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Social Services**

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Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

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Honourable Wade Verge, MHA

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

Chair: Glenn Littlejohn, MHA

Members:

Tony Cornect, MHA
Lisa Dempster, MHA
Stelman Flynn, MHA
Glen Little, MHA
Kevin Pollard, MHA
Gerry Rogers, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Lorna Proudfoot

Appearing:

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

Hon. Clyde Jackman, MHA, Minister
Dave Aker, Chief Financial Officer
Dennis Kendell, Executive Director, Regional Operations
Tom Lawrence, Interim Chief Executive Officer

Also Present

Tom Osborne, MHA
Dana English, Researcher, Official Opposition Office
Susan Williams, Researcher, NDP Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Tom Osborne, MHA for St. John's South, substitutes for Lisa Dempster, MHA for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

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

CHAIR (Littlejohn): Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the Social Services Committee. I welcome representatives from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation this evening to our Committee. I understand that Mr. Osborne is substituting for Ms Dempster.

OFFICIAL: Gerry is here for herself.

CHAIR: Gerry is here for herself, yes.

MS ROGERS: I am actually substituting for myself.

CHAIR: Welcome, everybody.

Minister, I am going to have the Committee introduce themselves first and then I am going to ask you to introduce your staff and we will get started hence.

Tom, if you want to start.

MR. OSBORNE: Tom Osborne, MHA for St. John's South.

MS ENGLISH: Dana English, Researcher with the Opposition.

MR. FLYNN: Stelman Flynn, MHA for Humber East.

MS ROGERS: Gerry Rogers; I work for the good people of St. John's Centre.

Susan Williams, Researcher, just had to quickly step out.

MR. CORNETT: Tony Cornect for the beautiful, cultural District of Port au Port.

MR. LITTLE: Glen Little, MHA for Bonavista South.

MR. POLLARD: Kevin Pollard, MHA for Baie Verte – Springdale district.

MR. LITTLEJOHN: I am Glenn Littlejohn, MHA for Port de Grave.

Minister, if you want to introduce your staff or have them introduce themselves. We will start with you, Sir.

MR. JACKMAN: Clyde Jackman, Minister Responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

I will let my staff introduce themselves as soon as the red light comes on.

MR. LAWRENCE: Tom Lawrence, Interim CEO, Housing Corporation.

MR. KENDELL: Dennis Kendell, Executive Director of Regional Operations.

MR. AKER: Dave Aker, Interim CFO.

CHAIR: Just a reminder to the gentleman that before you go to speak, make sure your little red light is on and for the Committee members as well, so we get it all recorded downstairs.

Minister, you have fifteen minutes for opening remarks and we will start from there.

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will not take fifteen minutes, but I do want to make some brief commentary. This is my first stint working with the people from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I have said on several occasions, I do not think there is a more recognized group across the Province, rural and maybe within the city, than Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. The suite of programs that they have, I think people are more than familiar with them.

Also, I know, having been in this portfolio for just a number of months, the cases that come forward are often very complex and have their challenges; but, I have to say, while we as MHAs sometimes inquire on behalf of our constituents, we may not always get the result that we want, what I have found with the staff who are down there is they are more than committed to the cause they are carrying out on behalf of the people of the Province and will try

and find every way possible to accommodate clients. So I want to thank them for that.

A few of the programs that we have in place, we were pleased to announce the \$68 million affordable housing unit this year. Over the past ten years, we have had approximately 1,117 of these new, affordable units across the Province. The latest agreement will see \$27 million invested in that over the next four years. This is one year out now and another four years.

The remaining \$41 million will go into the Provincial Home Repair Program. We continued support for that as well. Again, we are supporting the Residential Energy Efficiency Program for \$3 million. It is a staggering number when you look at it. There is \$10.1 million in Rent Supplement Programs. This year it will go to assist some 1,882 households. There is a new project that I have asked for: the Rent Supplement Program. There is \$10.1 million going into that this year. There is an additional \$150,000 this year. So the total rent supplements for the Province this year is 1,882.

Also, I know, Gerry, you will be interested in this one. We are going to run a pilot for the portable rent supplement. I believe at this particular point we have twenty-two or twenty-four that we have put in place. My thought on it is we may have someone who wants to live in a particular neighbourhood because of family support or something of that nature. So what we can do now is we can support them in that subsidy, and there are rules and guidelines and stipulations and codes that they would still be expected to meet under Newfoundland and Labrador and Housing standards. Hopefully we can work more towards this, and this pilot will set us in a specific direction.

Supportive Living, again, there is another \$5.3 million going into that; \$2 million investment in the Home Modification Program. So the work that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is doing in the Province is commendable. I make no bones about it; the investment that we have put into it over the years has seen major improvements in wait-lists. As a matter of fact, these folks will tell me that anybody who applies this year for the Provincial Home Repair Program will be served within the year. So,

when you can speak to that, that is a positive piece of news.

So, we will open the floor for your piece of work, Mr. Chair, and we will take her from there.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Tom, you have fifteen minutes on the clock, and you have opening remarks. I will ask the Clerk to call the first subhead, please.

CLERK (Ms Proudfoot): Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: The Clerk has called 1.1.01.

Tom.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

Considering there is only one appropriation, I guess you are open to general questions. Otherwise, it is going to be a very short (inaudible).

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, that is right. I expected there would be questions around programming, yes.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay, I appreciate that, Minister.

The budget this year is almost \$8 million shy of what it was last year. During the lockup, it was explained to us that there was a piece of land in Southlands that they were hoping to make up that amount from. Can you elaborate on that a little more?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, there are four pieces of property out in Southlands – and they can speak to it more – and what we have decided on doing is selling two of those. Well, that is basically it. The premise of that is to sell four pieces you would probably up the market or whatnot, so these are the two pieces that we have decided on. I think the value of the other two pieces of property is around \$8 million.

OFFICIAL: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes

MR. OSBORNE: So, you are selling two this year with the hopes of collecting about \$8 million and make up –

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, it is \$7.7 million.

MR. OSBORNE: Seven point seven million dollars.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: All right.

I just have a general question on land. I know years ago, in addition to Elizabeth Towers and Churchill Square – those were revenue generators for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and helped to subsidize the low-income housing. In addition, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing generated a great deal of revenue from land sales and land development, and have kind of moved away from that.

Is there any expectation that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing will get back into land sales and land development in order to regenerate some of the revenue needed to maintain the properties that you have and potentially build additional properties?

MR. JACKMAN: Do you want to speak to that?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes.

CHAIR: Tom.

Mr. Lawrence.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, thank you. That is a good question.

Back in the 1990s we were directed by government to divest all of our interests in all the land that we owned. Even prior to that, we were directed to divest ourselves of all of our market rental housing like Elizabeth Towers, Churchill Square, and Pine Bud. We had units in Marystown, Stephenville, and Goose Bay.

Yes, we were directed to get out of land development, but we developed all of Mount Pearl and we developed all of Cowan Heights. They were profitable. Anyway, it was the

wisdom of the day, by the government, for us to get out of that business.

So over the years we have been selling off these blocks of land. We do not develop them. They are sold, but the infrastructure is in place. It is raw land in the sense that the developer, whoever buys it, has to put in the roads, the local servicing, that kind of thing.

We have been selling those pieces of land now since the 1990s. Like the minister said, we have four pieces left out in Southlands. We sold the last one in 2011-2012. It was a bigger piece and I think it was \$13 million that we got for that.

This piece now, we are putting up two more blocks, 7A and 6. That is what we call phase 7A and 6. We expect to get around \$6 million or \$7 million for that. We have two more to go probably in a couple years' time because you do not want to flood the market all at the one time. We have no direction to get back into that business.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. So that question is probably more appropriate to the minister. Is there any intention on government providing direction – I know that Powers Pond and, I think, even part of Southlands and Cowan Heights were planned developments. Contractors made money, housing made money, it subsidized the operations of housing.

MR. JACKMAN: I can tell you that at this particular point there is not.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. Are you able to provide any sort of breakdown on the one line item that is there, the \$34.5 million, and give some indication as to where that is appropriated.

MR. JACKMAN: The breakdown on the dollars?

MR. OSBORNE: Yes.

MR. LAWRENCE: Actually –

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. LAWRENCE: We are one line in the Estimates, but our budget is actually \$118 million. The grant is \$34.5 million, but we get

\$50 million-\$60 million from CMHC every year, annually. We have rental income of around \$20 million, and then the rest we have some interest income and land sales, of course including Southlands this year, of around –

MR. JACKMAN: I could –

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: I can probably even provide you with that list, if you wanted it.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. That would probably save time if we could get it.

MR. JACKMAN: That would save time (inaudible).

CHAIR: And –

MR. JACKMAN: Oh, sorry about that.

CHAIR: Obviously, minister, if we are providing to one party, can we provide it to both, so that way –

MR. JACKMAN: I have no problem with that.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Are you able to provide a list with that of the third-party agencies that have been provided grant monies through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. JACKMAN: Absolutely.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

How many employees are currently directly employed through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. JACKMAN: I am going to take a stab now. There are about 420?

MR. LAWRENCE: Four hundred.

MR. JACKMAN: Four hundred. I missed it, 400.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. Is that 400 full time, or is that full and part?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: They are full-time employees.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. Are there any part-time employees as well?

MR. LAWRENCE: We just have a couple. We have a couple of seasonal, but the vast majority are full time.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. Is there any direction given to Housing to eliminate any of those positions through attrition?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, there is.

CHAIR: Minister, can you repeat that please to the mic.

MR. JACKMAN: Oh yes. We are looking at six positions per year, for five years for a total of thirty.

MR. OSBORNE: Are you able at this point to give an indication as to what those positions are?

MR. JACKMAN: I cannot right at this particular point, but we have a number of people who are up for retirement. We will be taking a look at that, in consultation with the CEO and staff, and then we will make determinations on that.

MR. OSBORNE: Are those positions included in the numbers that were provided in the budget, or are they over and above?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, they are included in the budget. It is around \$650,000 this year for those six positions.

MR. OSBORNE: No, I mean the positions that were identified as being eliminated through

attrition in the Budget Speech by Minister Wiseman.

MR. LAWRENCE: Not that I can remember. They would have been included in the overall numbers that he was talking about, the 1,400. They would have been included in that.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. JACKMAN: Going through the Budget exercise, we offered up to find a number of positions. Once that determination was made, they will be within that thirty.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Besides the attrition positions, are there any other positions that will be affected through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, any other layoffs?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Nothing, no. We are not anticipating any other layoffs other than that.

MR. JACKMAN: I will point out that one of the things I think these people have been very good in is that if there are ways to find efficiencies, or if there are positions they feel do not need to be refilled, they have taken initiatives on their own previous to this.

MR. OSBORNE: So the positions directed by government, the six positions per year, are there plans for other positions besides what you have been directed by government to reduce the size of Housing to?

MR. JACKMAN: I think within these numbers that will be our expectation. I do not think we would expect them to go beyond that.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

How many offices does Housing currently have throughout the Province now?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: We have seven: the Avalon Region, Marystown, Gander, Grand Falls,

Stephenville, Corner Brook, Goose Bay, and a sub-office in Lab City.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. Are there any plans to reduce the number of offices or consolidate offices?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Not at this time, no.

MR. OSBORNE: Are you able to provide a wait-list by region for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. JACKMAN: Numbers you mean?

MR. OSBORNE: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes. Do you want us to tell you now or provide them to you?

MR. OSBORNE: You can provide them, that is fine, unless you have them.

MR. LAWRENCE: They are very, very detailed.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Sorry.

MR. JACKMAN: That is it. The teacher is there now. We have to say our name.

MR. LAWRENCE: Am I supposed to say my name?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, you have to.

MR. LAWRENCE: Sorry.

CHAIR: You are, but we are okay.

MR. JACKMAN: I have been trying to nudge you though.

CHAIR: They understand down below. We are good.

MR. LAWRENCE: Okay, sorry.

MR. JACKMAN: He has been naming you every time.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes.

Yes, I have the list here, but I can certainly provide it to you.

MR. JACKMAN: I think it would be the best thing, yes.

MR. OSBORNE: If you could provide that.

MR. LAWRENCE: It is very detailed by region. It breaks it up –

CHAIR: Tom, you are on.

MR. LAWRENCE: It breaks it up also by the criteria in the wait-list.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. When can we expect a copy of that, Minister?

MR. JACKMAN: We will get Tom and them on it as soon as we leave here this evening. I will see if I can have it to you within the next – I will say we will have it to you before next week is out.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. JACKMAN: If there is a problem with that – I am sure they will let me know afterwards if that is not enough time. We will get it to you as soon as we can.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. Is the income cut-off still \$32,500?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, it is.

MR. OSBORNE: That is Island wide. It is different than Labrador, I think.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes it is.

MR. OSBORNE: What is the amount in Labrador?

MR. JACKMAN: It is \$65,000.

MR. OSBORNE: Do they apply now to all housing programs, PHRP, REEP and so on?

MR. JACKMAN: Are we what?

MR. OSBORNE: Those income thresholds, are they consistent through all housing programs?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, they are, except the HMP. I think that is \$45,000 because that is for disabled people and they need a little bit more leeway there.

MR. OSBORNE: What would that be in Labrador?

MR. LAWRENCE: I think it is \$50,000.

I think it is \$50,000 in Labrador, but I can certainly check to make sure.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

There is \$8.8 million for the Provincial Home Repair Program. Can you tell me the average grant amount? It used to be \$5,000. Is it still at \$5,000?

MR. LAWRENCE: It is around \$3,900 now.

MR. OSBORNE: Three thousand and nine hundred dollars.

MR. LAWRENCE: It is after dropping down. The maximum is \$5,000, but the average is around \$3,900.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. How many grants were distributed under this program over the past budget year?

MR. LAWRENCE: There were 1,400.

MR. OSBORNE: Do you know what the wait-list is for that program right now?

MR. LAWRENCE: Actually, a number of years ago it was almost 4,700. Over the past six years the Province has invested an extra \$4 million a year, so that is \$24 million in extra funding we had for PHRP. Currently now, we are serving the current year wait-list. If you apply this year, you will get a grant this year.

MR. OSBORNE: Perfect. We cannot complain about everything that government does.

MR. JACKMAN: I told you that you cannot.

MR. OSBORNE: I will come back with some tomorrow.

MR. JACKMAN: I figured you would.

MR. OSBORNE: The budget also mentions \$250,000 for the program in Labrador. Why is the Labrador and Island amount separated?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: That is for PHRP?

MR. OSBORNE: Yes.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, in Labrador, that is all the take-up that we can get down there.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. LAWRENCE: It is not a very popular program in Labrador. We have done everything to try and increase its popularity, but nothing seems to take effect on it.

MR. OSBORNE: The partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government; \$700,000 to assist low-income homeowners in Inuit communities. That was in 2014. Is there a similar program this year?

MR. LAWRENCE: No, that was just a one-time program. We cost shared that with the Nunatsiavut Government, \$350,000 each. It was a special one-time program to help them with some terrible houses they had, I think mostly in Nain.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

CHAIR: I am going to hold you there, Thomas, and I will come back to you.

MR. OSBORNE: I still have eleven seconds.

CHAIR: That is okay.

MR. OSBORNE: I have one more question.

CHAIR: Okay, one more. Go ahead.

MR. JACKMAN: Go for it.

MR. OSBORNE: Is the Housing Corporation subject to the landlord tenant relations act?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, we are. Yes, we follow that act.

CHAIR: Gerry.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

Can I just ask, you follow it, but are you bound by it though?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, we are.

MS ROGERS: Okay. There is a mythology out there that you are not.

MR. LAWRENCE: No we are, just like any other landlord.

MS ROGERS: Right. It is interesting that mythology is out there.

I want to thank you very much for coming this evening. I know everybody is so busy.

I just came back from Corner Brook and was part of the All-Party Committee on Mental Health. We met with managers in the regional health authority. We met with service providers. We met with social workers and with psychiatrists. We met with community groups providing services for people with mental health and addictions. We met with people living with mental illness and we met with their families.

Without exception, everybody talked about the housing crisis. They talked about the need for affordable housing, plus then also the need for supportive housing. The desperation, particularly for people with complex needs, is astounding. They talked about the same that we hear in all of our districts, in terms of some of the larger areas; people living in horrible, horrible boarding house situations, people coming out of – if they have been incarcerated then being released. Or people who have mental health issues, people on Income Support,

particularly single people whose Income Support is so minimal.

Housing is such an important foundational piece as to whether someone – you all know that, I do not mean to be preachy.

OFFICIAL: No.

MS ROGERS: Whether someone can get well, whether someone can stay well, whether a senior can avoid going into a personal care home or a long-term care home, if they have enough supports to live in their homes.

I oftentimes think that when I am standing in the House perhaps I am exaggerating, but then when you go out on the streets and into community centres, church halls, and hear people's stories or phone calls, you know it is not an exaggeration. I do not believe the situation is getting better. I do believe it is more challenged. I know that your staff deals with a lot of these issues. You have such a wonderful, dedicated staff.

With that in mind I am going to ask you a few questions. One of the questions I am going to ask is: Why are you selling the last four pieces of land? We know what is happening across the country, across the continent, almost globally in helping people with complex needs, helping people with addictions, with mental health issues or homelessness is that the approach is housing first.

Dr. Ladha, our senior psychiatrist in the Province, the chief forensic psychiatrist, said his people, the people he sees cannot get well if they do not have a place to live – a safe, decent place to live. Why sell this land now when we know that no one is making land anymore? We do not know what the future is going to hold in terms of that whole issue of housing first.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: One point is that we are not selling all of the land. The second point is that the number of units – you can speak to the number of units that we would have. Plus, if we can get more into the portable subsidies that we are talking about, hopefully we would have

enough houses to meet the needs of those who are seeking them.

We have adopted the OrgCode report.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: One of the things that I will agree with you, it just seemed to make common sense – I do not know why we did not get there – before, you had to work your way to earn a place.

MS ROGERS: And you could not.

MR. JACKMAN: This report says that the very first thing you need is safety, security, and a place to lay your head each night. Now let's start to put the supports around you to work out the issues that you have, but first and foremost is finding accommodations.

This is a policy piece and I do not think we should put it up on Newfoundland and Labrador Housing officials to answer on policy –

MS ROGERS: Yes, but I am happy to hear from them.

MR. JACKMAN: – but from our perspective, we will continue to work through the OrgCode. I asked the Committee to have the report done and back to me before the end of April, and they did submit it last week. I am going to take a look down through it and then see where we move with it, but it is not something I want to sit on for a number of months.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

My question is, in the sale of this land are there any conditions – the other thing is we know that no one is really building rental units aside from –

MR. JACKMAN: Building what?

MS ROGERS: Rental units, aside from the groups, organizations who are availing of the housing initiative where they are building supportive units.

MR. JACKMAN: Your question –

MS ROGERS: My question is nobody is building new rental units. We have not seen an increase really in the stock of rental units in the Province. Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is one of the main landlords. Then we have seen some additional units that come through the housing initiative where groups and organizations are building – some of them are supportive housing units, some are straight but affordable units. It is a drop in the bucket, it is very important, and the work is great.

To talk about the rent supplements, which I think is really important, do you foresee when we look at our aging population that the rental stock that is going to be necessary is going to be out there?

MR. JACKMAN: With the affordable housing initiatives that we are making, like I said there are some 1,700 and we are continuing to build those from a seniors' perspective, I think that is there. I think one of the things we have to take a look at is the difference between what we are seeing in especially the urban parts here in St. John's and Labrador as two unique areas that require special consideration and what the demand is in other parts of rural Newfoundland.

There is a demand all across the Province, but the demand in these two areas that I mentioned are much higher than they are anywhere else in the Province. I guess what we have to do is work with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing to see how we can continue to find units that are suitable through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and meet the clientele that you are talking about.

MS ROGERS: It is the same in Clarenville and it is the same in Corner Brook, the demands –

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, it is those bigger areas.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

In the sale of the land, are there any conditions on what would be built on that land, whether or not depending – is there going to be housing developments? Will there be any affordable units? Are there any conditions at all on the sale of the land?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, actually the last time we sold a block in 2011-2012, part of the condition of the sale, the developer had to keep 100 of the lots for – we will call it – modest housing, 800 to 900 square feet. We are looking at doing the same thing again probably this time as well. These would be intertwined and blending in with all of the rest of the houses.

MS ROGERS: You are not looking at housing density, a requirement for any kind of housing density?

MR. JACKMAN: No.

MR. LAWRENCE: No.

MS ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

We have the total budget of the corporation for 2015. Why was the provincial revenue greater than the \$770,000 that was budgeted for 2014? Did you see greater revenue than what you had estimated for 2014?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Is that in rental revenue?

MS ROGERS: Yes. Was that rental revenue?

CHAIR: Where are you, Gerry, or what are you referencing?

MS ROGERS: In the Grants and Subsidies, the provincial grant.

The budget on the line item 10, Grants and Subsidies, was \$41,494,600 and then it was revised to \$42,265,000.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: That was to cover off a general salary increase that employees had received for last year so they put that into our budget this current year, 2014-2015.

MS ROGERS: Great, thank you.

Aside from the properties that we just spoke about, where there any properties sold in 2014-2015 – land or properties?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: No.

MR. LAWRENCE: No.

MS ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

MR. JACKMAN: Between the two of us, we got “no” out.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

What vacant properties are left? Are there properties that have been sort of decommissioned, that are on the chopping block?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: This number changes almost daily, but at the moment we have about 128 vacant properties across the Province; twenty-six are in rural areas where there is not demand; ten are being prepared for tender as we speak; twelve –

MS ROGERS: What does that mean, Dennis, for tender – for repair?

MR. KENDELL: The tender documents to get the work done are being prepared by our engineering division.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. KENDELL: We have another twelve that has already been a work-in-progress type of thing. We have fifty with some major repairs and structural mould issues, these sorts of things, but twenty-eight of them are in an area of Marystown where there is absolutely no demand on our wait-list. We have another twenty-seven, in addition to that, where the work is ongoing as well. We have a total of three that is waiting for inspection to get the work done.

CHAIR: Okay, Gerry, can I hold you there?

MS ROGERS: Can I ask one quick question to wrap this one up?

CHAIR: Yes, you can.

MS ROGERS: Are there any properties that you are thinking okay, we are going to sell then; we are going to move them on?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: Not other than the two that we have –

MS ROGERS: The two pieces of land.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MS ROGERS: Any other buildings, units?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: No, we have not decided at this point, but we do have some areas of the Province where there is no demand. The question we have to ask ourselves is: Do we continue to try to keep them from falling down and spending money on them, when we have no demand? So that is the decision.

MS ROGERS: What areas would they be?

MR. JACKMAN: Just as an example, down in my area I have had a discussion with them. They have between thirty, I believe –

MR. KENDELL: Twenty-eight.

MR. JACKMAN: – twenty-eight pieces of property in Marystown right now. There is no need for the uptake so the decision is going to be: Are we going to keep them or not? In all likelihood, we will not.

CHAIR: Okay. I am going to hold Gerry there.

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. OSBORNE: Thank you.

Still on that theme, I know Housing has some buildings in Pleasantville that are not considered low-income, but fixed-income rentals. What are your plans for those buildings?

MR. JACKMAN: We have been having some discussions about that one. We have not finally

decided on it one way or the other. I know one of the things that have been raised is that you get some people who are living in those who would be above the thresholds of what we have for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. We are taking a look at it.

MR. OSBORNE: Are there any plans to sell those units?

MR. JACKMAN: Not at this particular moment. We are just having discussions around it.

MR. OSBORNE: Is there any indication as to what the discussions are, what your focus is?

MR. JACKMAN: No. It is just that it has been brought to our attention that this is Newfoundland and Labrador Housing property. There are people there who – well I guess our question is, can they afford to pay more, or do we want to do something different? So it is a broad discussion at this point.

MR. OSBORNE: What is the budget this year for the Rent Supplement Program? Is that an increase, or it remains the same, or a decrease over last year?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: No, it is the same as last year. It is around \$10 million.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. How many rent supplements does that \$10 million cover?

MR. LAWRENCE: It covers 1,882.

MR. OSBORNE: Can you be exact?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, 1,882. It went up 150 this year.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. What is the average rent supplement? What would you call the maximum rent supplement?

MR. JACKMAN: The maximum –

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. JACKMAN: Oh okay.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: No, you go ahead, Tom.

CHAIR: I am sorry.

MR. JACKMAN: No, Tom can go ahead.

MR. LAWRENCE: The maximum rent that a landlord can charge is \$800. So the way it works is the client will pay 25 per cent of their net income, and we pay the difference between whatever that is and the \$800 maximum. It is around the same as our own units. Around \$350 a month is the average income, \$323.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. LAWRENCE: Sorry, it is the average rent for the clients.

MR. OSBORNE: What is the amount in Labrador? Last year it was \$104,000. Is that the same?

MR. JACKMAN: For what?

MR. OSBORNE: In Labrador.

MR. JACKMAN: Okay.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: That is the same, yes.

MR. OSBORNE: The cut-off in Labrador would be the same as for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: The City of St. John's has taken a direction – for example, there is a development proceeding in Shea Heights. They have put out the tender. It was a purpose tender where the builder had to ensure that the properties were affordable for home purchase, and to ensure that they are below market average for purchase price.

Does Newfoundland and Labrador Housing have any hopes of taking on that direction so that you are not only a rental agency, but you are looking at – perhaps, with some of the land banks you

have remaining that you will look at purpose driven so to make it affordable for homeowners to get in below the market average?

MR. LAWRENCE: We have not up to this point, but I guess anything is an option to look at. For that there is another program, the down payment assistance program, which is designed to specifically help that class of people making between \$40,000 and \$65,000.

MR. OSBORNE: I was going to ask you a question on that as well actually. What the city is doing – and it is great in the city. Newfoundland and Labrador Housing operates throughout the Province. It is one thing to have your down payment, but if you cannot afford the mortgage it is another thing.

What the city is doing is ensuring that these units are below market average, which makes it affordable for people to get in. They are also looking at some assistance through the developer on down payments as well. It is just a suggestion to government and/or Housing. There are two types of housing demand; one is low-income rentals, and the other would be low-income ownership.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: We will take the point under consideration. We will have a chat on it.

MR. OSBORNE: With the down payment assistance program, can you tell us some more about the rollout of this program and some of the details?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, I will speak to some of it. We are hoping that it will not be too long before we will roll it out. What we have done is set a threshold for housing costs, for example. In St. John's we know that you are going to pay more to get a modest house than you would be if you were in – I will not say Rocky Harbour, but somewhere on the Northern Peninsula. So we have set out a maximum threshold for the price of a house.

Now, I wonder, should I give you details, or will we do it in our news release, in our announcement? You should come to our announcement.

MR. OSBORNE: I will not announce it on you.

MR. JACKMAN: You come to our announcement. We will give you all the details then.

All I will say to you now is that we are going to be rolling it out very shortly.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. JACKMAN: It is a good one. When I sit and look at somebody – I will use two examples. Two individuals who might be working at a department store, combined salaries and paying their rent; this program could help them purchase a home and it would be theirs.

Somebody used an example today; a young professional who had finished, making \$42,000 a year, just coming out could not get a loan through the bank. Therefore this will allow somebody who is coming out of school or something to avail of it.

The term that we like to use is that it is a hand up, not a handout. That is one you are going to be hearing me say a fair bit about; it is a hand up, not a handout.

MR. OSBORNE: When you say a hand up, not a handout, are people expected to repay their down payment?

MR. JACKMAN: There are going to be terms around it, but I think people will be more than pleased with what we are looking at.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

We talked a little bit earlier about the Home Modification Program. Can you tell me what the budget is for that this year?

MR. JACKMAN: The Home Modification Program; it is \$2 million.

MR. OSBORNE: Can you tell me how many grants will be provided under that?

MR. JACKMAN: Do you know how many?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Approximately 300.

MR. JACKMAN: Eighty-three per cent of those are seniors. That impressed me.

MR. OSBORNE: What was that percentage again?

MR. JACKMAN: Eighty-three per cent.

CHAIR: I kind of wish this place was this quiet all the time.

MR. OSBORNE: Yes. Usually when I speak it is.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, right.

MR. OSBORNE: What percentage of people really wants to hear what I have to say?

What percentage of Housing's current stock is now considered to be fully accessible?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: I just have to look up the number there now. Currently, out of our housing stock, we have about eighty-three that are fully accessible. We realize it is not a lot, but these units are old and they are very difficult to make accessible without, basically, tearing them down and rebuilding them.

We do have another 551 that we call visitable. That means you have zero-step entry, accessible bathrooms, doors are wider so that somebody who is disabled, for example, in a wheelchair could visit your home. We have 551 of those.

In the Affordable Housing Program there is another 223. We do not directly own those, but they are still available through the Affordable Housing Program: 223.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: That is a condition of constructing those, that there is a number that has to be accessible. If you get ten, there is a number that has to be accessible.

MR. OSBORNE: That is the program where Housing partners with contractors and provides affordable housing?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: Do you know what the wait time is – not counting the fact that your application expires after one year so there is only ever less than a one-year wait, what is the true wait time now for somebody who is applying for Housing; and, piggybacked on that, what is the wait time for accessible housing?

MR. JACKMAN: I would like to have Dennis speak because we had this discussion just a couple of days ago (inaudible).

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: First, I want to make a point; we made some changes recently with regard to the applications that would expire after twelve months. We do not allow people with complex needs, people with disabilities, and there is another group I am losing here –

OFFICIAL: Victims of family violence.

MR. KENDELL: Victims of family violence. We do not allow these to expire anymore. We felt that was important that we would not ask them to reapply.

With regard to the wait-list, it is next to impossible – people will qualify for a home based upon the need, not necessarily first-come, first-served. Having said that if someone is a victim of family violence, they would get a house faster than someone, for example, who does not have any medical issues or any other problems, so we have criteria – we do it based upon need, but we do know that we placed about 880 people last year, and our wait-list is less than that.

Technically, they could all receive a home with the twelve months depending upon their need, if you understand what I am trying to say.

CHAIR: Tom, I am going to hold you there so save your thought.

Gerry, do you want to pick it up from there?

MS ROGERS: Thank you.

I am very interested in the wait-list as well in terms of the category of seniors, people who want a one-bedroom unit or more than that, and it has always been hard to get a true picture because people drop off the list. Often, they do not realize they have dropped off the list. At least those are the kinds of calls that we get.

The expiry is twelve months from your application, from your applying, not the calendar year or the fiscal year?

Okay, great. I guess it is a little bit hard then to get that true picture. I mean, if it was within the calendar year, then it would really be easier. As much information as we could get in terms of the types of units people are looking for, the size, the region, the age or the different categories, that would be great to have.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, we can get you that.

MS ROGERS: Do you keep stats on how many people dropped off, expired, and then reapplied? Is that a stat that you have?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: We do keep all of the stats. I do not have them in front of me. There are a number of things that happen with a wait-list. In 2014, we had 241 people who refused the unit that they were offered, even though we say to them upfront that you choose the part of the city where you want to live. When we do offer the home to them, 241 have turned it down, which is quite a substantial number.

Our wait-list at the moment is 830 people. We placed 531 in our own units last year and 354 in rental supplements. There is a natural turnover in both the Rent Supplement Program – people do move from that program as well. They also move from our own houses so we placed – well, the math, 531 and 354. That is what we placed last year and we have a wait-list of 830.

Again, like I had said earlier, it is very difficult to give a timeline on how long someone would be on the list depending upon what their needs are.

MS ROGERS: There was some talk of trying to streamline because some people are on the wait-list for St. John's Housing, some are on the wait-list for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing – has anything been done about that?

MR. KENDELL: We do not share our wait-list; there is a privacy issue. We do not say to them that you cannot be on one or the other.

MS ROGERS: No, I would not think you would want to do that.

MR. KENDELL: They may be on both, that is true, and we know that a lot of them are.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

MR. KENDELL: Again, the most important change will be made in regard to the expiring of the people who drop off is that we do not – the complex needs of the homeless and the disabled groups, they do not expire anymore.

MS ROGERS: Right. I imagine for many of those, they are looking for one-bedroom units, possibly two-bedroom units, and those are the fewest number of units that you have, yes?

MR. KENDELL: Yes, we have as policy also that says that if someone is a one-bedroom requirement – say it is a single individual –

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. KENDELL: – we will allow them to move into a two bedroom, but we will not allow them to move into a four bedroom or a three bedroom.

MS ROGERS: That makes sense, yes.

MR. KENDELL: There are reasons for that, by the way, social reasons and so on.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. KENDELL: Having said that, we do our best to move them up at least one bedroom if we do not have – because our stock, you see, was built in the 1950s for the most part, 1950s and 1960s –

MS ROGERS: Big families.

MR. KENDELL: – and 1970s when families were a lot bigger than what they are today. So we do have a demographic problem in regard to our units.

MS ROGERS: Okay, great. Thank you very much.

Is there any plan to build any new social housing units this year?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: No.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

I think we have asked this – for the 2015 budget breakdown, can we have a breakdown of the different programs as well, like the public rental housing, maintenance, modernization –

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MS ROGERS: Great, thank you very much.

So, are you in the process of renovating units to make them smaller?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: We were given a million dollars a few years ago – government gave us some money to look into the costs of doing that. We did a project in Corner Brook where we took two homes that were side by side and we changed it into a fully disabled unit on the bottom, and two single units on the top. We did a similar situation over on –

MS ROGERS: Campbell Avenue too, didn't you?

MR. KENDELL: Mundy Pond Road, that area, where we had a duplex with two three-bedroom units, and we now have four: two up on top and two on the bottom now. I will say that is extremely costly. It ran us somewhere in the area of \$350,000, something like that, which is quite expensive but it is an option. Like I say, it would take a considerable amount of money to do so.

MS ROGERS: Okay. Yes, I guess sometimes it is easier to build.

Do you have a list of how many people were granted a rent sup, but were refused by the landlord?

MR. KENDELL: We may be able to get the numbers for you. What happens is when we sign an agreement with the landlord, the landlord has the right to refuse, I think it is, two, and then they have to take the third one.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

MR. KENDELL: If the landlord continues to refuse, we can drop that agreement with that landlord. We do have some that are refused by the landlord.

MS ROGERS: Yes, I would love to know how many.

MR. KENDELL: I can see if we can get the number.

MS ROGERS: Okay. That would be great. Thanks.

The maximum rent, then, for any unit that is with a rent supplement is \$800, is it?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, it is.

MS ROGERS: Okay. How do you handle rent increases? At what point can landlords say okay, I want to raise the rent?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: The landlord has the right to raise the rent, but I think it is only just once a year under the Residential Tenancies division. That is how it is regulated.

The cap is \$800. The problem with that is if they do go to \$825 or \$850, then, of course the client has to pick up the \$50 that is over and above the \$800. That does create a little bit of a problem, but we find that the market right now is beginning to correct itself. That happens of course. There are a lot more units that are

vacant in the city now. The vacancy rate in the city now is a lot higher than what it was a couple of years ago. So it may look after itself anyway, but we watch it very, very closely.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: Just personally too, this is a concern of mine that here we were a couple of years ago and everything was just up here. We are going to have to take a look at raising that level, but I think like Dennis has said, right now we are seeing a softening in that. If it gets to that point again we may have to reconsider.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

The pilot project, the pilot portable; how will that work?

MR. JACKMAN: Who wants to speak to that?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: What we are doing is we have gone down through our wait-list of people who are waiting for what we call in situ. They are already living in a place where they want to stay to live.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

MR. KENDELL: We found very quickly – and this is why you run these pilots, you want to find out how it will work – that a lot of the people do not want to stay where they are. They want us to find a place for them, and a better place for them in a lot of cases.

We did find twenty-three I think it was, at this point in time, who we did subsidize exactly where they were, in the home that they were. We did the inspection on the property to make sure that it met the fire codes and the life safety items. Once that was good to go, then we signed the agreement with the landlord.

MS ROGERS: Okay, particularly, in situations where a spouse has passed away.

MR. KENDELL: Yes. It can work that way. In order to get the twenty-three we did go

through a considerable number more than that. It was something like seventy-five in order to get twenty-three who did not want to stay where they were, they wanted to move somewhere else.

MS ROGERS: Okay.

CHAIR: I am going to hold you to that one, Gerry, and I am going to go back to Tom.

MR. OSBORNE: How many applications were approved last year?

MR. JACKMAN: For?

MR. OSBORNE: For housing. Applications received and then approved.

MR. JACKMAN: For rent supplements?

MR. OSBORNE: No, no, for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

MR. JACKMAN: Okay.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Around 800. It runs between 719 and 820, we will say, on an average. Those are the tenants we place in the run of a year.

MR. OSBORNE: No, no, not placed, applications that you have received. You have reviewed the application and said, yes, we are going to put you on the wait-list.

MR. LAWRENCE: We do have that number. We can certainly get the number. I cannot remember now, I cannot remember exactly what it is.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: You are looking for the number of applicants.

MR. OSBORNE: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: Okay. I will get the staff to get it for you.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. How many are on file right now, on the wait-list at the moment?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: There are 830.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Can you tell me what the budgeted amount is for the REEP this year?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: REEP is \$3 million.

MR. OSBORNE: Just going back to the applications that expire and people who are dropped off, I know that is a cause of frustration for applicants and it is a cause of frustration for MHAs. A lot of times, applicants fall off the list and are not even aware they have fallen off the list.

Just to give an example, I placed a call two weeks ago to find out where somebody was on the list. They said, still nothing. They did not inform me that their application was going to expire on May 7. We put a call in again today because their circumstances changed and were advised that their application expired on May 7.

If Housing had informed me – I have authorization to make a call on their behalf – that their application was about to expire, I could have had that file rolling. To find out that we called, literally, a couple of days before it expired and we were not informed, and then a couple of weeks later find out that the application expired two weeks ago, then I have to go back and explain well, they did not tell me – I am sorry, they just did not tell me – to a frustrated applicant.

Is there any way that, if an MHA is authorized on the file, we can be automatically informed? You must be computerized and automated enough that the person who is authorized to inquire on behalf of those individuals can be given even a month's notice that those individuals are going to have to reapply again.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: I will take that under advisement and I will speak to staff to see. I imagine with clients and likewise versa, we may

have people who are applying to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing who may find something and would not notify these people. There are complications on both ends, but we will have a discussion and see.

MR. OSBORNE: Absolutely. When we place a call and three days later the application expires, and you guys could not tell me three days prior to it expiring that it is going to expire, that is clearly not good enough.

MR. JACKMAN: We will have a discussion on that and we will see if there something we can do.

MR. OSBORNE: The Affordable Housing Agreement – we spoke a little bit about that earlier – there was \$68 million over five years I believe was the agreement?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, it is.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MS ROGERS: Sorry, I missed that.

CHAIR: Sixty-eight point five million over five years – the Affordable Housing Agreement.

MR. JACKMAN: Sixty-eight million over five years.

MS ROGERS: (Inaudible).

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: Stop cutting into my time, Gerry.

MR. JACKMAN: Hey, we got them fighting with each other –

MS ROGERS: (Inaudible).

MR. JACKMAN: Here we go.

MR. OSBORNE: Where are you locating the new affordable housing units?

MR. JACKMAN: Well, there is an application process it goes through, and there is a criterion, and they are placed all across the Province.

There is a list of approved projects – we can supply that to you.

MR. OSBORNE: So you can provide us with a list of –

MR. JACKMAN: Unless there is some –

OFFICIAL: That will be coming out in the news release –

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, right. What happens in the process is they get conditional approval. Once they come back and make the conditional approval, then we will be doing an announcement, and all of the approved projects will be in that announcement.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. JACKMAN: So you will be able to get that.

MR. OSBORNE: All right.

There are no approved announcements to date?

MR. JACKMAN: No, all that is sent out is a conditional approval. They put in an application; you have to meet these conditions. Once they come back and meet the conditions, then we do an overall announcement, and that will be coming before too long.

MS ROGERS: (Inaudible).

MR. JACKMAN: When? Probably within the next month or so – Dennis knows the date.

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: No, I do not know the date, because the conditions of the approvals sometimes can take – it is financing, for example, environmental issues, and sometimes it can take months for them to get their conditions to the approved state. So, some of them may be ready soon. They may have their financing in place already.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: This is a shared partnership between us and the federal government. So, we

have an indication from the federal government that once we get to where we think we are comfortable with it, we will do that; but it is like Dennis said, we are not going to wait eight months if there is one or two that is outstanding. We will give it a bit more time and then we will do the overall announcement.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. OSBORNE: What is the breakdown on the 50-50?

MR. JACKMAN: What do you –

MR. OSBORNE: Is it 50-50, the federal-provincial?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: It is? Okay.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, it is 50-50 for the full \$68 million. So, half is the Province and half is the federal government, yes.

MR. OSBORNE: The partner-managed housing, can you tell us a little more about that?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: There are three components to it. One component is groups or projects that we subsidize directly. There are about 1,000 of those across the Province. We have some with the City of St. John's, Humber Valley seniors, and Marystown kinsmen, are some examples, and Charwood Legion Manor in Carbonear.

We call these partnered managed. They are run by a volunteer board. What they do is they will charge the rent based on 25 per cent of their net income and then whatever their operating cost is above that, we will pay the difference. We subsidize them, basically, 100 per cent.

We also have 395 co-op houses. These have been on the go for years –

MR. OSBORNE: Three hundred and ninety-five you said?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, 395. They were all built by CMHC and back when the devolution agreement was signed back in 1997, we took over those, but we do not have the same relationships with the co-ops. They are more independent. We actually just give them a grant of a 2 per cent rate down on their mortgage.

Then we have what we call the federal portfolio. This is a hodgepodge of all kinds of projects like Saint Luke's Home, Agnes Pratt – they are mostly nursing home beds. Again, for us, our main involvement there is to collect their mortgage payment and forward that to CMHC because they all have mortgages with CMHC. They are further removed again.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

So the 1,000 units that are partner-managed units throughout the Province, are they included in the 5,500 units?

MR. LAWRENCE: No, they are separate.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

What is the budget for partner-managed housing?

MR. LAWRENCE: The total budget is around \$9 million.

MR. OSBORNE: Is that funded under the \$68 million housing agreement?

MR. LAWRENCE: No, that is completely separate. Actually, a lot of it is funded under the Social Housing Agreement. That is another agreement we signed with CMHC back in 1997.

CHAIR: I am going to hold you there.

MR. OSBORNE: Now, Gerry owns me about two minutes.

CHAIR: Okay, you will get them back in a little bit.

Gerry.

MS ROGERS: The pilot project, the portable rent supplement, the rent supplement goes to the landlord, not to the tenant who pays the

landlord; so the rent supplement then is attached, in fact, to the unit rather than the tenant having a rent supplement where they can go where they want to go.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, that is how the program works.

MS ROGERS: If Ms Smith is under this program and then Ms Smith passes away, the rent supplement then stays with the unit that she was in?

MR. LAWRENCE: No, we would take that back then, unless we had somebody else to put in there.

MS ROGERS: Right.

Say, Ms Smith was not part of the portable one and Ms Smith was in a rent supplement but is not part of the portable one, and she passes away, that rent supplement stays with that unit?

MR. LAWRENCE: It is a one-year agreement with the landlord.

MS ROGERS: The portable one or the regular one?

MR. LAWRENCE: The non-portable.

MS ROGERS: The non-portable. The portable one, I imagine, it is a one-year agreement too.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes.

MS ROGERS: I guess, in fact, it is kind of not really, totally a portable rent supplement program, it is more of there are some that can be allocated –

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, it is not a rental allowance, which goes to the client and then the client goes on and we probably would not see him again. They take the money and they go and live wherever. We have not gone down that road, and the main reason is we would lose control over the accommodations that the client would be living in. Because they could take their allowance and possibly – I am not saying they would, but possibly get to a low-standard

house or a low-standard unit that did not meet all of our guidelines and criteria.

MS ROGERS: Are you familiar with the BC one for seniors? They have a seniors' rental assistance program so they actually help the seniors find places, and it is a portable program.

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: We had our policy and research department look at other jurisdictions across the country. There are a number of different programs throughout different provinces.

MS ROGERS: Ways to do it, yes.

MR. KENDELL: I think the one in BC is like \$100 a month that goes as a rental allowance and they can take it and use it wherever they want to. Ontario is about \$100 a month as well. That would not go very far. As you can see, the average rent supplement with us is like \$450 or so.

MS ROGERS: That is right.

I did not realize that, and their specific rental program for seniors – they have one for seniors, a whole program.

MR. KENDELL: Yes.

CHAIR: Minister, you wanted to have a word.

MR. JACKMAN: To that point though, this is something we have started that is new.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: Somewhere in this process I want us to take a look at it. If a lady is here and we have family on the other side of town, I want us to just explore is there a possibility that if she finds a spot there that we can somewhere work out an arrangement. We will let this piece work its way through, but that would be part of my intentions as well.

MS ROGERS: In the long run it saves us money in all different kinds of areas, if people are healthy and not isolated.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes. Equally as important is to have supports around you, if you can live in a particular area where there is family or something else.

MS ROGERS: Exactly.

MR. JACKMAN: It is something that once we work our way through this and ask some questions – what a pilot is all about – then we will take a look at that as well.

MS ROGERS: Great. Perfect. Fabulous.

Some of these questions that I was burning to ask have been answered, so that is great.

MR. JACKMAN: That is great.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

Your strategic plan says that with the new IAH funding you will focus on private units for specifically challenged, and on supportive housing for the homeless and those with complex needs. Can you tell me a little bit about what specifically challenged might be, or what you have in mind with these?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: I am thinking that would be folks with complex needs and those kinds of clients.

MS ROGERS: Yes, and I guess people with disabilities as well then, would it be?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes.

MS ROGERS: Okay, great.

MR. JACKMAN: That is the affordable housing.

MS ROGERS: Seniors, yes.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, because I think we need to understand that this is not all about providing seniors units.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: There is that other component of it.

MS ROGERS: That is right. Is there any possibility of using existing units or vacant units that housing has as part of this?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: As part of the investment in affordable housing? No, we are not allowed.

MS ROGERS: Oh, okay.

MR. LAWRENCE: That is part of the CMHC rules.

MS ROGERS: Okay, great.

Do you know if there are any wait-lists for some of the affordable housing units that have been built under the previous agreement?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, there are.

MS ROGERS: Do you have that information?

MR. LAWRENCE: Not on me, but we do have it.

MS ROGERS: Great.

MR. LAWRENCE: We monitor these groups monthly and they have to provide annual reports. We do track. We wanted to gauge to see what kind of wait-lists they do have. In many cases they do have a tidy wait-list.

MS ROGERS: Yes, I would love to see that.

MR. JACKMAN: I know that in my own particular area, Gerry, where these units are being built, the proponents get calls even on speculation that they are putting in an application. They want to get into them. It just points to the demographic and where we have to go.

MS ROGERS: It is full before there is a spade in the ground.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MS ROGERS: I have to mention my dear friend Baxter Hookey. I am sure many of you have heard from Baxter or heard him on the radio.

MR. JACKMAN: I have heard from Port Blandford.

MS ROGERS: Is there anything going to be done to help dear Baxter Hookey and the other seniors in that area? I think he is in Port Rexton. Is he?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes. The reality is I do not believe we had an application from that particular area. Did we?

OFFICIAL: No.

MS ROGERS: He wants to see, specifically, seniors housing.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes. Through this process would be one way, but we did not have a proponent from his particular community.

MS ROGERS: Oh, an application for this program.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, because I believe I have asked that before. I do not think we had an application there. No.

MS ROGERS: It is hard because the community groups – these projects become the tail that wags the dog for a few years for these community groups. They are very complex. We have seen how long it takes for them to get up and running. If you do not have the expertise and you have volunteer boards, it is tough. It is tough to make these things happen.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MS ROGERS: You are going to give us the budget for all of the different programs, the Home Modification, home repair, and the Residential Energy Efficiency Program?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MS ROGERS: I think for the Home Repair Program you can apply and then you have to

wait, is it five years or seven years, before you can apply again?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MS ROGERS: Then it is only twice in your lifetime?

MR. KENDELL: Are you talking about HMP?

MS ROGERS: The Provincial Home Repair Program, the PHRP.

MR. KENDELL: The Home Repair Program.

MS ROGERS: Yes.

MR. KENDELL: Yes, you can apply every seven years. There is a lifetime maximum grant amount of \$12,500.

MS ROGERS: Not a whole lot of money if you have to get anything done.

MR. KENDELL: No, it is not a lot of money. Now that we have gotten our wait-list under control maybe it is something that we can take another look at some time in the future.

MS ROGERS: Yes. Particularly for people who cannot do any work themselves. They are finding it hard to be able to get what needs to be done with those amounts.

MR. KENDELL: We do offer a loan as well, a low interest loan to go with that, if they wish to do it that way.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: I think Dennis' point is a good one. We invested a large number to get rid of this wait-list. Now that we can serve people within a year, maybe it is time that we take a look at it and see if we can revise it some.

MS ROGERS: Great. Thank you.

Community centres; will they be getting the same budget that they got last year?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, they are funded at the same level.

MS ROGERS: Okay, great.

CHAIR: I am going to leave you Gerry, and go back to Tom. You are stealing his time he tells me.

Tom Osborne.

Folks, just for the Committee's amusement, I am just wondering if after this we take a break. Or are we close to cluing up?

MR. OSBORNE: We are close to cluing up.

CHAIR: Okay, go ahead.

MR. OSBORNE: You are getting in on my time now, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: No, I am going to give it back to you, though, there, Mr. Osborne. Here you go.

MR. JACKMAN: He is a Montreal fan. That is the problem.

CHAIR: Oh God. We should stay here all night.

MR. OSBORNE: Now you should know, Minister, that you and I are both Tampa Bay fans.

MR. JACKMAN: I am definitely a Tampa Bay fan.

MR. OSBORNE: You should know that.

MR. JACKMAN: I know that.

MR. OSBORNE: I saw you and you saw me.

MR. JACKMAN: That is exactly right. I have a jersey to prove it.

CHAIR: You do.

MR. JACKMAN: I gave up on Toronto and I have gone with Tampa.

MR. OSBORNE: The \$12,500 maximum lifetime grant; is that from all sources, the

PHRP, REEP, the Home Modification, or is that just PHRP?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: No, that is just on the Provincial Home Repair Program. There is no lifetime maximum on the HMP at all. If someone, for example, has a disability of some sort, they can apply, they can apply, and they can apply again. There is no maximum on the HMP.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay. What about REEP?

MR. KENDELL: Pardon?

MR. OSBORNE: What about REEP?

MR. KENDELL: REEP is just one time because that is mostly for installation. So once you do that once, sort of thing, that is it. REEP is just one time of \$3,000. The HMP does not have a maximum. The PHRP has a \$12,500 maximum lifetime.

MR. OSBORNE: Under REEP, are you able to apply again in seven years, or it is just once and once only?

MR. KENDELL: No, it is just one time. The reason for that is it is an energy-efficiency program. So, once you make your home energy efficient, there is no need to do it again. That is basically the reason why, but now there are energy-efficiency items that do come underneath the PHRP program as well: doors, windows, and these sorts of things.

What we do with REEP is do an assessment of the home to see where they are losing the most heat, the most energy being lost. That is done with the blower door test. Once we determine what that is – 90 per cent of the time, by the way, it is insulation. It has an overall savings, on average, to the people who have it done of about \$790 a year once it is done. It is a great program.

MR. OSBORNE: The Provincial Homelessness Fund, what is the committed amount in this year's budget for that?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: It is \$1 million.

MR. OSBORNE: What types of initiatives are you going to undertake with that?

MR. JACKMAN: I cannot speak to what will be rolled out this year, but I know that there were different ones. There were some organizations within rural parts of the Province, a church group, who might have been offering some type of services to groups that operate within the city. It might be something like Choices for Youth. So, it is a wide variety, application based – what is the deadline for the application?

OFFICIAL: There is no deadline. Once the funding is gone, then it is –

MR. JACKMAN: There is no deadline.

MR. OSBORNE: Does that cover organizations such as a soup kitchen so on as well?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MR. OSBORNE: To provide programming or do they have to provide modifications to their –

MR. JACKMAN: Modifications.

MR. OSBORNE: In February of this year, A Road Map for Ending Homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador, you were supposed to map out an action plan. When will we see the results of that action plan and what can we expect from it?

MR. JACKMAN: That is the OrgCode report you are referring to. The report came out and then what we had is a committee put in place to take a look at the recommendations and then bring them back to government. As I said a little while ago, that report just came on my desk within the last week or eight or nine days, so I have not had a chance to go through it yet but intend to go through that rather soon. Like I said before, this is not something that I want lying around for six or eight months. So, you can expect that we will be acting on that sometime this spring.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

The Supportive Living Program, what is the budget for 2015?

CHAIR: Tom Lawrence.

MR. LAWRENCE: Five point three million.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Do you sign service agreements with the organizations for this program?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, we do. That funding is mainly for operational funding – groups like Choices for Youth, Stella’s Circle, and the list goes on and on.

MR. OSBORNE: Do they submit financial statements to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing as a condition for the funding?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, they do.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, they do.

MR. OSBORNE: Are they made public?

MR. LAWRENCE: No. They are in our files, but we do not make them public

MR. OSBORNE: The Paddon Home in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, is that now being utilized?

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: No, it is not. We have been having some discussions with the local MHA as to see if there are ways we can utilize it. We have been having discussions with Housing and also with Health, but we have not arrived at a place yet where we have come up with something.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

The Education Incentive Program, is that still in place today?

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, it is. That is \$625,000 a year, and that is still in place.

MR. OSBORNE: Six seventy-five or twenty-five –

MR. LAWRENCE: Six hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars annually.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Was that \$675,000 at one point?

MR. LAWRENCE: No, \$625,000 was the maximum.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

MR. LAWRENCE: It was cut back at one time, and then we reinstated it again.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

What are the results of that program so far?

MR. LAWRENCE: It is geared towards our clients’ children and, of course, any of our clients who are in post-secondary education. We are having good results with it. The whole idea was to try to keep our clients’ children in school longer. We are finding that is working. The problem is there is still not a huge increase in the number graduating from high school. They are staying in school longer, so that is something that we are looking at and it is a tough challenge, I can tell you.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Have you been doing evaluations of the program to determine how you can improve it, or other incentives you can provide the students to increase the number of grads?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, absolutely. We did one there several months ago and it is being finalized now we will say. We should know better results or more conclusive results in another couple of months.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

Are the students’ attendance rates tracked by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, they are.

MR. OSBORNE: How often?

MR. LAWRENCE: I think it is done twice a year because that is when the allowance is paid out, twice a year. We go and get all that information from the Department of Education.

MR. OSBORNE: Okay.

A couple of years ago in Estimates, Housing indicated that about 80 per cent of their units were three and four bedroom. What percentage is that today?

MR. LAWRENCE: It is about the same. It is one of the bigger challenges that we are facing. We got units that were built in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, all three and four bedrooms because families were bigger back then, and now our demographics are shifted completely that most of our clients need one- and two-bedroom units. That is challenge; there is no doubt about it.

Like Dennis said if you require a two bedroom, our policy allows you to move into a three bedroom, so that helps there.

MR. OSBORNE: What is the percentage today of the need for three- and four-bedroom units versus the one- and two-bedroom units?

MR. LAWRENCE: I would say it is around 15 per cent or 20 per cent maybe who need a three- and four-bedroom. Eighty or 85 per cent require a one and two.

MR. OSBORNE: Does Housing have any plans – I know there was some discussion earlier but I mean if a four-bedroom unit is not required and you are putting a two-bedroom or a three-bedroom need in a four-bedroom unit. I am not suggesting that this is the answer, but I am just wondering is there any benefit to looking at building additional one and two-bedroom units and probably disposing of the four-bedroom units.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: I think, Tom, this is one of the things that we are going to have to take a look at, there is no doubt about it. There are two priorities; one was that some of them needed work done on them, renovations and whatnot,

and maintenance to bring them up to code. I think there is something like 77 per cent or 80 per cent now that have been brought up to standard and improved upgrades to the units.

The second thing was the investments to get the wait-list down as much as we can. I think that is where we need to start looking now. I know Dennis mentioned it is an expensive venture to do, but I think in the coming year or two we are going to have to take a look at it.

MR. OSBORNE: Just on this point, Mr. Chair, and then I will let it move on. I know it is expensive. It is probably almost as expensive to renovate a four-bedroom unit to turn it into –

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, as to build.

MR. OSBORNE: – one one-bedroom and one two-bedroom, whatever the case may be. Is there any value in exploring the option of disposing of the four-bedroom units, selling them to private, maybe even look at making them affordable sells, and reinvesting the money into building one and two-bedroom units?

MR. JACKMAN: I will not criticize all your ideas either. That is something we could take under advisement. You said we are not doing all bad things –

MR. OSBORNE: I bet you we are not getting any credit if you do.

MR. JACKMAN: It is something to look at. It is a good suggestion.

CHAIR: Tom, are you done?

MR. OSBORNE: No, I still have a couple of other questions.

CHAIR: Okay. Then based on that, Gerry, you have another ten minutes for sure.

MS ROGERS: (Inaudible) go with less.

CHAIR: Less.

MR. OSBORNE: I have one or two questions, if I can ask those, then Gerry can wrap it up.

CHAIR: Okay, because I am thinking we only have one staff person downstairs and they need a break. So if we can get it done in the next –

MR. OSBORNE: Final question: Why is it that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing does not provide fire extinguishers for the units?

CHAIR: Dennis.

MR. KENDELL: We have talked to the fire departments. It is not required in single-unit homes. In multi-unit buildings, the fire departments – they are required in the hallways and so on, the fire extinguishers. It is not required in an individual home by the fire department.

The other issue is that when you have 5,500 homes, the task of having them recharged every year and making sure that they are all checked and up to – you do not want to create a false expectation, for example, that the thing is charged and ready to go. There is a lot of work involved. The fact that it was not required, no more than it is required in your own home, we have not gone there. We thought about it over the years, but it is not required by the fire department itself.

MR. OSBORNE: I do not often lie, Mr. Chair, but one final question on that related to this. Has anybody done an evaluation of the cost of providing those units versus the cost of – because every couple of years for sure, maybe more often than that, you hear of a Newfoundland and Labrador Housing unit that has been extensively damaged by fire. There is obviously a cost to refurbishing that unit, making it livable again. Would one outweigh the other? I mean if somebody had a fire extinguisher in their home, would that excessive damage perhaps be –

MR. KENDELL: I cannot give you the current numbers, but when we did look at it in years gone by it was way more expensive than it was for the cost of our fires. Now I know that is not the way to look at it, but it was a lot more expensive.

The other thing that was more expensive, as well, was the insurance on our properties. We are self-insured. This year we have been

fortunate, our fires are not – in the last twelve months we have had a few, but we have had more in other years. We talk more about education with our clients, cooking fires, fat fires and these sorts of things. I think that is where we need to focus in the future, on that area of prevention.

CHAIR: Okay. Gerry.

MS ROGERS: Snow clearing; I have heard from folks in Froude Avenue. Froude Avenue had a program where they paid students who were tenants in the houses to do snow clearing for people with physical disabilities who were living in those units. They said they had to stop because of insurance.

The community centre said they could not do that anymore, they could not pay the young folks who were living in the housing units to do snow clearing in front of the houses of people who are physically disabled. So we have people who are physically disabled in the units and they cannot get out. I mean I have gone over and shovelled myself.

MR. KENDELL: Do you know if it was a workers' comp issue?

MS ROGERS: It was an insurance issue. I do not know if it was workers' comp or anything, but it is a huge problem for people who are calling me. They cannot get out – do not know what I am going to do. There is no one to shovel. I cannot find anybody who will shovel. We try to find people on Facebook. Can you go and shovel? Is there something to be done? Often it is not that much; it is just their little walkways or their ramps.

MR. KENDELL: I will tell you what I can do, I can check with the executive directors of all of the community centres to find out.

MS ROGERS: Great.

MR. KENDELL: The issue with snow clearing for tenants, we have –and you mentioned people with wheelchair ramps and these sorts of things. There are a lot of our tenants who have other disabilities as well that may not be wheelchair related, but they have other disabilities with regard to back injuries, heart disease, and on and

on it goes. We do not know where we would stop if we were to go out snow clearing.

MS ROGERS: I understand that.

MR. KENDELL: The other problem too is that it is not so easy to find seasonal workers to do that anymore. It is very difficult.

MS ROGERS: They had a program where they were paying students who were living in the community, which seemed like a great thing to do.

MR. KENDELL: Yes, we provided the funding for them to do that. That is the reason why I am kind of interested in what the reasons were that they could not continue on. We did provide them with a small amount of funds so they could hire some kids in the community to go and shovel.

MS ROGERS: Dennis, it would be great if you could check that out.

MR. KENDELL: Yes, I will check that out.

MS ROGERS: It is a big deal.

I have just two quick questions. The federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy; I cannot remember if we already got the number of community-managed supportive housing units that exist in the Province now. That would be, I guess, Stella's Circle, that kind of thing.

CHAIR: Tom.

MR. LAWRENCE: Yes, we do not have that number, but we could probably get it.

MS ROGERS: I am wondering again what the wait-list is. We are going to go all over the Province and what we are hearing from everyone is the need for these supportive housing units; affordable housing plus supportive housing units – desperate.

Then my last question is back to Baxter Hookey. There has been no application from that community. Is there some kind of initiative or program where you go and look at where the needs are across the Province and encourage the development of those kinds of housing for the

uptake for that money? For instance, would anybody have gone to Port Rexton saying we know there is a problem here, hey folks, is there anybody who would like to step up?

CHAIR: Minister, closing comment.

MR. JACKMAN: I know in the case of Baxter Hookey, we have had conversations with him. I have spoken with him myself. My staff has spoken with him on several occasions. Beside the private sector component putting forward an application, you also can have non-profit –

MS ROGERS: Yes, I know that.

MR. JACKMAN: – organizations that could put forward, but we have not received any from out there.

MS ROGERS: Yes, I know that.

My question is: Has there been any outreach? Do you have any kind of outreach where you look at where there is some real need and then somebody from Housing goes out and meets with community groups and says this program is available, is anybody in the community interested because there is a particular need.

CHAIR: Minister.

MR. JACKMAN: My response to that one would be that we have to take a look at is there somebody within close proximity of that community whereby there would be housing –

MS ROGERS: Yes, absolutely.

MR. JACKMAN: – because it is going to be impossible to have units in every community in Newfoundland and Labrador.

MS ROGERS: I know that, yes.

MR. JACKMAN: Then, I guess in certain areas in this case here somebody may say there is one close by in Clarendville or something of that nature.

MS ROGERS: Yes, I just was wondering if Newfoundland and Labrador Housing does that proactive job of trying to encourage the different communities where there is a great need.

MR. JACKMAN: Do you want to speak to that, Dennis or Dave?

CHAIR: Dave.

MR. AKER: I finally get a question at the tail end.

All I can say to you is that there is a consultation process that we hold every couple of years. I know Morley Linstead and Kate Moffatt in our department, I think it was two years ago went out, went across the Province talking to all of the groups.

MS ROGERS: I remember that, yes.

MR. AKER: That is where you gather that information. I think in the case of the gentleman you are talking about, they need to establish, I would think, as a first step, a community advisory board within that community.

MS ROGERS: I am not talking about him doing it. I am just saying –

MR. AKER: No, I am just saying because sometimes when you gather together as a group, you bring the community together and that is who we want to consult with to see what the issues are. Of course, it is not just about working on problems; it is also trying to get people to suggest solutions.

MS ROGERS: Right.

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

Thank you to the Committee members, thank you to the staff of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and the minister.

Clerk, can I ask you to call the subhead, please?

CLERK: Subhead 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, subhead 1.1.01 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, total head, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation carried without amendment?

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Can I have a motion to approve the minutes of the Social Services Committee for May 12, 2015, the Department of Justice and Public Safety and Fire and Emergency Services? A motion, please.

Moved by Mr. Little; seconded by Mr. Pollard.

All those in favour, ‘aye.’

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: Minister, staff, thank you so much. The Committee thanks you for coming this

evening and providing the answers and receiving all of the questions.

A motion to adjourn?

Moved by Mr. Osborne; seconded by Ms Rogers.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.