you guys have your questions answered. I think we're getting close towards the end of it anyway.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah.

CHAIR: Good.

Ms. Ottenheimer?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Royal Newfoundland Constabulary; under Transportation and Communication, it appears here that the RNC is trying to save money and reduce this budget line.

Can the Minister please detail some of the things which the RNC is doing to save money? That's under 4.1.01, Transportation and Communications.

MR. GREEN: We review historical expenditures every year for all divisions, and we saw that there was a little bit of a decrease in Transportation and Communications expenditures. So we've allocated that money elsewhere within the division where we think it's required.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Just on that point with respect to Transportation and Communications, this is a general question relating to a trend that I've noticed. We keep hearing and seeing that travel to Labrador is perhaps one of the considerations involved in why there's been an over budgeting, often, in Transportation and Communications.

I ask the minister: Are there any solutions or proposals that you might have in mind to fix this issue?

MR. A. PARSONS: Just to make sure I heard it correct. We talked about travel to Labrador, specifically as it relates to the RNC –

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Well, no, just the trend that I've been seeing throughout the Estimates is that –

MR. A. PARSONS: Oh.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: – under Transportation and Communications there seems to be continually an over budgeting. I'm just wondering, it seems to relate to, perhaps, Labrador.

MR. A. PARSONS: I guess anecdotally what I can talk about is just something I noticed, because you hit the nail on the head. When I got in I went and visited all the offices. You go to the court in Stephenville and you talk to all the staff there: 30-year service, 28-year service, 25-year service; same thing in Grand Falls, same thing in Grand Bank.

You go out to Labrador: How long you been here? Two years, one year, the turnover is extremely high. Just look at correctional officers. We were taking correctional officers from St. John's, they do their training in here, go up there; not long after they wanted to get transferred. Even when you look at the RNC officers coming back and forth, that's all transportation costs there. That's why we started just looking at correctional officers; we started doing court training up in Labrador. Let's get people from Labrador to do the training and stay in Labrador.

We're trying to do the same thing with court staff. You look at the court costs there; we were spending a fortune sending staff up there. One of

the things is trying to identify what causes the constant turnover that we've seen up there and trying to find ways to alleviate it. What are some unique things we can do differently?

We've done it with corrections. The police training, the same thing, you know, it's hard to do. In some cases, you just have to transfer between the three locations, even when it comes to promotions. When you look at the court staff, we'd like to do something there, but that's one of the issues.

It's the same thing. I think if you go outside JPS and go to CSSD, the same thing with social workers. The same thing, it's just that turnover there. My solution, if I were to think, is more training and opportunities for Labradorians –

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: – to stay in Labrador, if that's what they want.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Under Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, under Supplies, last year's supplies went over budget by \$122,600. Can the minister explain that, please?

MR. A. PARSONS: Supplies. Do you have that?

MR. GREEN: In general, it's just an increase of police requirements. Joe might be able to talk about what they purchase in Supplies. There are uniforms that come out of Supplies; bullets that they purchase would also come out of Supplies.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: And gas prices, is that –

MR. BOLAND: Last year, we had a need for an X-ray machine for the Explosives Disposal Unit. We also had soft body armour. Every five years we have to replace the soft body armour on our officers and they're \$850 each, so that's a significant cost.

The other one is we had C8 rifles for our police vehicles. They actually go into the cars. That

was mandated that we have those available, so that was the significant cost we had last year.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

Under Revenue - Provincial, there is \$513,700 here. Minister, where does this money come from under RNC, Revenue - Provincial?

MR. A. PARSONS: Just one second now. I think we're all trying to figure it out.

MR. BOLAND: That's like certificates of conduct, fingerprinting services; we charge our cadets for semesters when they come in. There are also expenses related to rent – not rent but expenses that we would have doing events. If you look at the chase the ace in the Goulds, for instance, we do cost recovery on those types of events that they are for-profit in the community. That would have been ones under –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. BOLAND: The what?

OFFICIAL: Revenue.

MR. BOLAND: Oh, were you federal? Were you talking about federal?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: No, provincial. No.

MR. BOLAND: Provincial, yeah. That's the provincial one.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So –

MR. BOLAND: In Labrador, our officers are in government-owned housing in Labrador. They pay rent in those houses so that comes in as well.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: With respect to the cadets, you indicated you charged them for courses? In what way?

MR. BOLAND: There's a fee when they come in. I forget, I think it's around \$1,200 a cadet when they come in. It's just basic fees; it's actually perhaps the cheapest in the country. I think Halifax charges \$10,000 a cadet.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

All right, thank you.

How many RNC officers are now trained in roadside testing of cannabis?

MR. BOLAND: How many are currently training or trained?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes.

MR. BOLAND: I don't know if I've have the exact number here. I could get back to you with that, but we have significant numbers of officers that are trained with standard field sobriety and with drug recognition evaluation. We were quite ahead of the game in that area.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

I guess the same would apply with respect to RNC officers associated with the mobile crisis units. Would you have a number on how many?

MR. BOLAND: Yeah.

What I can tell you is in Labrador, 100 per cent of our first responders are trained. In Corner Brook we just went through training and we have, I think it is 14. So the numbers in Corner Brook are about 25 officers that are front line.

In St. John's on our Patrol division, 50 per cent of our officers are trained and our goal is to train 100 per cent. The model that we adopted, the Memphis model, only calls for 20 per cent but it is significant training. It is 40 hours of training for our officers, especially when it comes to de-escalation.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Great. Thank you.

How does the number of RNC members who are eligible for retirement compare to the number of recruits?

MR. BOLAND: I have that sheet.

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible) I think we have 27 recruits this year and I think we have somewhere in the range of 45 officers that could possibly retire. Obviously, you never have a

situation of all retirement-eligible officers going – we haven't seen that – but I think that's about the numbers.

MR. BOLAND: Yeah, so with 25 years of service or more – and you can retire after 25, but what we're seeing is it gets closer now to 35 years, but there are 62 officers that can retire from our service.

We have 27 recruits that are coming in. Last year, we had 11 officers that retired. It's not an easy number to – you can't just go in and ask somebody to retire, right?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: With respect to the recruits, this number seems to be up, is it, from other years, the number of new recruits?

MR. BOLAND: The number is up.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: (Inaudible) 27.

MR. BOLAND: Yeah, in our first two or three years, when we started training back in 2005, we had high numbers between 26 and 30, but this is the highest number in many years, and it's because of the demographic.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Speaking of demographics, in terms of gender balance, what would the proportion of male and female be in the new recruits?

MR. BOLAND: We have 30 per cent of our officers who are female. As the older officers retire here, you will see that number increase. For instance, when I joined, 47 in my class, there were four females.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Can you provide a list of the detachments and the number of personnel at each of those detachments?

MR. BOLAND: Labrador West, approximately 25; Corner Brook would be approximately 45; and then St. John's would have the – these are uniformed officers in these detachments.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

With respect to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 4.1.02, can the minister please provide a list of detachments and the number of personnel at each?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, just one moment now.

Let me see, I got something here for the RCMP. I think in terms of their – B Division has 780 people, with three policing districts: East has 16; West has 15; Labrador has 11. I think there are about 420 employed as provincial policing personnel.

I don't have the breakdown by detachment, but that's the number of officers and that's the number of detachments. Obviously, most of the ones in Labrador would be considered isolated detachments.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under RNC Public Complaints Commission, 4.1.03, Salaries, I noticed the budget is being decreased slightly. Three questions related to that: Can the minister please explain why? How many complaints does the RNC Commission receive on average each year? How many were received last year?

MR. A. PARSONS: Attrition would be the explanation for the number.

In terms of the number of complaints, I think they had 55 last year, that's open files. I can't tell you how many were started and closed, but that would be the number. What I can say is I'm pretty confident they do an annual report as well, which would list the – if they haven't done it yet, it will soon have the 2018 roundup of their work for the year.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

With the respect to the Serious Incident Response Team, under Salaries, can the minister please explain why there is a \$33,000 increase in the salary budget? Was this for additional staff?

MR. GREEN: The money was restated into this budget. So, the assumption was that we would have – as the minister alluded to earlier, it would be a phased-in approach. The hiring of the director and maybe one staff was initially anticipated last year and it didn't happen. We're currently in that model now, and then this is the allocation we would have to operate the office.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Under Operating Accounts, these are all new numbers. Can the minister please explain how these amounts were estimated?

MR. A. PARSONS: I can give some information.

I look at the Employee Benefits, \$2,000, that will likely be the Law Society cost for whoever's hired because they will likely be a trained or a practicing lawyer and a member of the Law Society.

The T&C, what I'm guessing here is that we've looked at a number of complaints that we've handled over the last 3½ years; it's not completely accurate because in some cases Alberta or Nova Scotia did not charge us, but we've been able to look at each file, look at the numbers and then extrapolate what we estimate. Again, it's basically estimations here, what the cost will be.

When you look at the T&C, we're working with TW on the housing of this unit; that cost could go – we've got a policy where we want to do everything within government-owned space; let's try to reduce the footprint. We don't want to go out and get a new spot and a new lease, let's try to go under the old lease.

Professional Services, I'm assuming that's where we may have to reach out to get officers from other locations, I think.

MR. GREEN: Professional Service would be if they had to do any specific things in their investigation with respect to forensics or traffic reconstructions and stuff. The allocation is new to us, so we don't know where the expenditures will lie. It might not be all in Transportation and Communications, there might be more in

Professional Services or more in Purchased Services.

So, as the director gets hired and then they start to tell or decide how they want to operate that office, that'll give us a better picture of where they should look, and then next year, you'll see some of these expenditures. It might be up and down across the lines.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The Member's time has expired.

Ms. Coffin?

MS. COFFIN: A couple of quick questions here now. Adult Corrections, I believe I stopped at Purchased Services. We have an extra \$551,000 in Purchased Services.

MR. A. PARSONS: I had mentioned earlier, there was a change in the catering contract. It ended last year, we had to go back out. So that's the increase in the cost of the food.

MS. COFFIN: Maybe the garden that they're trying to create will help cut down on some of that?

MR. A. PARSONS: So that – by the way, I agree with you on self-sufficiency for food. It also has the electronic monitoring added in there too. That was about \$250,000?

MR. GREEN: Two-hundred and seventeen in Purchased Services.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

MR. A. PARSONS: For the actual bracelets.

MS. COFFIN: For the bracelets, yes, I assumed that's what that's for.

Revenue – Provincial and Revenue – Federal; Revenue – Provincial was up by \$1.2 million; Revenue Federal was up by \$2.5 million, revised over budget.

We got money from them this time?

MR. GREEN: So, with respect to Adult Corrections, we have federal revenue for an exchange service agreement where we house federal inmates. We basically give a day rate and we charge that back to the federal government. We had an increased number of federal inmates this year.

It also includes allocations for Victim Services federal funding agreements, on the federal side. On the provincial side, I think it's the Provincial Victim Fine Surcharges amounts.

MS. COFFIN: How many federal prisoners do we house?

MR. A. PARSONS: The number depends on how many you have there, but we have had situations in the past year where, due to the increase in inmates on a provincial scale, we have had to move federal inmates back to federal institutions, which would then negate the amount of money that we're receiving. So the number is fluid.

Every morning we'll usually reach out and get a count across the province in the different institutions, and it's constantly changing. So, there's no set number, unless you want to go – most of them are at or near capacity, but when you have a federal inmate, there's money coming in.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah. I probably have some more questions about that if we have a federal inmate. What types of crimes, then, are we seeing housed here? I know the security level is very different. I knew we were fairly close to capacity. Is this a temporary arrangement or is this a permanent arrangement when we bring federal –?

MR. A. PARSONS: We've been doing that for a long time.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah, I'm just wondering about it now. First day here, remember.

MR. A. PARSONS: In a lot of cases the fact remains that they're down here, they're in the court system here; they get sentenced to federal time. They have to wait in some of our institutions and there are a number of factors at play. In some cases, you get people that want to

go to the federal institutions because of access to services. In some cases, you get some that don't want to go to federal institutions.

OFFICIAL: They may still have matters (inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Yeah, that's the other thing. In some cases, your matter is disposed of. You have federal time, federal sentence, but you also still have other matters that are before the court, so there's no value in transporting you up –

MS. COFFIN: If you have to come back for a provincial –

MR. A. PARSONS: – if you have to come back.

MS. COFFIN: Yeah, so if you are in both the federal system and the provincial system, you need to be here while you're moving through the provincial system. Would anyone serve out their entire federal sentence in a provincial?

MR. A. PARSONS: Not usually. That's not usually the case.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, yeah. That's a little disconcerting.

Okay, provincial revenue is up. Who's paying what for what there?

MR. GREEN: Those are the Provincial Victim Fine Surcharges that we collect.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

All right, let's flip over to Youth Secure Custody. We're seeing \$273,000 extra in Professional Services. What professional services are they receiving?

MR. GREEN: We allocated an additional amount of funding based on the new youth agreement for an IRCS client which is intensive rehabilitation custodial services. It's a client of the youth centre who would require an increased amount of psychological care.

MS. COFFIN: Right, okay.

Okay, that's great.

MR. GREEN: We get that money from the federal government.

MS. COFFIN: Is that what we've seen – wow, there's an awful of extra money in federal revenue; in fact, there's almost \$2 million in the '18-'19 revised budget?

MR. GREEN: Again, that was with respect to not setting up the accounts receivable for the previous year, receiving that money and then properly setting up the receivable this year –

MS. COFFIN: (Inaudible) right.

MR. GREEN: – and recognizing the revenue.

MS. COFFIN: Okay.

One final question: Can we have an update on the work being done with the Jesso report recommendations, please?

MR. A. PARSONS: I'm trying to think now. What's the best way to put it?

There's been a significant amount done when you break down the report into – and, again, I can't tell you exactly how many recommendations there were. We've moved on a significant number in terms of putting it into the Health Department as opposed to having it provided within Justice. That's in transit, we'll say. A lot of them are in transit.

Obviously, one of the big recommendations was getting the new facility. We don't have it but we've indicated that is somewhere that we want to go.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

It's easier if I look at the recommendations here: Take immediate steps to proclaim the new *Correctional Services Act*. We did that, didn't we?

OFFICIAL: We did. We have to do the regs.

MR. A. PARSONS: We did that so we're working on the regs. That was something we did during the last session.

It talked about doing alternative methods to incarceration and, obviously, we've done that with bail supervision and electronic monitoring, so we've moved forward on that. A new provincial institution – we've indicated we want to do that.

Recommended Adult Custody – ensure training is organized completed, monitored and reported accurately. We are working on that but that's more of a fluid one and it's less specific, I would suggest. Dynamic security model within all institutions – several institutions are working towards using it. In that case, when you move into a new facility, dynamic security will be easier than doing dynamic security in the old facility.

Institutional counts being done hourly in random intervals – that has been implemented. A focused strategy to reduce drug abuse and trafficking within the institution – work is ongoing. That's a much bigger problem, I think, than just the Jesso report.

MS. COFFIN: No more KINDER eggs?

MR. A. PARSONS: You would be shocked.

MS. COFFIN: No, I wouldn't.

MR. A. PARSONS: It is amazing, actually.

Information management practices, monitor for compliance – we're working on how to effectively address that. That one is in transit being done. Talking about all CCTV videos being archives in accordance with best practice standards – we're working with the vendor and OCIO to ensure that is being done or can be done.

Recreation provided to inmates for at least one hour per day as per standing orders – we're working on that but I will say that the number of incompatibles, the number of gang-related issues that we have in our institutions sometimes prevents that from happening. When you're putting people out and there's the possibility that

they're going to be harmed, that is something that we have to guard against.

Program plan be developed that includes needs-based assessment for each offender; programs being developed in a timely manner – we're working on that but that also factors in Health. There's a transition that goes over with them,

A female offender strategy be developed as evidence based and includes gender- and trauma-informed interventions – we're working on that. Our assistant superintendent at Clarendville has been involved in a federal-provincial-territorial committee meeting responsible for creating this.

We also have Stella Burry that's been going to Clarendville to provide coping skills. We're working on that. We've had the First Light Centre go out there, we've had Stella's Circle and we've had – I'm trying to think, there's one more that we had. Anyway, it's not hitting me right now.

Space at HMP and Clarendville be repurposed, renovated and constructed as a mental health unit. Obviously, with the new penitentiary, that's one thing and Clarendville – it's hard. When you're talking about the physical structures, it's hard but we are working on that. Recommendations 14 to 17 deal specifically with health services. Those are all in transition and hopefully will be transferred soon.

What I can say is that I think we've taken the report seriously. We're working on it, we need to do more and I'll leave it at that is probably the best way.

MS. COFFIN: Okay, thank you.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I have just a few follow-up questions on Adult Corrections, Salaries. This year, \$28,422,300 is being budgeted. Can the minister please comment on how this number was determined?

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, I'll take a shot at it before Andrew gets at it. I'm sure they're looking at historical numbers in terms of you have to look at inmate numbers, you have to look at overtime needs, you have to look at staffing, just looking at the sick leave and basing

it on a number of years. We've had constant attention based on trying to reduce that number but it's extremely challenging.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes, thank you.

Can the minister provide an overview of the capacity of each correctional facility and if they are full, if they have space available and, if so, how much?

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

As of this morning – sorry, it's April?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, no.

Actually, the last count I have is coming towards –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. A. PARSONS: I have a new count coming. We're supposed to have the super here, Don Roche, but something came up and he couldn't be here.

Okay, HMP has 157 people right now. Their capacity is around 175, I think. Some of that number, though, is actually on the outside, TA, temporary absence outside. Corner Brook Lock-up, they have three; Clarendville has 16. That's actually pretty good considering that their capacity is 26 and for a while there, when we first got in, their numbers were hitting 32.

St. John's Lock-up has 10 and I don't know what their capacity is there. It's not much more than that. It's not meant to be. Bishop's Falls has 29. Their capacity, I think, is in the 30-something-ish range. Perhaps the best way to put it is there's inside and outside. So Bishop's got 24 inside, five outside. Labrador has 55 inside, six outside. I think their capacity is in the 70s but we just announced, in this budget, a million that's going to increase the capacity that is there, as well as including female capacity. And Stephenville has 45 inside, three outside, and I think their capacity is up in the 70 range.

So, right now, we have 324 inmates – the vast majority inside, but you have some outside on temporary absence.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

On Youth Secure Custody, Salaries there – the last year's salary line when over budget by \$40,000, yet this year's budget is decreased by \$461,600. Can the minister please explain why that occurred?

MR. A. PARSONS: That's where there's been some attrition there based on historical numbers of inmates that we've had. The average over the last number of years has been three inmates per day. So the number of positions there was not – and a number were vacant. Like I say, it's an attrition type thing, but they took a lot of it based on the fact that the numbers, when you're averaging three inmates per day.

Now, you still have a significant staff complement, just that you need it. But the numbers are quite different than they were back in the earlier years before the Youth Criminal Justice Act when you go out there and visit and they show you pictures of the Christmas dinner there and you've got 100 kids and now you've got three.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Purchase Services, last year this line item went over budget by \$8,000. Can the minister please explain that?

MR. A. PARSONS: Just one moment now.

MR. GREEN: Purchased Services line includes Xerox expenditures, video conferencing expenditures, some radio expenses that they have, but I don't actually know the reason as to why they were over by \$8,000. I think there was an increase in the contract for video conferencing – or not video conferencing, video surveillance.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. All right, thank you.

Revenue - Federal, last year \$1,874,100 was collected over what was budgeted. Can the minister please explain what contributed to this increase in funds?

MR. GREEN: The federal revenue is an agreement we have with for the youth services act, I think it is. And it was, again, a similar situation in other areas where we received the revenue from the previous year without actually setting up the AR. It's like double counting. We set up an AR for this year, recognized the revenue.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: All right, thank you.

I just have a couple of final general questions. Would I be permitted to ask them?

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, go for it.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

When the minister mentioned delays in cannabis training, what accounts for that?

MS. MERCER: I can try and answer generally. So when the cannabis legalisation came on stream, we were all sort of trying to estimate what we would need where. So we –

MR. A. PARSONS: (Inaudible) it was supposed to happen in June.

MS. MERCER: Yeah, and it was delayed.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's right; my memory is terrible. So I remember it was supposed to happen in June, and then we had the delay from the feds, so our legislation was delayed as well. I think that delayed, actually, some of the training from happening then, because the legislation had not been finalized and we hadn't had ours finalized.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. All right, thank you.

And with respect to the courthouse infrastructure, could you just give an overview of what upgrades are needed with respect to the courthouse infrastructure?

MR. A. PARSONS: Generally in the province?

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay, definitely. St. John's, it depends on which judge you talk to. If it was Chief Justice Derek Green, he will tell you they need it yesterday. But no, in all seriousness, the St. John's courthouse has been identified as something that could happen, although the talk about it has died down a bit from – it depends on – we'll say there are certain pressures from certain people.

And I'm looking back now, Shelley, because, you would've been – Chief Green, that was probably one of his number one priorities. Chief Green is gone; I don't have Chief Fry or Chief Whalen mentioning it as much. They've been really good to deal with in that sense.

OFFICIAL: They both realize that the penitentiary should take priority right now.

MR. A. PARSONS: That's the big thing. Because you notice in court cases too now, you got judges on both benches saying – you know, they're referencing HMP in their sentencing decision. So you can't sit up there and make policy decisions and reference HMP and at the same time say we need money for a court. But they've been really good to deal with on that.

Stephenville is something that's been identified for decades now. It's not a good courthouse, put in the old American barracks. That needs to be either replaced, renovated or an alternate structure found that would make it accessible. It's not just a court issue; they've got other government services within that building.

Labrador, we've got a beautiful federal Supreme Court up there. Our Provincial Court is not so ideal. We have made some changes in the last little while, so I don't hear as much about that. And we've called for a tender on that one. Harbour Grace, we've made some changes in the last year. There are some renos going on out there with security.

The Family Court renos – so the Family Court, we made a big change on that one over in the Argyle Building, so that division's extremely happy with the new court there.

Off the top of my head, that's all I can think of. Like I say, we all know that that court infrastructure is there, but HMP sort of was the top priority there for a long time.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

I just have two more questions.

MR. A. PARSONS: Okay.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: You had indicated that you had hired two counsels to help save money on outside counsel. That was under the Civil heading,

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Would hiring one more person or counsel help save additional funds? Would that be something to consider?

MR. A. PARSONS: It's something we're willing to consider. The problem is that sometimes when you get these cases, depending on – Rolf hit the nail on the head. When you talk about some of these cases that have very intricate details, we're talking about mining tax, you don't have enough of the work to keep somebody on full time who that's what their specialty is, nor can we afford them, quite frankly.

At the same time, that goes on a lot and sometimes it's just not worth it. Right now, we've made that change. This is the first year you're seeing the impact of that decision where we said let's reduce outside counsel. Let's bring in a couple more inside. But it's got to be more of a general nature. Even though we're the biggest law firm in town, we still don't have that ability to hang on to certain files. You just got to go outside.

So when you look at the top files that we have – and, again, you talk about, we had 30 per cent of them that is AG-funded counsel. There's nothing we could do there anyway. I forget, there is 48, there is 30 – what was the last 22 –?

OFFICIAL: Litigation, yeah.

MR. A. PARSONS: Litigation.

I think that's benefited us in that we've had good-quality lawyers doing good work and we've managed to save money. But I'd be afraid that – you got to weigh can – we're never going to get outside of having to hire some of these firms, I guess, is the best way to put it.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

And the last question is related under Executive Support, under Salaries, you had indicated that you had hired two deputy ministers and I was just wondering what that was about.

MR. A. PARSONS: Make sure I get that right now, because we did not hire – no, actually, I think we have one less deputy minister than from a few years ago.

OFFICIAL: Assistant deputy (inaudible).

MR. A. PARSONS: Assistant deputy ministers? Why don't you explain it?

MS. MERCER: I am one of the deputy ministers of which you speak. So I was an assistant deputy minister and director of Public Prosecutions and I was placed in the deputy minister role on October 1 of last year. Heather Jacobs, who was previously deputy minister for a number of years, had retired, came back – and was working, but had agreed to come back for a short term, overlapped with me.

So, I think, last year, we actually had Todd Stanley, who left; Heather came back; and then I stepped into the role, knowing she was only back for a short time. So, there was a slight transition there.

MS. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you very much. That was my last question.

I would just like to thank everyone. I must say, this has been, as you had referenced earlier in the House, a very useful exercise, very substantive, very informative, and it certainly contributed to my understanding of the process. So, I'd like to thank everyone for your contributions.

MR. A. PARSONS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

Go ahead, Minister.

MR. A. PARSONS: If I could just make a couple of closing comments.

One, I want to thank everybody here, whether it is Table staff or Committees staff, it was a long night, but I think it is an important night. I appreciate your patience with this, and your patience with us as we look for the answers to your questions.

I would say to you, if there is anything that pops up that you might have overlooked or you think about it later, email us and we'll certainly do what we can to get it out.

Number two, I know we are busy now with budgets and this and that, when we get our ground under our feet, I'd be more than happy for Justice critics to reach out and get a briefing from the department on different aspects or areas. I think that is really productive in the critic's role. We are going to send out all the requests of information we didn't have; we'll send that out as soon as possible.

The last thing, I look at the people sitting around me, this is the Justice league here I like to call them. They're the biggest part of the iceberg that we don't see, so I want to thank all of them. They all have places they could be, things they could do; they have stayed here extra time. They've been working on this really hard. So, I want to thank all these people sitting around me here. They're the brains of the operation and they are the ones who – there is a lot of good work, I think, Justice has done and they are responsible for all of it. So, thank this crowd right here.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

On that note, shall 4.1.01 to 4.2.02 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 4.1.01 through 4.2.02 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 Justice and Public Safety, total heads, carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Justice and Public Safety carried without amendment.

CHAIR: The next time that the Social Services Committee will meet will be Thursday, June 13 at 9 a.m., here.

Thank you, travel safe.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.