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Social Services**

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Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development

Chair: Lisa Dempster, MHA

Vice-Chair: Gerry Rogers, MHA

Members: Paul Davis, MHA
Carol Anne Haley, MHA
Betty Parsley, MHA
Scott Reid, MHA
Brian Warr, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Sandra Barnes

Appearing:

Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development

Hon. Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Minister
Derek Bennett, MHA, Parliamentary Secretary
Bruce Cooper, Deputy Minister
Paul Grandy, Comptroller
Michelle Healey, Director of Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation
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Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

Hon. Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Minister
Derek Bennett, MHA, Parliamentary Secretary
Jenny Bowring, Director of Communications
Glenn Goss, Executive Director, HR and Engineering
Heather Harding, Director of Program Delivery
Doug Jackman, Comptroller
Kelly White, Executive Assistant

Also Present

Graham Letto, MHA
Megan Drodge, Researcher, Official Opposition Office
Susan Williams, Researcher, Third Party Office

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Graham Letto, MHA for Labrador West, substitutes for Betty Parsley, MHA for Harbour Main.

CHAIR (Dempster): Substitutions this morning, we have Mr. Letto sitting in for Ms. Parsley.

Just to get it out of the way, I'll ask for a motion to adopt the minutes from the Social Service Committee meeting of May 2.

So moved by Ms. Haley.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: I'll give the minister a moment to introduce herself, say some opening remarks, and she can introduce the staff or they can introduce themselves, however you see fit, and we'll go from there.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Good morning.

As Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, I'm pleased to appear before you to discuss this year's Estimates.

Here with me today are officials of the Corporation: Glenn Goss, Executive Director; Doug Jackman, Director of Financial Operations; Heather Harding, Director of Program Delivery; Jenny Bowring, Corporate Communications.

I have behind me Derek Bennett, the MHA for Lewisporte – Twillingate and my Parliamentary Secretary; Kelly White my Executive Director; and we have with us Communications, Melony O'Neill.

Our government understands that safe, stable and affordable housing is fundamental to the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and our communities. We also recognize that finding and maintaining a suitable home can be a daily challenge for some.

In response, *Budget 2017* has provided significant investments that enable the Housing Corporation to provide housing programs and services to assist households and persons with low incomes, persons with disabilities, persons

with complex needs and those who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

In March 2017, our government released Building Forward, a strategic framework that will guide priority infrastructure investments throughout Newfoundland and Labrador over the next five years. Over this period, government will contribute \$86.5 million in funding to the Housing Corporation for the repair, maintenance and modernization of affordable housing units throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

In the fall of 2016, the province and the federal government announced a two-year, \$48.9 million social infrastructure fund for improved social and affordable housing in Newfoundland and Labrador. This –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Oh, certainly.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We can also give you the notes.

MS. ROGERS: Great information, though.

Thank you so much.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Okay.

This is an investment of \$34.6 million from the federal government and \$14.3 million from the provincial government.

This year's investment of \$8.2 million in our Home Repair Program will continue to assist households with low incomes in bringing their homes up to fire and life safety standards, or improving accessibility that enable individuals and families to remain in their homes. About 86 per cent of program recipients are seniors, and these options enable these individuals to continue living independently in their own homes close to family and friends.

This year's budget also provides \$10.6 million for the Rent Supplement Program. This program supports individuals and families with low incomes and individuals with complex needs by

paying the portion of their rent that exceeds 25 per cent of their net household income directly to their landlord. By partnering with private landlords, the program enables the lower-income households to avail of increased housing options. Approximately 54 per cent of rent-subsidized housing units are occupied by seniors.

Budget 2017 continues the investment of \$7.6 million for the Supportive Living Program to provide grants to non-profit organizations for the provision of services and supports to address and prevent homelessness. In 2016-'17, the Supportive Living Program funded 21 non-profit community-based groups to operate 31 projects throughout the province.

Budget 2017 also continues a \$1 million investment in the Provincial Homelessness Fund to provide funding to non-profit organizations enabling them to provide on-site and outreach services to promote housing stability and greater self-reliance for those at risk.

We are very pleased to announce in *Budget 2017* a new Home Energy Savings Program of \$5 million over three years to assist electrically heated households with low incomes improve their energy efficiency of their homes. This will be of particular importance as these households will be among the most vulnerable to increased electricity costs when Muskrat Falls comes online.

Future electricity rates management is a priority of our government and we have instructed Nalcor to explore and pursue all options for achieving this. This program is a first step in a larger process to achieve this objective. Government continues to make meaningful progress on initiatives identified in *The Way Forward: A Vision for Sustainability and Growth in Newfoundland and Labrador*. One of over 50 initiatives included a review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation's programs to ensure the mandate of the organization reflects current priorities, and to ensure that programs and services are efficiently and effectively serving the needs of clients.

Commencing in November 2016, we have undertaken extensive consultations with our

community partners, clients and employees to seek their input into the programs and services offered by the Housing Corporation. Recommendations stemming from the review of programs and services have recently been provided to government and an action plan to address priority areas will be developed by the end of June 2017.

The consultations and review of programs and services are also key elements in informing the development of our provincial housing plan, which will be a focus in 2017. This plan will address the diverse needs of our residents, paying particular attention to housing needs and support for the most vulnerable and those with distinct needs.

I am also working with my federal, provincial and territorial colleagues to develop a national housing strategy, which will set a common vision and priority areas to achieve better housing outcomes for all Canadians. Our provincial housing plan and our national housing strategy will complement and support each other.

As an organization, the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation is continually planning ahead and developing housing initiatives in consultation with community stakeholders. It is that approach which has enabled us to create the comprehensive policies and programs that are addressing the complex challenges associated with providing safe and affordable housing to people with low incomes and those most at risk of becoming homeless. We are seeing results from our approach and we will continue to build on our current success.

Thank you, and I now welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

I'm going to ask the other Members to introduce themselves before the Clerk calls the subhead.

MS. PERRY: Tracey Perry, Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

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

MS. ROGERS: Gerry Rogers, I work for the good people of St. John's Centre. Thank you so very much for coming out this morning; I'm really looking forward to this dialogue.

MS. WILLIAMS: Susan Williams, Researcher for the Third Party.

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

MR. LETTO: Graham Letto, Labrador West.

MS. HALEY: Carol Anne Haley, Burin – Grand Bank.

MR. WARR: Brian Warr, Baie Verte – Green Bay.

CHAIR: Okay. The first responder will have 15 minutes and then we will go 10 and 10, and I would just remind folk to state your name before you speak for the purpose of the Broadcast Centre downstairs.

First, we're doing Housing Operations, just one section but when we flip back, we'll go subheading by subheading. Hopefully, that will be clear for everyone.

CLERK (Barnes): 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Good morning, everyone. Like Gerry said, thanks for coming out and answering our questions here this morning.

I'd like to start: Can I get a copy of the minister's binder?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, definitely.

MS. PERRY: Okay. Can we get that beforehand or ...?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: After.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Another thing: Do you have organizational charts including all of the branches and divisions

with responsibilities for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing as it stands today?

MR. GOSS: We did not bring them with us this morning, but we do have them. I can certainly forward them to you.

MS. PERRY: Okay. Yes, we would like a copy of that.

MR. GOSS: I will make sure we do that.

MS. PERRY: Thank you so much.

MR. GOSS: Sure.

MS. PERRY: How many people are employed with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing today?

MR. GOSS: There are 343 right now full-time equivalent positions. We don't have any seasonal. We've got just a handful, seven I believe, temporary positions, but there are 343 people with us right now.

MS. PERRY: So of that 343, plus seven temps, or that includes seven temps?

MR. GOSS: No, there are 343 funded positions with our organization right now, including the seven temps.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

And of those temporary positions how many of those are 13-weekers?

MR. GOSS: None.

MS. PERRY: None?

MR. GOSS: None.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

How many positions have been eliminated from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. GOSS: Over the last year do you mean?

MS. PERRY: Yes, year or two.

MR. GOSS: Through the attrition plan we've been working on over the last three years, last year we removed eight positions from the staff complement as a result of retirements, resignations and that sort of thing. Sorry, and one other; there was one in Labrador, an engineering technician, which we removed. We tried to fill it for four years; we just couldn't entice anybody to take the position.

We had one individual who ended up moving out of the province and we haven't been able to fill it since, so we didn't see any reason to save the funding for any other reason. We just do the work for engineering through our department now in St. John's.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can we have the specific title of the positions that were eliminated?

MR. GOSS: Eliminated, yes, if you'll just give me one minute.

As I said, there was a safety officer, which is a management position, out of our head office; records clerk in head office, that was an excluded position, non-bargaining, non-management; and we had six union positions; a collections officer that works out of our Marystown office; a property appraiser that works out of St. John's office; three clerks, one in St. John's, one in Gander, one in Corner Brook; and a maintenance scheduler which works out of our maintenance department in St. John's.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Do you have any vacancies currently?

MR. GOSS: Yes, we do. We've got nine currently right now; some of which are in various stages of being backfilled. Some are still under review within the department as to whether or not they're going to come forward with a request to staff.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

When the positions were eliminated, the position control number, was that eliminated as well?

MR. GOSS: Yes.

MS. PERRY: It was. So new hires will be assigned a new PCN?

MR. GOSS: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Has Housing been given a budget reduction target for this year for future years for budget reduction?

MR. GOSS: Doug, you might want to speak.

MR. JACKMAN: Excuse me, with respect to attrition, the attrition line?

MS. PERRY: Yes, with respect to staffing – overall budget.

MR. JACKMAN: No, just going into the '17-'18 fiscal year.

MS. PERRY: Your overall budget for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing this year, do you anticipate it will be cut this year, next year – have you been given any targets to reach to reduce your budget?

MR. JACKMAN: No, the only target that goes beyond the 2017-'18 year for now, from a forecasting perspective, would be the year four of the attrition plan.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

So now I'm moving over into the actual headings. What is the total number of housing units currently?

MR. GOSS: Right now, the Housing Corporation administers 5,599 units. We have an additional 1,757, I believe it is, Heather, that are rent supplement units.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. GOSS: Yes, 5,599 public housing units across the province, and 1,757 rent supplement units currently.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

What percentage of program recipients are seniors?

MR. GOSS: I guess it would depend on the program, I would assume. I don't have the particular details on the breakdown, the demographic for each particular program, but if there's anything in particular you'd like –

MS. PERRY: Could we get an estimate on how many of your housing units are for seniors, and how many of your rent supplements are for seniors?

MR. GOSS: I could certainly get that for you.

MS. PERRY: Okay, thank you.

MR. GOSS: Yes, I will.

MS. PERRY: Are there any vacant units right now?

MR. GOSS: Typically, there are always vacant units on a rotational basis. As tenants move out, we move in to ready the unit for occupancy again. So typically, as it stands right now, we've got in the area of 290 vacant units across the province. Some of which are what we call major repair vacancies. They require significant dollars to prepare them, so they're going to take longer to do.

We've got in the vicinity of 95, that sort of thing. That includes major repair vacancies. It also includes – as you've seen on the news the other day, a couple got burned down, burnt out – fire damaged units. Units that are held for major redevelopment, where we'll go in and we'll just move people out and redo the whole building. So we've got those vacant until we get those types of projects finished.

There's also, in certain areas, where there's just simply no demand. They're vacant because there's nobody in the areas to go in them. That makes up that 95 to 100. The remainder are what we call vacant and available, which are the ones that continually rotate, and that's in the area of 200 across the province.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can we get a list of exactly where these vacant units are?

MR. GOSS: Each one?

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MR. GOSS: It will be a snapshot in time. I might tell you today that there's one on Brophy Place, by the time tomorrow comes around it's not vacant, but a certain snapshot in time for sure.

MS. PERRY: Yes, we appreciate that.

What are the current wait-list numbers per region?

MR. GOSS: Per region; again, I don't have it off the top of my head but I do – do we have the wait-list here with us? I do have it. Yes.

As currently right now, or as of the date of this note, there were 785 people on our wait-list: 378 which are in the Avalon Region, which includes St. John's and, as the name suggests, other areas on the Avalon; Marystown region has just five; Gander has 85; Grand Falls, 112; Corner Brook, 107; Stephenville, 54; and Goose Bay, 44 – Goose Bay being the whole of Labrador, not just the Goose Bay area.

MS. PERRY: Okay, and just backtracking a little now to the vacant units again. Is there a cost estimate for the repairs that need to be done on the 95 that you said are major repair vacancies, as well as any other repairs?

MR. GOSS: We'll typically spend in the area of \$5,000 to \$6,000 to \$7,000. That includes labour, materials, new paint, replacing flooring tiles, that sort of thing when we ready a vacancy. That's a typical number, but, as I say, it will depend on what our guys find when they go into the unit to do the repairs. If there's more damage than typical, then obviously the cost is going to rise.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Just for clarification, you said \$5 million to \$7 million per year?

MR. GOSS: Thousand.

MS. PERRY: \$5,000 to \$7,000 per unit.

MR. GOSS: Oh, my gosh, yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay. I thought you said – okay, \$5,000 to \$7,000 per unit.

MR. GOSS: If I did say million, \$5 million to \$7 million was not right. It's \$5,000 to \$7,000. Each time we go in to do a vacancy, it costs in that area to ready it for the next occupant.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So that would be the estimated cost per unit.

MR. GOSS: Yeah.

MS. PERRY: How much do you have budgeted this year to do those repairs?

MR. GOSS: We have \$10.2 million in our maintenance budget annually, and those regular repairs come out of that \$10.2 million.

MS. PERRY: Okay. And if you were to put a total estimate now for all the repairs outstanding on the 290 units, what would that number be?

MR. GOSS: I can't give you that. Some of the major repair vacancies have not even been looked at for estimate. So I really would be a little bit – I'm reluctant to give you a number because I wouldn't have any faith in it, to be honest with you.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

The budget documents indicate that *Budget 2017* allocates \$10.6 million for the Rent Supplement Program. Can you tell me how much was allocated last year in 2016?

MR. GOSS: I'm sorry, could you repeat that?

MS. PERRY: How much money was allocated for the Rent Supplement Program last year?

MR. GOSS: We'll just get that for you.

Doug might be a little bit better to respond.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, the budget for '16-'17 fiscal year, the total program budget for Rent Supplement was \$10.3 million.

CHAIR: Okay.

The budget documents indicate that *Budget 2017* commits \$7.6 million to supportive living. This money goes to 37 non-profits and community-based groups which operate 51 projects to help individuals with complex needs.

Can you give us a list of specifically which groups are receiving this funding and how much money is being received per group?

MS. HARDING: I can't give you the breakdown today, but I can get that information for you. I can give some examples of where that funding is going.

MS. PERRY: A few examples today would be great, but we would appreciate the full list.

MS. HARDING: Sure.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Thank you.

MR. HARDING: For 2016-17, some of the projects we supported and we're continuing to support in '17-'18 would be the Labrador West Housing and Homelessness Coalition, Mokami Status of Women Council, community mental health Initiative in Corner Brook, Exploits Valley Community Coalition in Grand Falls-Windsor, Regional Action Committee on Housing in Clarenville, Thrive in St. John's, Stella's Circle in St. John's, and the Gathering Place.

We have nine housing support workers across the Island and into Labrador: Carbonear, Marystown, Clarenville, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Stephenville, Corner Brook, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador West.

MS. PERRY: Okay. And do you have the amount each of those receives?

MS. HARDING: I don't have it here with me but we can certainly provide it.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Thank you.

I'm still good. How much time have I got left?

CHAIR: Two.

MS. PERRY: Two minutes.

CHAIR: And we can come back to you, of course, right.

MS. PERRY: Yes.

The budget documents indicate that *Budget 2017* commits \$5 million over three years for a new Home Energy Savings Program. How much does this program cost each year?

MS. HARDING: The Home Energy Savings Program has been allocated for \$1 million this year and \$2 million each year for the next two years.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Budget documents indicate that *Budget 2017* is offering a new Home Energy Efficiency Loan Program which is going to offer low interest financing. How much does this program cost each year?

MS. HARDING: This one is allocated for \$500,000 this year and I'm not quite sure in the subsequent years, but that's actually not being delivered by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. It's being delivered to the Office of Climate Change. So the funding will go to them and then through the energy delivers, like Hydro and Nalcor.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

You referred to in your opening comments, the National Housing Strategy. Can we get an update on exactly where that is and when we can expect it to roll out?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, you can. I will get an update to you from my FPT staff and forward it over.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Thank you so much.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MS. PERRY: Oh, sorry. I asked for an update on the status of the National Housing Strategy –

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Okay, yes.

MS. PERRY: – and she's going to get a note to us.

In the federal budget there was no mention of money in support of housing either. So do you anticipate that the federal government will contribute in some way to this National Housing Strategy?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Well, we are working with our FPT partners to hopefully get some provincial funding from the federal government towards the strategy. That is the objective and goal as we move forward. Of course, it's all dependent on the objectives that we put forward as a country, as each province and territory comes forward.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

How much money was generated last year from the sale of vacant land owned by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MR. JACKMAN: For clarification, you want to get strictly vacant land or just strictly land?

MS. PERRY: Land and housing, anything that's sold.

MR. JACKMAN: Okay.

MS. PERRY: Can we get a list of what you sold as well?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, actually what I do have here is I can give you a listing of the properties that were sold during the '16-'17 fiscal year.

MS. PERRY: Yes.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry, if we could move now to Ms. Rogers and you can come back if you still have more questions related to Housing.

MS. PERRY: I do.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

I just want to revisit some of the questions that Tracey had asked just for some clarification and further follow-up. Also, any lists or information that Tracey has asked for, I would assume that we would get and vice versa. Thank you very much.

In terms of the potential elimination of positions, is there a target to eliminate any further this year?

MR. GOSS: As part of our attrition plan, it started three years; it's a five-year plan. Typically we're looking at six positions a year, in the area of \$450,000 worth. So sometimes that means six positions, sometimes it means eight, as it did in the last one. Given the salary and benefit range, it would be a particular position. Yet the target is 30 positions over a five-year period.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And those are the only positions that are targeted for elimination this year?

MR. GOSS: That's the number that's targeted but each position that becomes vacant for whatever reason is scrutinized and reviewed as to whether or not it's required to backfill.

MS. ROGERS: Right.

That's above and beyond the attrition plan?

MR. GOSS: I'm sorry?

MS. ROGERS: Is that above and beyond the attrition plan as well?

MR. GOSS: That's a regular routine. When we get vacancies, they're always scrutinized –

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. GOSS: – but we don't eliminate them simply for the sake of eliminating. We have the attrition plan, which we're sticking to, and we're not looking to eliminate any others.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

MR. GOSS: If that's what the question was, yes.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

The home energy savings plan, it's only for people who are using electric heat? And how will it be rolled out?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: That particular program right now that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing is putting forward is for individuals who are using electricity. We do recognize there is a need for individuals who use other sources and in the review we are analyzing that.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So it's \$5 million for this year?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: It's \$5 million over three years.

MS. ROGERS: Over three years. And how will it be rolled out? We know that in a number of the programs that we've had, people have to apply; oftentimes, they're oversubscribed and they're used up pretty quickly because I guess the need is so great. How will this one work?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: It's an application-based program.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: It will be rolled out similar to all other programs at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

MS. ROGERS: And has that started already, for this program?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: July 4.

MS. ROGERS: So July 4, people will be able to apply.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Do you have any expectations of what the applications will be – how much the demand might be for the first year?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: As I indicated in my preamble, the purpose is to help mitigate the cost of the electricity rates which we anticipate rising with Muskrat Falls. Prediction: No, we cannot predict. It will be analyzed and as we roll it out, we'll address the demand with any new program we put in place, somewhat of a pilot, to determine if need is less or more as we move forward.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

The eligibility criteria, has that been established yet?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Low-income individuals, \$32,500, as with all Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation programs.

MS. ROGERS: Yes. What would the percentage – for instance, \$32,500, is it based on their consumption or is there a block of funding that somebody applies for? How will that roll out?

MS. HARDING: You will have to have used 15,000 kilowatts of energy in the previous year and that can be provided by your energy supplier.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And how much will the rebates or the amount ...?

MS. HARDING: It's \$5,000 for energy efficiency upgrades.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So then the home energy savings program, it's not a per annum relief. This is for making your house more energy –

MS. HARDING: Correct.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, so it's conservation.

So we no longer have any kind of rebate for energy use, do we?

MS. HARDING: Not with this program.

MS. ROGERS: Is there another program with that? We know that we lost that.

MR. GOSS: We don't have an energy rebate program. I'm sure the utility company runs one, but we don't.

MS. ROGERS: So this is a one time – right, okay.

Thank you very much.

The provincial housing strategy, will that go beyond just our social housing program? Is it going to be a provincial housing strategy that looks at the issue of housing in a comprehensive manner, beyond just the provision of social housing units or rent supplements, but looking specifically at the future, current in terms of the housing needs of the people of the province?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Right now, it will be based on the mandate of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

MS. ROGERS: So just that; not going beyond that. Okay, thank you.

Is there any plan to look beyond just the mandate of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing in terms of a provincial housing policy?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: For the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, no.

MS. ROGERS: No, for the province.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: I can't answer that question right now. What I can say is that we are into the analysis; of course as you know, we just did extensive consultations on all our programs.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So that will lend into this, along with the federal plan. So we will work together with our FPT partners to develop; however, the plan for Newfoundland and Labrador will be that for Newfoundland and Labrador. So as we address the mandate of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing

Corporation if additional factors come forward that need addressing, we will then address them with government.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you very much.

I may have missed it, Minister, in your initial address. We note the rent supplements for '16-'17 were \$10.3 million. What are they for '17-'18?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: \$10.6 million.

MS. ROGERS: \$10.6 million, so a little increase there.

As you know, I'm constantly getting calls and demands, as most of us are, for the needs, particularly for seniors. I know how difficult it is with the housing stock that we have to house single people.

So is there any plan at all to look at using some of our larger units in different ways to try and address the issue of individuals looking for housing options?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So the rent supplement program is under review also, and we have presented our recommendations to government. We will be releasing the document, the probative plan, the end of June. Rent supplements will be included in that release.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. I guess what I'm asking is specifically about some of our larger units in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, again, because there's less of a demand for multi-bedroom units. Is there any plan afoot to look at any kind of home share or other way of using that?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: So that need has been identified.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: At the end of June, after government analyzes our recommendations, we will put out what we are going to do as a corporation on a go-forward basis to address this need.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great, and then that document will be released?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

Thank you very much.

That question has been answered. Is there a plan for the sale of any properties or land in '17-'18?

MR. JACKMAN: No, there are no initiatives for any plans.

The only thing I will say is, historically, each and every year if there are any long-term vacant rental properties throughout the province where there's no wait-list and if they're not in really good condition, we do consider selling those, but these typically are in the smallest of communities.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, but at this point there are no targeted properties.

MR. JACKMAN: No, nothing, no.

MS. ROGERS: I'm going to run out of time soon.

The 200 properties that are vacant, the ones that require extra maintenance and renovations: what is the waiting list like in terms of getting that work done? What are we looking at?

MR. GOSS: In terms of turnaround time you mean?

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. GOSS: Again, it varies. Depending on the number of vacancies we have at a given time for our workforce and the cost per vacancy, which will dictate how long it's going to take.

I can't really answer your question in terms of how long it takes all the vacancies but typically you could be a couple of months while we're getting it ready, depending on the volume we have.

I will say, though, our vacancy rate within the Housing Corporation is better than the vacancy

rate that CMHC has put out for October 2016. Our vacancy rate is lower than the general population. So we're pretty proud of the fact that we keep up as best we can and ahead of the game, really.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm going to pick up where I left off, but Gerry already asked the question. So there are no sales planned for this year as part of any type of a revenue generation strategy?

MR. JACKMAN: No, there's nothing planned. And where we left off was I indicated I was going to – we did sell five vacant, social housing units during the '16-'17 fiscal year.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. JACKMAN: I can list these off for you.

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MR. JACKMAN: I don't have the financial figures for each one but I can list off the address and the community: 46 Fairview Avenue, St. Lawrence; 75 Main Road, Noggin Cove; 8 Battery Road, Tilton; 149 Main Street, Beaumont; and Crocker's Hill, Green's Harbour.

MS. PERRY: Can you also provide us with the total amount of revenue that you generated from these sales?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay, thank you.

Is there a budget reduction target for next year or within the next two years, really?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: I just want to – just back on the vacancies. We had two group homes we did put up for sale in the last fiscal year. They were previously used as group homes. One

was in Stephenville and one was in the Grand Bank area.

The Stephenville one, actually – the intent was to put it up for sale but after consultation with a community group, we realized another use for that building. That building is presently being converted into a type of services, like Choices for Youth in the Stephenville area.

The second building did go up for sale. The tender came in way below market value, so we withheld on the building.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Newfoundland and Labrador Housing continue to check out with community groups to see if there's another need and see if those groups, if we pass over the property to them, that they have the capacity to maintain operations which is key. Passing a property over to a group and they don't have the funding to maintain operations or capacity to generate operations in community becomes an issue.

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: However, we're quite proud in Stephenville and what we're doing.

The vacant units that were listed here for sale today are units that we had no demand for. They were sitting idle. The cost to just leave buildings idle, a government asset, is not warranted.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

So with respect to my question about budget reduction targets for '17-'18 and '18-'19, are there any specific budget target reductions?

MR. JACKMAN: Like I alluded to earlier of course, fiscal '17-'18, and also carrying on into '18-'19, there is the attrition target and that dollar amount in terms of the forecast is still at – as Glenn alluded to earlier, it is approximately \$450,000 per year.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you provide us with any additional information on the review of programs and services? For example, who did the review?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Extensive consultations were done throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. I, myself, attended five. My staff went in and they interviewed clients. They interviewed stakeholders and community groups. There was extensive data collected, analyzed, and then recommendations were put forward to government.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So it was done internally within your department? No external consultants were engaged?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No, we did not pay for external consultants to do the review. We used our internal staff and community.

MS. PERRY: Pardon?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: And community.

MS. PERRY: Okay. When were the recommendations given to you, as minister?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: The recommendations were collected as we did the consultations and analyzed. An extensive amount of data was collected and I have analyzed the recommendations myself with the CEO over the last – this is May. Over the last five to six weeks we have been going through the recommendations.

MS. PERRY: Okay. And when will the recommendations be made public?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: June 30.

MS. PERRY: June 3?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thirtieth.

MS. PERRY: Thirtieth, okay.

Moving on then into 1.1.01; can you give an overview of why the grant to Housing has increased by \$18.8 million, from \$21 million in the 2016-17 budget up to \$40,134,600 million this year?

MR. JACKMAN: As you alluded to, of course, the budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year was \$21,333,500. The primary driver of that increase results from an add back of one-time items for 2016-17. So there was the return of surplus regarding historical capital grants of \$15,160,000; Southlands land sale, \$5 million; sale of vacant rental units, \$590,500. So if you add up those three, one-time items that gives you a total of \$20,750,500. So that's the primary driver of the increase.

In terms of budget changes: of course, as already been discussed, the Home Energy Savings Program, \$1 million; the Home Energy Efficiency Loan Program, of course which will be delivered by the Office of Climate Change, \$500,000; discontinuation of the Residential Energy Efficiency Program, that's a decrease of \$1.7 million.

We also had a reduction in the home repair grants of \$1.3 million; however, that funding is going to be fully restored through the federal-provincial social infrastructure funding, and the salaries and benefits attrition, \$449,400. I've said \$450,000, I was rounding earlier. And, of course, when you add up all those items, you arrive at the 2017-2018 budget of \$40,134,600.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Last year in Estimates it was indicated that Housing had \$15 million in its bank account which it would be using in place of funding. Is that money all used up now?

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, as I alluded to, that was a one-time transfer of funds. That dates back to historical investments made by the province in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, the rollout of social housing stock into developed land assemblies historically. So those funds have been exhausted.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you provide a detailed breakdown of the programs which are supported by this grant and how much is allocated for each program?

MR. JACKMAN: Okay. In terms of our programs – or some may refer to these as expenditure lines as well. In terms of the '17-'18

budget, public rental housing, \$46.6 million; Partner-Managed Housing, \$7.8 million; Rent Supplement, approximately \$10.7 million – I am rounding here a little – Home Repair Program, \$8.4 million; the Home Energy Savings Program, \$1 million. The home energy efficiency loan program, which will be delivered by the Office of Climate Change, I'll disclose that here as \$500,000, but ultimately that will not be reflected on the financial statements of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, but for budget purposes I'll disclose it here.

Affordable housing, \$5.4 million – that's a part of the five-year investment, Affordable Housing Agreement, that dates back to 2014 – Provincial Homelessness Fund, \$1 million; Supportive Living Community Partnership, approximately \$7.8 million; our administration, which primarily consists of salaries and benefits and other administration costs of approximately \$21.1 million. That includes our entire workforce, except for our field workers that perform maintenance and renovations.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you provide a breakdown of which programs received funding for the last fiscal year and how much for each?

MR. JACKMAN: Public rental housing, \$46.8 million; Partner-Managed Housing, \$8.2 million; Rent Supplement, \$10.3 million; Home Repair Program, \$8.2 million; the Residential Energy Efficiency Program, \$1.7 million; Affordable housing, \$5.4 million; Provincial Homelessness Fund, \$1 million; the Supportive Living Community Partnership, \$7.8 million; and the administration, approximately \$21.5 million.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry –

MS. PERRY: I'm out of time again?

CHAIR: Time has run out on the clock again.

I'll move to Ms. Rogers but if you still have Housing questions, we can come back.

MS. PERRY: I do, okay.

CHAIR: Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: We will get a list of all those facts and figures.

MR. JACKMAN: Yes, the document I'm reading will be included in your binder.

MS. ROGERS: Great, perfect. Thank you very much.

In terms of the wait-list, can we get a breakdown of the types of requests on the wait-list, age groups, unit size and region? I don't have to have it right now but if we can get that.

MR. GOSS: Wait-list of Housing applicants you mean?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MS. GOSS: And you're looking for basically the demographic information?

MS. ROGERS: That's right.

MR. GOSS: Yes, I can get you some information and send it to all of you.

MS. ROGERS: Perfect. Great, thank you very much.

The issue of people being cut off from the wait-list at the end of the year, we still have a lot of folks who aren't even aware of the fact that they have fallen off the wait-list. Is there anything being planned to address that?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Your point is taken and that is under review also. I'm very well aware that individuals did not realize once they applied at the end of the fiscal year, they would have to reapply again. That did come out in the consultations and we are addressing it.

MS. ROGERS: Great. Thank you.

Do we also have stats about how long people are waiting? For instance, if Ms. Smith is looking for a one-bedroom unit, whether it be a unit or a rent supplement and she falls off the list and has to reapply, do we have that kind of information?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: I don't think I can get the details that you are looking for. We do have information of the wait-list and the individuals, but previous practice was, in fact, that if you did not reapply, your name was not kept there.

On a go-forward basis, hopefully we'll be able to maintain that type of data. But to be able to identify the exact individual who applied – often what happens a significant amount of time, when we go back to an individual, if they're on a wait-list, they have found accommodations themselves. They've moved in with a partner or they have found accommodations elsewhere.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah. Or they're living in poverty because where they are, their rent is so high. I mean that's also the case that we're seeing.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We use community organizations and partners to identify individuals as such.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Because it would be really interesting to know really what are the wait times like, not just simply the numbers but what's the duration for people waiting.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yeah. Again, I recognize your question and we do work with groups like End Homelessness St. John's so we can identify these gaps that are in the system, and that was one of the factors also that came out in the consultations.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

In the demographics of your wait-list, would we be able to get information as well in terms of people with disabilities who are needing accessible units? How is that right now in terms of the wait-list for people with disabilities who are looking for accessible units?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We will get you the demographics and what information we can share, we will get that.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And then the other thing as well is that we have people who may not specifically need a fully accessible unit but I know that there are a number of rent supplements in apartment buildings, particularly in my district, where there are no elevators. So we have seniors or people with some mobility issues who are having problems because there are no elevators. I'm just wondering if that has been something that's been an issue that you've had to deal with.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Individual cases have been identified where individuals have difficulty with access. Sometimes we have found that an individual may, in fact, be on a second or third floor where there's no elevator, they run into a mobility issue and then we are tasked with finding them a residence at a lower level. It's a challenge at times, I will admit, but we do work with each individual case to try to meet their needs.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah. I have every belief that Housing is doing that, but I'm also aware of the challenges and the demand and what we have to meet that demand.

We're going to get a list of the different community organizations that are doing some of the supportive housing, who are managing some of the units and how many of those are. What is your sense about that program? How is it working?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Heather.

MS. HARDING: You are referring to the Supportive Living Program?

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MS. HARDING: That would have been part of the overall review and so if there are any changes required, it will certainly come out in the action plan in June, but our sense is that it's working well.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. I think it's a great collaboration.

Maintenance and modernization, we know there are approximately 200 vacant units. Some may not be renovated for sure this year, if there's been fire and that. Do you have a sense as to

how many of those will come back into available stock or – what’s the time frame like for that?

MR. GOSS: As I alluded to earlier, I probably wasn’t as clear as I could have been.

MS. ROGERS: You were probably really clear.

MR. GOSS: Thank you.

There are essentially, at any given time, in the area of 250 to 300 vacant public housing units across the province; 200 of those 300, shall we say, are what we call vacant but available. It’s where the previous tenant gives us notice and moves out. We go in with our workforce, spend \$5,000 to \$6,000 to \$7,000 to make it available for occupancy, and we’ll move people in. That has typically taken between six and eight weeks, but I don’t really like to tie myself to that number because at any given time it depends on the number of vacancies we get, will dictate how quickly we can get to them.

So of those 200, those are continually turning over yearly. We typically have 95, 90 to 100 that are not available for various reasons: major repairs, fires, that sort of thing.

MS. ROGERS: The renovations then, the maintenance for the ones that aren’t major, are those done by in-house staff or is that contracted out?

MR. GOSS: They are done by in-house staff.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. GOSS: Ninety per cent of the time it’s done by in-house staff.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. GOSS: Every now and then we will contract out a bundle, due to the fact that there may be an influx of vacancies at one time that will lead to them being vacant for too long if we don’t contract them out. So we do that periodically as needed.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

I get a lot of calls in my office of: I need a place, and how come the house on James Lane has been empty for months? I get a lot of those calls in St. John’s Centre, people watching vacant units and wondering how come they’re not back on the market or filled.

MR. GOSS: Yeah.

MS. ROGERS: I know there are various reasons for that.

MR. GOSS: And there are. There are various reasons. We get to them when we can. As I said earlier, we have a better vacancy rate than the private market. We get to them as quickly as we can. We recognize the fact there are some, but generally that means we have, again, that increase in the number of vacancies which slows down our ability to get to them.

I do recognize your point. We would love to get them occupied within days.

MS. ROGERS: Sure.

MR. GOSS: Obviously, in certain situations that’s not possible.

MS. ROGERS: Are some of the folks from Choices for Youth still doing some of that work with your staff?

MR. GOSS: Yes. I believe they are still doing some, yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

Thank you very much, this is great.

How many of the rent supplements are currently portable? There was a pilot project last year or the year before.

MS. HARDING: Yes, we did a pilot on portability of rent supplements. It’s still ongoing. It took us a little bit of effort to get people who were qualified for it. We went through about 70 applicants to get 20 who were able to participate in the project, for various reasons. On occasion the landlord wasn’t willing to participate, the current accommodations weren’t up to life safety standards or the person

actually preferred to move from where they were.

Of the 20 that are participating, 18 are still housed where they were originally housed and two actually have moved on to a higher level of care. So their rent subs were returned to the bigger pot to be turned to somebody else.

MS. ROGERS: So if I'm Mrs. Smith and I'm part of this program, I have a portable rent sub and I'm moving on Mayor Avenue, but now because of changes in my own health I need the apartment on Merrymeeting, this already was portable, am I able to take that with me?

MS. HARDING: In this pilot, yes, that would be the understanding.

MS. ROGERS: Is there any plan to expand that program?

MS. HARDING: That's certainly part of the larger review of the Housing Corporation, and I would anticipate that there would be something to address that in the action plan.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers, your time is up.

MS. ROGERS: It goes too fast.

MS. PERRY: It does, it goes way too fast.

CHAIR: Well, if you guys want to spend it all on Housing that's good with me.

MS. PERRY: No, we're going to come back again.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Has Housing been directed to reduce its operating costs?

MR. GOSS: No, there's no direction to reduce the operating cost. As Doug alluded to a little earlier, our grant from the provincial

government is returned to historical levels. So there's no –

MS. PERRY: Okay. So there are no planned cuts then for Housing?

MR. GOSS: Just the attrition, as I spoke to earlier, but I don't have any – there's nothing I can tell you in terms of anything else other than the fact we have the attrition plan. That's all I'm aware of.

MS. PERRY: So no deficit reduction targets or anything like that?

MS. GOSS: Not that I'm aware of.

MS. PERRY: I'm going to jump back a little bit now to something I never asked in the beginning. When we talked about the positions that are no longer with Housing, that were gone through attrition, how much was paid out in severance?

MR. GOSS: Yeah, we'd have to get that number. I just know they're vacant, and right now I don't even have the details as to why they're vacant. Some are retirement, some are resignation or for various reasons.

MS. PERRY: When we get the list of positions eliminated, can we also get the amount of severance that was paid out for each?

MS. GOSS: Sure.

MS. PERRY: Have any new positions been created at Newfoundland and Labrador Housing?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: In actual fact, when I came onboard we noted that we needed an inquiries individual. We were finding that numerous staff were getting contested with the same question, so I suggested that we put in place an inquiries individual who had been in place in the past. We did assign an in-house staff to that particular role. So that position, the actual description of the position, his job has changed but he was already an in-house staff individual.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So there's no incremental budgetary cost?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No, there was not. There was a new position, but –

MS. PERRY: The position was re-profiled.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Exactly.

MS. PERRY: Okay. We'll see that in the org chart?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, you will.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

The government is looking for a savings of \$41.9 million from agencies. Are you saying absolutely none of that \$41.9 million is expected to come from Housing?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: What we are saying is that we are analyzing Housing. We've just done a complete review of Housing, and as we put forth the recommendations we will analyze the need for our staff in-house and address it then.

Right now, there are no dollar amounts attached to the analysis. After June 30, we should be able to provide more information.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So you don't have any inclination at this point which programs and areas you're probably going to be looking at?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No, because I cannot project an analysis by government from our recommendations.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

I'm on my last question. When can we expect all the additional information that you will be providing based on our questions this morning?

MR. JACKMAN: Some of the information – when I went down sort of line by line with the program budgets for '17-'18 and '16-'17 fiscal years, that will be included in what you will receive later today. The other items, I can't speak to each individual one because some will take longer than others. Some items maybe we can turn around in a matter of a few days but some may take a little longer, depending on how much compiling is involved.

MS. PERRY: Okay. All right.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry, you have some time on the clock but are you okay now? Before I call that, I want to go to Ms. Rogers and let her finish her question.

MS. PERRY: I would be (inaudible) Ms. Rogers the opportunity to ask more if she has them.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

The federal provincial investment and affordable housing, and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, if we could get a list, not now, but maybe if we could have a list of how many units have been created under the agreements: the number total, the number of accessible units, seniors units and supportive housing units, if we could get those numbers that would be great.

The homeownership assistance program, is there any plan to renew that, to look at a new form of that?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, that program has been extensively reviewed under this greater review and the recommendations will come forth on June 30.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

And do we know, was that fully subscribed? Was all the money spent?

MS. HARDING: Over the two years, in the first year '15-'16, we advanced approximately \$1 million, and in '16-'17, so far we've advanced \$716,000. In total, we have supported the purchase of 174 new homes.

MS. ROGERS: 174 homes?

MS. HARDING: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

Was all the money used for '15-'16, or is that money that was spanning two years?

MS. HARDING: That was funding over two years. We had budgeted \$1.25 million for '15-'16, and \$1.25 million for '16-'17 as well.

MS. ROGERS: Are you expecting to be able to spend – oh, '16-'17 is gone. None of that money then was carried over to '17-'18?

MS. HARDING: No it wasn't, and the take up did slow down a little bit in '16-'17 and we suspect it may be because of changes in the federal guidelines for qualifying for a mortgage.

MS. ROGERS: Right. Okay.

The economic situation and – yes, okay, thank you very much. That money just was not used. Okay, thank you very much.

Our provincial housing plan, housing strategy: Will there be a specific focus as well on ending homelessness?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: End homelessness is a priority.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: It will be included. On a national level, there is discussion at the FPT table also.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: And we've had extensive discussion with End Homelessness St. John's and Choices for Youth and the partners. I myself have been out on the ground so I could get a personal feel for it. So, yes, there is a focus on ending homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

What about a strategy for youth?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: As per my mandate letter with CSSD, we are working to address the issues and concerns of youth that have been in our care, and we will also focus on youth through the homelessness component. We are

very well aware, it has come to the forefront and the point in time recently, that particular exercise has identified the stats. So we are aware and we will be analyzing more data. We will be focusing on youth along with the population as a whole.

To focus directly on one group, that is not our plan right now, but our plan is to include youth in the overall plan.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Although we know there are some very specific issues for youth.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We do.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, and we will see that in the report of the review the end of June.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No, these consultations that we completed, they will play into the actual plan.

MS. ROGERS: We're not expecting that the end of June, it's just –

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No.

MS. ROGERS: What would be your time frame for that?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: It's my mandate to move forward with this. I can't give you a time frame right now because I am working with FPT partners also. While it is a provincial plan, we want to ensure we are parallel with the federal plan also.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

I have no further questions, but I do want to say thank you very, very much. I know you have perhaps the highest percentage of social housing units and rent subs in the province in St. John's Centre and a lot of people with great need. I want to say we are aware of the challenges that Housing faces.

Also, the staff has been absolutely fantastic. I think we had the ability, through my office, to speak to almost everybody in Housing. Thank you for your incredible passionate and compassionate work. Hopefully with the review, it will point to any resource gaps that might be

there and the possibility of filling some of those resource gaps.

Again, thank you very much for your work and thank you very much for this morning.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry, you have nothing further? Okay.

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: Now we'll move back –

CLERK: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: Oh, for that section.

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 heads, carried.

CHAIR: Now we'll move back to Children, Seniors and Social Development.

So now may be a good time for a five or six minute break, while we do a switch out, to grab a coffee.

Recess

CHAIR: Okay, we've downstairs linked in, so I'll give the floor back over to the minister to introduce her staff.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Good afternoon – or good morning. It feels like afternoon, isn't that something? It's like we just came back, we're in the House and it feels like afternoon.

What I'm going to do here before my comments is I'm going to allow my staff to individually introduce themselves. I'm going to start here on my left.

MR. COOPER: Good morning, Bruce Cooper, Deputy Minister, Children, Seniors and Social Development.

MR. GRANDY: Paul Grandy, Departmental Comptroller.

MS. WALSH: Susan Walsh, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Child and Youth Services Branch.

MS. M. HEALEY: Michelle Healey, Director of Healthy Living, Sport and Recreation Division.

MR. R. HEALEY: Rick Healey, Assistant Deputy Minister for Programs and Policies.

MS. O'NEILL: Melony O'Neill, Director of Communications.

MR. BENNETT: Derek Bennett, MHA, Lewisporte – Twillingate, and Parliamentary Secretary.

MS. WHITE: Kelly White, Executive Assistant to Minister Gambin-Walsh.

CHAIR: Wonderful.

Okay, I'll ask the Clerk to call.

CLERK: 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Lisa, I'd like to have some opening comments.

CHAIR: Oh, my apologies.

Sorry, we're going to do two preambles this morning. Thank you.

My apologies to the minister; so we'll allow the minister to open up the Children, Seniors and Social – I'm glad this is my last Estimates.

Go ahead, Minister.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you very much.

Our department is dedicated to providing a wide range of family focused services with a concentration on nurturing strong, healthy communities. These services include everything from protecting children and youth from maltreatment and reuniting children with their families when appropriate, to helping alleviate poverty and ensuring that all residents are provided the opportunity to participate in our society and economy.

In the area of child protection, our priority is to work with families with an end goal of having children and youth returned to their home. We know that every child and youth deserves a loving, nurturing environment and when possible, the best place is with their family.

We have worked hard to help us achieve these outcomes through such actions as developing co-operative working relationships with our Aboriginal communities, completing a review of our *Children and Youth Care and Protection Act* to ensure that our legislation is allowing us to best meet the needs of the clients we serve and rollout of our structured decision-making model training this year.

We continue to build upon the commitments to ensuring the protection and well-being of our provinces most vulnerable children and youth. We also remain committed to the approved organizational structure of 1-20 ratios in team structures. Physical activity is such an important part of our daily lives, improving the health and well-being of the people of this province is a large component of this commitment. We have established targets to increase physical activity rates by 7 per cent and reduce obesity rates by 5 per cent by 2025.

As outlined in *The Way Forward*, our success in Newfoundland and Labrador by 2025 will be measured by additional targets such as increasing breastfeeding initiation rates and reductions in smoking rates. Our community partners are crucial in helping us meet our targets and I have to applaud them for the great work they are doing.

In terms of the disability community, our government has committed to developing and implementing a cross-departmental, individualized support funding model that will enable individuals to self-direct the supports they receive and how they are used. Supports for individuals are currently provided through a number of programs, several departments and often with different application processes and eligibility.

We will work with our Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, community stakeholders and individuals to build a new delivery model for individualized supports.

Speaking of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, I'm also pleased with the recent appointment of 12 individuals to the council. The council is comprised of individuals who have extensive knowledge and personal experience related to inclusion. The role of the council is to advise and inform me on disability related issues, promote awareness and identify best approaches to remove barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

Integrating the knowledge and experience of persons with disabilities has been vital in the success of advancing inclusion and accessibility in our province. I place a high value on the work of our partners, and we are very pleased to have recently worked with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL in creating a universal design website. The universal design website project was funded through our capacity grants.

I would also like to mention the establishment of an Office of the Seniors Advocate in our province. Our government promised to establish this office and we are well on our way to delivering on that commitment. While mechanisms are currently in place to handle

information services and to address individual issues impacting seniors, there is a gap when it comes to addressing systemic issues. This is the core mandate of the Seniors Advocate.

Regulations have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders. The Independent Appointments Commission is leading the search process for the position of the Seniors Advocate and is expected to initiate the process in the very near future.

These are just a few of the items I would like to highlight for the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. Despite the difficult fiscal realities facing the province, we remain committed to providing the necessary supports so that the department continues to deliver family focused services to the people of our province.

Now we would like to take the opportunity to address any questions you may have.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

MS. PERRY: My first question, of course, can we get a copy of your binder today for this division as well?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We will get you one today.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can we also get an organizational chart including all the branches and divisions and responsibilities?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

How many people are employed in total in your department today?

MR. COOPER: In our departmental salary plan we have provision for 730 positions. We have 70 positions that are currently vacant, and of our positions, we have 635 that are involved in front line service delivery.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Do you currently have any temporary positions in place?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we do. We have about 20 temporary positions, and there are also some temporary positions that would exist in regional operations.

MS. PERRY: Can we get a list by title of what each of these positions are?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we can certainly do that.

MS. PERRY: Okay. Can you tell me what subheads your temporary positions are included under?

MR. COOPER: I would suggest they would be – I know there are 30 of them that would be included under the subhead that is Child and Youth, but I won't be able to, off the top of my head, tell you the rest of them.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: I would imagine they're distributed throughout the department. We don't have a significant number for the size of the department. We have a small number of temporary employees. You understand that there's a difference between –

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MR. COOPER: – a temporary position, where you have somebody who is moving into a project and then you have to backfill.

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: So then, technically, you have a temporary person backfilling a permanent position. There's a low number and some of the reasons wouldn't – it's not true temporary.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

And when you give us a list of those temporaries, can you distinguish which ones are contractual positions and which ones are 13-weekers?

MR. COOPER: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Have any positions been eliminated in your department?

MR. COOPER: As part of budget decisions for this year coming? For '17-'18?

MS. PERRY: Any position, any and all, whether it's part of budget or part of normal operations.

MR. COOPER: Okay.

In this year's salary plan, we've seen a reduction of 24 positions as a result of management restructuring that has occurred. There's a net reduction of four other positions that are owing to past year's decisions such as the attrition management plan of some years ago.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Just for clarity, 24 positions eliminated for management restructuring.

MR. COOPER: Right.

MS. PERRY: Plus four more eliminated for attrition.

MR. COOPER: Net four other positions associated with past year's decisions.

MS. PERRY: Is that the attrition plan?

MR. COOPER: Attrition would be part of it, yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: I don't have the full list of those. I do have the listing of the positions that were associated with our restructuring recently.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can we get a list of all of these positions, their title and any severance that was paid out?

MR. COOPER: Yes, you can. There's a nuance with your severance question, and that is that severance is paid out at the end of a person's serving notice period. So it would be a point-in-time number.

MS. PERRY: That's fine; we'd still like the number.

MR. COOPER: Okay, yes.

MS. PERRY: Just to be clear, that's 28 positions in total: 24 for management restructuring and four from attrition?

MR. COOPER: Four from previous year's decisions, right.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Do you have any vacancies in the department?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we do.

MS. PERRY: Right, 70. Of those 70 – sorry about that – are you planning on filling them all?

MR. COOPER: Certainly, these are PCNs that would be under various stages of recruitment. The question of whether we fill them all, as the minister referenced in her opening comments, our department – very similar to an allocation formula I guess you'd see in the school system – is predicated on an allocation of staffing to sustain a ratio of basically six social workers to 120 cases, or one in 20 is the simple way we frame it.

Given we have a significant degree of turnover as a department, we have a lot of people coming and leaving, every time we have a person leave a position, as we're looking at whether we need to do a fill we do an assessment and we ask the question: Are we going to be able to deliver our model? Do we need this position to deliver our model? So for every position we have, we undertake that kind of scrutiny and we ask ourselves ongoingly.

We don't have any existent plans around eliminating any of these vacancies. But I will

say that our recruitment requires that we consider whether there's an ongoing need for a position.

MS. PERRY: Okay. And you're going to provide us with a list of the vacancies as well?

MR. COOPER: We can give you a list of our vacancies, yeah.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

When the eight positions we talked about a little while ago were eliminated, were the PCNs eliminated as well?

MR. COOPER: Yes, any positions that were eliminated, particularly through our management restructuring, the PCNs have been eliminated. I can't speak to the other four positions because, to be honest, some of those positions may be ones that would fall under attrition. We have to wait for that to occur.

But, certainly, the PCNs were clearly eliminated and, actually, some new ones created as part of our management restructuring process.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

That was my next question, actually. Can you give us a list of the total number of new positions created by title and the new PCN numbers?

MR. COOPER: Sure. Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: Do you want that now?

MS. PERRY: Sure.

MR. COOPER: I can't give you the PCN numbers for the new positions but perhaps it would be helpful, to put this in context, for me to describe the organizational restructuring. Would that be helpful?

MS. PERRY: Sure.

MR. COOPER: Because that's really the story you need to understand to see the new positions we created.

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: Through our organizational change process we went through a process of identifying our strategic issues. We looked at our workloads, we looked at appropriate practices around span of control for directors and we looked at issues we needed to resolve in terms of creating a strong department, a new department. Through that process we made some decisions.

We've merged two of our regions. Central region and western region have been merged now under the leadership of one director. We merged together what were previously two separate divisions of Healthy Living and Rec and Sport, creating a brand new division that's focusing on the important synergy between these areas.

Because we were two departments coming together we had two distinct policy functions. So we merged them together to one. That was one of the eliminations and thus we needed a new position created.

In the child, youth and family services area there were three directors with the work broken down along the lines of youth, adoptions and protection, essentially. What we did is we amalgamated. What that means is we created new positions. We created a new director of Healthy Living, Rec and Sport to support the new structure. We created a director of policy and strategic planning, a director of Adoptions and In Care, which is bringing together all elements of the Continuum of Care for children under one person and one division, and a director of children and youth focusing on child protection and youth issues. That explains the structure and the four positions that we created.

MS. PERRY: Okay. Thank you.

Can you give me a breakdown of the number of employees in the Seniors and Social Development division versus the CYFS division? Can we have a complete organizational chart with titles?

MR. COOPER: We'll certainly get you organizational charts. The organizational charts we'll be able to provide will be at the level of

the management staff, because at this point we're still doing work within our system within HRS to ensure everything is coded properly before they can press the button for us and give us new charts. So we can get you the management because we've done all that.

Your question in relation to Seniors and Aging, we have a director of Seniors and Aging and we have three management staff in that area, three analyst-level staff in that area.

I'm not forgetting any, am I, Rick? That's it?

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: The role of Seniors and Aging is – they don't actually run a program in the same way that a child protection program operates. They are a hub for policy development, supporting all departments throughout government, looking at things through an age-friendly lens and providing support to every department in government. So as a policy shop, we maintained our resources at the level I just described.

Over in the Child and Youth area, we have a director and we have – I just have to do the math here. Actually, Rick, maybe you know off the top of your head. I see three management positions showing here and several unionized, but I don't have the number at my fingertips.

MR. R. HEALEY: Under Child and Youth, we would have a director and we would have four policy analysts.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Last year in Estimates, we talked about the *Adult Protection Act* and at that time there were 258 reports and 22 investigations. Can you give us the updated statistics for this year?

MR. COOPER: I'll pass that to Rick.

MR. R. HEALEY: Sorry, would you mind repeating that?

MS. PERRY: Last year, there were 258 reports and 22 investigations under the *Adult Protection Act*. What are the statistics for this year?

MR. R. HEALEY: I don't have that with me right now. I can get that for you, though.

MS. PERRY: Okay, thank you so much.

Last year, how much was actually spent on the Seniors' Advocate office?

MR. COOPER: To my recollection, I don't believe we spent any money on the office in the last fiscal year, as it is not established yet.

MS. PERRY: So there was zero dollars spent in relation to that position, creating that position, getting ready for that position, nothing spent that have been allocated to that?

MR. COOPER: There was money spent in a partnership with the Seniors Resource Centre to ensure that there's understanding about seniors' programs. I don't have that number. I think it was around \$100,000, if memory serves.

MS. PERRY: So it was \$100,000 paid to whom?

MR. COOPER: It would have been the Seniors Resource Centre.

MS. PERRY: Can you get us the details on that as well?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we certainly can.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Last year in Estimates, we talked about the new anti-smoking campaign. Can we get an update on where that is?

MR. COOPER: So the campaign you're referring to – I didn't have the benefit of being here last year, the campaign that we're currently embarking upon for smoking cessation, and you'll see in the Estimates, there's \$100,000 revenue that we received from the federal government to extend our smoking cessation work with the Smokers' Helpline to carry on that service for another two years.

There's been the addition of – over this year we spent some money on a development of, I guess you'd call it an online text-based support service. So there have been some investments

there and there's a plan for the year ahead to work on looking at how we address the need for nicotine replacement therapies for persons in low income. We've have a plan that's being put together for this year that will include that and some other interventions.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So when can we expect it to roll out?

MR. COOPER: We're linking this with the development of an overall healthy living strategy or action plan, I should say. There'll be some things rolling out in the coming months. Certainly, by the time the fall hits.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

I'm out of time again. I'm going to park my next question because it's a bigger one.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: If we go line by line here under 1.1.01 in Minister's Office, for Salaries there was a reduction of \$68,000. Can you tell me what that reduction represents?

MR. COOPER: There are three funded PCNs in the Minister's Office: the minister, the executive assistant and the departmental secretary to the minister. The variance that you're seeing there is due to a zero-based adjustment that occurred through the elimination of one secretary to the minister positions.

There were two positions budgeted in '16-'17 because of the two departments, so there'll only be one secretary to the minister for '17-'18.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you very much.

In Transportation and Communications, I see the variance there of \$31,000 not spent, if we could have an idea of what wasn't spent, what that variance represents and then a reduction of \$21,000.

MR. COOPER: The reduction that you note from '16-'17, fundamentally, there was just less travel than expected. And I think it's fair to say, and we certainly encountered this as we did the

zero-based budget exercise, oftentimes the numbers in these areas, particularly, that we were carrying, were a reflection perhaps of history as opposed to based on an assessment of need.

So it's certainly not the case that the minister didn't go to any FPT meetings that she was supposed to or anything of that nature. Everything that was meant to be done was done and we happened to have this slippage.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. COOPER: So in terms of your question regarding the '17-'18 budget and why we're down \$21,000, again, it's the zero-based budgeting process.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. COOPER: We looked ahead and we planned the minister's trips. We anticipated what trips are going to be there in the minister's office for the year ahead and that's the number that we needed.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

1.2.01, Executive Support, this may have been answered in the positions that you mentioned earlier, but a reduction in the salary of \$282,000?

MR. COOPER: Right.

This reduction is based on the changes that the department made; the merger of departments.

MS. ROGERS: Merger, yeah.

MR. COOPER: So we had four positions eliminated: one deputy minister, two assistant deputy ministers and one director of communications, for a total reduction of \$428,000. There's an offsetting amount of \$145,800 to ensure we have sufficient funding that was put back for that net reduction of \$282,000.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you very much.

I would assume that Transportation and Communications reductions there are also the result of zero-based budgeting.

MR. COOPER: That's correct; same process.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great, thank you.

That's all I have there.

Were you calling just those two?

CHAIR: We just did the Minister's Office, Ms. Rogers, to start. So if there are no more questions, okay.

MS. ROGERS: I may have more here too, just a sec now.

I see there's nothing under 1.2.01, Executive Support, for Professional Services?

MR. COOPER: That's correct.

You can see there was nothing used in '16-'17 for Professional Services and when we looked at it in preparation for budget, really when you think about it from the executive office perspective, we thought it's better to consolidate that. Let's move all Professional Services to one place so we can manage it better, as opposed to having money spread in different places. So we moved our Professional Services spending all on our policy and program areas just because it didn't seem to – it hadn't been used historically and why ask for it.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, and Purchased Services.

MR. COOPER: Right.

MS. ROGERS: What kinds of purchased services would you have had there?

MR. COOPER: It would be everything from taxis to room rentals to media monitoring, those sorts of things.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. So that's been reduced significantly.

MR. COOPER: Yes, that's correct. Within the same process, we built it up from zero.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. Thanks.

That's General Administration; we're still going all the way through 1.2 I assume, right? Is it?

CHAIR: Pardon me?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: No, we're just doing the Minister's Office right now. When you're ready, we'll move on.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Well, I kind of snuck into the next one, didn't I?

CHAIR: Pardon me?

MS. ROGERS: And no one stopped me. Does that mean I can keep going?

CHAIR: So you're done with 1.1.01?

MS. ROGERS: I am. Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, Ms. Perry, you have some more questions in that section?

MS. PERRY: Yes. Can you provide some information on ratios and staffing levels in Child Protection? How many social workers per supervisors? How many clerical staff and assistant staff per social worker? How many front-line positions are in Child Protection currently? What percentage of positions is vacant?

MR. COOPER: Yes, would you like that now or would you like us to –

MS. PERRY: Yeah, if you have it.

MR. COOPER: Okay.

So, Susan, do you want to chime in here?

MS. PERRY: And I'd like it in writing after as well.

MR. COOPER: No problem, yeah.

MS. WALSH: The team approach is used in Child Protection Services and it is supported by

our organizational model that Bruce referred to earlier.

We have six social workers on every team and those social workers generally have 20 cases each. Certainly, if you add the six social workers' caseloads up, it would be 120, and that 120 reports to one supervisor.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MS. WALSH: Each of the supervisors report to a zone manager. So we have five clinical program supervisors that report to a zone manager. I'm just going to walk through our process in terms of the model first.

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MS. WALSH: We have four, generally, zone managers who report to a regional director. So we have three regions, as Bruce laid out for you earlier. So that's our structure.

We track our caseloads in relation to our social workers. So we know that generally for the province, as of December of 2016, we had a provincial ratio of about 24 cases per social worker.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MS. WALSH: And that varied across our region; some regions would have been exactly on 20. For example, Central West was 20, Metro was 22, but Labrador is a little higher. We were at 29 for Labrador. I know there are numerous pieces to your question, could you –?

MS. PERRY: It was a long question, so certainly some of it you can prepare for me: How many social workers per supervisor; how many clerical staff and assistant staff per social worker; how many front-line positions are in Child Protection currently; and what percentage of these positions are vacant?

MS. WALSH: Okay. Going back to the team structure I explained to you, each team has a clerical support staff, and most would have as well, or at least share with another team, depending on the area, a social work assistant and/or a community services worker in Labrador. So that's basically the team structure,

in terms of you asked about the support positions.

As well, we have approximately 20 behaviour management specialist positions throughout all the regions, and I think that's generally all of the support positions. The other question you had, in terms of vacancies, there are approximately 57 vacancies currently in regional operations.

We generally would have a vacancy factor of about 7 to 8 per cent. You can appreciate that we have very often a young workforce, especially in terms of our social workers, and a very female-dominated profession. So consequently, we incur a fair bit of turnover as it relates to maternity leaves. We have approximately 640 positions in regional operations and only about half of that are social workers. So we also have a number of, you know, all these other support positions, and these positions turn over in terms of applying on other jobs, moving, all the things that happen in a larger organization.

MS. PERRY: Okay, thank you.

How many CYFS offices are now open? How many offices do you have?

MR. COOPER: Forty-four.

MS. PERRY: Forty-four?

MR. COOPER: Yes.

MS. PERRY: How many closed last year?

MR. COOPER: Last year there were two offices that closed.

MS. PERRY: Where were they?

MR. COOPER: Port Saunders and Gambo.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

I got question on the overall Program Funding Summary, which is on page 1 just before 1.1.01. You have a gross expenditure of \$170-and-some-odd million; less: related revenue current of \$16,262,300. What is that?

MR. COOPER: So our revenue is comprised of children's benefit; we do get revenue – when children come into care, we essentially get the

same benefit that the family would get because we are –

MS. PERRY: From the feds?

MR. COOPER: From the federal government.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: And that then gets converted, that gets passed on as part of our allowances and assistance to foster families.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: We also get significant revenue, and it's actually gone up this year by another \$2 million, from the federal government in relation to the provision of services in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: With the Innu Nation.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: So because it's an area of federal responsibility, we're able to bill back. That's been an area – I think our revenue there has grown over \$3 million in the last 18 months.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Now, directly into 1.1.01, can you provide an explanation of why Salaries for last year were budgeted at \$261,000 but came in at \$291,000? So you were over by \$30,400 – 1.1.01, Salaries.

MR. COOPER: I'm sorry, my apologies; my bifocals aren't working today.

It has to do with severance and paid leave payout to a retiring secretary that occurred in '16-'17.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

I've reviewed the Estimates of this department in relation to CYFS and SWSD in the 2016 budget documents and it looks like the 2016-'17 budget number that's listed here for the Minister's Office is the number from last year's

budget for the two departments combined. Can you confirm that?

MR. COOPER: Paul, can you ...?

MR. GRANDY: It wouldn't be the exact same numbers because there were a couple of positions eliminated. There was one minister's secretary eliminated. So the budget for this year wouldn't be the exact – the budget that's listed there from last year, yes, is the two combined amounts. I'm sorry, yes.

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MR. GRANDY: If you're asking about '16-'17, yes, I'm sorry.

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MR. GRANDY: It is the combined amount, yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. GRANDY: I was thinking '17-'18 is (inaudible).

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MR. GRANDY: But '16-'17, yes, is the combined amount.

MS. PERRY: When we did the math, it matched up.

MR. GRANDY: Yes, absolutely.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

In terms of Supplies, how is the savings of \$3,800 achieved last year and what will the \$500 budgeted for this year be spent on?

MR. COOPER: Well, we had less than anticipated supplies expenditures last year. Again, it's not as if there are things that we just chose not to buy, it's just the volumes weren't there.

In terms of what our expenditure this year would be used on, we looked at our past history of spending and our Supplies line provides for the purchase of office supplies and meeting room

supplies, just miscellaneous office supplies. So when we looked at our volumes in terms of what we consume, that's what we – so binders and so on.

Anything else you wanted to add to that, Paul?

MR. GRANDY: No, it's just general office supplies, anything you can use in that category.

CHAIR: Minister.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: In the previous years, there was a significant amount of supplies purchased and we have on stock enough supplies to do us, I can assure you; therefore, the budget was reduced.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So that probably explains Purchased Services. You went \$200 over budget last year. You budgeted \$2,700 and you spent \$2,900, but this year you brought it down to \$500. Is that because you have surplus from the money you spent last year?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We have surplus for money spent in previous years, not necessarily last year. So by doing zero-based budgeting, we have enabled ourselves not to have to purchase supplies that we do not need.

MS. PERRY: Okay. So even though last year you needed \$2,900 worth, this year you think you can get away with \$500.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Last year zero-based budgeting was not completed. It was done on previous expenditures, the analysis. This year –

MS. PERRY: But you actually spent \$2,900.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Last year you spent it.

MR. COOPER: Yes, last year there was a higher than anticipated photocopying expense and the year ahead we're actually re-profiling the budget for the office for all photocopiers. Again, trying to consolidate them under Corporate Services and Performance Improvement, in addition to –

CHAIR: Sorry, my apologies, I was just noticing the clock.

MR. COOPER: Thank you.

MS. PERRY: I just have one question left on 1.1.01.

CHAIR: Okay.

Ms. Rogers, is it okay to grant leave?

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Okay. Under Purchased Services, what purchased services are included here and how confident are you that you're not going to need more than \$500 this year? What was included under Purchased Services?

MR. COOPER: This is for meeting costs, media monitoring, entertainment and general purchased services. We're confident, based upon our review, based upon the change we've made in the photocopiers, that this is appropriate, and frankly, we'll manage it. We're a large department and we're confident we can manage with that amount of money.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

CHAIR: Good stuff, everybody's good.

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.

CLERK: The total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, ‘nay.’

Carried.

1.2.01 through 1.2.04 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.2.01 through 1.2.04 inclusive carry?

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Okay, I’m just going to pick up on a question Ms. Rogers asked on 1.2.01, Salaries. You indicated there were four positions eliminated, but \$145,000 was put back. What was that \$145,000 put back for? In explaining the difference between \$1.9 million and \$1.6 million, that was the explanation.

MR. GRANDY: We did eliminate four positions, and the total was \$428,000. I guess to meet the requirement for the positions that are there this year, \$145,000 was just added back to make sure we have sufficient funding to fund the – I think it’s 12 or 13, 12 positions that are in that area.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Were any positions removed, and can we get the specific titles of the jobs that were eliminated?

MR. COOPER: Yes, there were four positions removed. There was one deputy minister, two assistant deputy ministers and one director of communications.

MS. PERRY: How much severance was paid out?

MR. GRANDY: I know the total. I don’t know what the breakdown was in severance.

MR. COOPER: We can certainly get that for you.

MS. PERRY: Pardon? You can get that for us.

MR. COOPER: We can get that for you as part of our overall package that we’re – yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay, thank you so much. I’m not hearing very well here this morning.

Under your Purchased Services and Professional Services, what items are typically included here? Taxis and room rentals and media monitoring – Gerry asked that one.

Okay, I’m good, actually. No, I have one more.

Property, Furnishings and Equipment had a budget last year of \$2,000, this year you have nothing allocated. What did you purchase with that \$2,000 last year?

MR. COOPER: Last year we moved from Elizabeth Avenue to a new office on the sixth floor here, and there were some requirements associated with the move. There were a variety of things, such as a bookcase, a mobile filing pedestal and structure column, a mobile filing pedestal, a shredder, and a panel for somebody’s desk in order to accommodate their ergonomic needs. So that’s where the money went last year.

This year, again this is an area – as we did our budgeting, our planning, we believe it makes more sense to consolidate all of our PFV in one place in the department so we can better manage it. So this money moved out to Corporate Services and Performance Improvement to manage.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

We’re going on to 1.2.04?

CHAIR: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under 1.2.02, Corporate Services and Performance Improvement, this is a new subhead in the budget. Which subheads have been combined and from which departments, so we can figure out how to account for this one from both subheads?

MR. COOPER: If memory serves me correctly, this is what used to be just called Corporate Services. We added in the Performance Improvement as a symbol of the efforts that we need to take to improve quality in our

department, and this provides a locus for that work to take place.

In terms of other subheads; you would have seen quality there before, you would have seen training there before. We now have quality and training, healthy living, sport and rec, information management, planning, finance, and general operations are all of the divisions that exist under that banner.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

With respect to Salaries, where in last year's *Estimates* book can I find the \$4,491,100 which was budgeted for last year? I can't find it in last year's *Estimates* book.

MR. GRANDY: It should be in Corporate Services. If you look at the previous CYFS, it would have been Corporate Services. In the SWSD, it would have been healthy living and recreation and sport.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. GRANDY: I think if you look at those three areas and combine those, it should give you the total.

You're looking at the '16-'17 original budget?

MS. PERRY: Yes.

MR. GRANDY: Yes.

MS. PERRY: In terms of the amounts from the original budget to the revised, how were the savings of \$253,000 achieved last year?

MR. COOPER: This is primarily related to vacancies in some management and admin support positions. We had a director of information management that was vacant for a period of time. We had a manager of organizational development, a financial analyst, three IM techs and two clerks that were vacant for a period of time.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

How much severance cost is included in the amount allocated for Salaries for 2017-'18 do you anticipate?

MR. COOPER: I don't have the actual severance number here for that area but, again, we can put that together for you.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

There's a cut in Salaries for this coming year. Over \$325,000 has been cut from budget '16 to budget '17. Can the minister give an overview considering that zero-based budgeting information indicates that Salaries should increase by \$29,300, yet the line item in the Estimates has actually decreased?

MR. COOPER: There are 53 positions in this area. I think that in terms of the reductions, we have \$400,000 that's related to four positions that were eliminated as part of management restructuring: three director positions and one policy program development specialist.

We've had some additions in relation to the new positions: director of policy and director of Healthy Living, Rec and Sport and we had a JES adjustment. The \$29,000 you're referring to, I think, is an adjustment. It was an add back to ensure that because there are some costs associated with severance, we need to make sure that we have enough money to cover everything that happens over this year. That was an add back to balance us, to make sure we got to balance with the consequences of some of the changes that we'd made.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you explain how the division saved \$8,900 last year on Employee Benefits?

MR. COOPER: Essentially, that would mean that there were fewer than anticipated conferences attended or events of that nature.

Again, the money that would have been acquired by the department last year would have been based upon prior year spending levels, and not necessarily connected to a calendar-based plan for what's going to happen. So for this year we used zero-based.

MS. PERRY: Employees attending conferences are budgeted under Employee Benefits?

MR. COOPER: Yes, that's correct.

MS. PERRY: Not travel?

MR. COOPER: Perhaps the kind of benefits that you might be thinking of in terms of the benefits that come with being an employee, the payment of benefits – EI, workers’ comp – that all comes under the Salaries section.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: These are benefits in terms of conferences.

MS. PERRY: Elaborate for me, then, on what you consider employee benefits there?

MR. COOPER: I’m sorry?

MS. PERRY: Elaborate for me on what’s considered employee benefits? Attending a conference? What other things?

MR. COOPER: Seminar training courses, registration fees for staff.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: Registration fees for – in some departments it might be registration fees for their professional association or ...

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under Transportation and Communications, what types of transportation and communications are included here? Can you explain why there was a savings of \$165,000 in 2016-’17, but that savings has not been carried over to 2017-2018?

MR. COOPER: In terms of what we used, the Transportation and Communications line 4, that’s for travel, for telecommunication, for postage, for fax, for courier charges. In terms of the savings from last year, we’re down \$112,000 in terms of our revised budget from the ’16-’17 original budget and that was just less than anticipated travel.

We reduced the budget overall for ’17-’18 by \$22,600 which we did an adjustment to. That’s based upon our assessment of our needs. Essentially, we did everything from looking at our utilization of postage.

This is an area where we have 4,000 pieces of mail a year that goes out. Part of the role of this group is when individuals who used to be in care, or who have questions around their history if they were adopted, they come to us and want a file review. We have 4,000 interactions a year with people, so we built it up again from 4,000 of the special envelopes and everything associated with that.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under Supplies – oh, I’m out.

MR. COOPER: That’s okay.

MS. PERRY: Sorry, I have to stop.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

Just back to 1.2.02: “Appropriations provide for the management of the quality and training” Can you tell me a little bit about what training is in that situation?

MR. COOPER: Certainly.

The department has – we have our own training unit comprised of a manager and two social workers. We’re working in tandem with the School of Social Work to revise our whole approach to training. When social workers first get hired they get provided with what’s called pre-CORE training. They get an orientation week essentially where they are given a series of modules. Then, as their employment goes on, we have other training that’s provided.

This unit are the people that lead that. We’re in the process of changing our delivery model to online, more teleconference.

MS. ROGERS: Right.

MR. COOPER: So that’s what they do. The marriage with quality is because one of the key features of an organization that cares about quality is focusing on training and staff and engaging with staff. That’s what they do and why they do it.

MS. ROGERS: Would this be the only pocket of money, then, to provide training, for instance, for social workers and child protection or is this

separate? Is there more money for training, other pockets of money for training for social workers in the front line?

MR. COOPER: There's an Employee Benefits line for the whole department, for the provincial office.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: It's held in the activity we're discussing. But there's also an Employee Benefits line that exists in the regional operations where that supports most of the front-line service delivery.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

So the Employee Benefits for the training here, then, is \$14,900. That would be for those activities that you talked –

MR. COOPER: That's for the provincial office. That's right.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah, okay.

All right. Thank you. Thank you very much.

I'm ready to move on to 1.2.03. Salaries, we see a reduction there in budget '16-'17 of \$184,000, then a reduction of \$475,000. Can we just identify where that's from?

MR. COOPER: The savings from '16-'17 was related to vacancies and delays in filling positions. We had, for example, a vacancy in a program and policy development specialist; we had a long-term leave from a clerk typist. This is the sort of thing that leads to those savings.

In terms of the budget being down, overall in this area we've got 27 funded positions: 23 permanent, three temporary and one contractual. There are some positions that were reduced as part of management restructuring: our four director positions, one manager of special projects and a policy and program development specialist.

Of course we've had some add backs as well to support the restructuring and we've had some prior year decisions that are being reflected here

in terms of the attrition plan or other plans that existed previously.

MS. ROGERS: And we can get a list of those positions –

MR. COOPER: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

Thank you very much.

Where have I gone now? Okay.

Then Administrative Support, Operating Accounts, we see you didn't spend \$50,000 in Property, Furnishings and Equipment. I assume that's because it wasn't needed.

MR. COOPER: It's Property, Furnishings and Equipment you're referring to?

MS. ROGERS: Yes, in 1.2.04. I assume that wasn't spent because it wasn't needed.

MR. COOPER: 1.2.04, okay. Oh, I'm sorry, you're in another area.

That's correct. My apologies, I just had to get to the right place in the binder.

So this is money we use for procuring vehicles for remote communities in Labrador, and we had no expenditure last year in that area.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

Thank you.

A few general questions: Can we have an update on the *Adult Protection Act*? I can't remember, did you already ask that, Tracey, the number of reports of abuse in 2016, what types? I think that was already asked, yes?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we'll get that.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Is there still education and training ongoing around the act?

MR. COOPER: I'll have to defer to Rick.

MR. R. HEALEY: There's an adult protection committee with the regional health authorities.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. R. HEALEY: Actually, I do have those numbers for you now. Sorry about that.

In 2015-16 there were 308 reports. We have the first three-quarters of 2016-17, and for the first three-quarters we have 253 reports.

MS. ROGERS: Wow, okay. For the first three –

MR. R. HEALEY: And the fourth quarter is being tabulated now.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. So it looks like an increase.

MR. R. HEALEY: Yeah, we're not sure yet.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thanks Rick.

What is the timeline for the Seniors' Advocate position? Do we have a timeline, Minister?

MR. COOPER: It's very nice to be here in the House because we work very closely with the House now. We're getting to the point where this is an officer of the House, it's being moved. The recruitment process is being moved with a lot of engagement with the House.

The IAC advised that the process is getting underway. I think there's some – sorry.

CLERK: (Inaudible.)

MR. COOPER: Okay, thank you.

Sandra just advised me it closes May 14; it's posted.

MS. ROGERS: (Inaudible.)

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

The original plan was to have it in place for the spring, so it depends upon – that process just needs to unfold. So it'll be soon.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, although the Advocate will be an Officer of the House, the Advocate will be sitting in CSSD or Executive Council?

MR. COOPER: No.

The role that our department played with the Advocate was because of the role of aging and seniors, we basically took government's policy and developed the policy framework to meet the commitment and helped it through the Cabinet process.

Now that it's been incubated and is hatched, it's going to be moving over to the House of Assembly.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

MR. COOPER: So it will be an Officer of the House in the same way that the other officers exist.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: So there will be no affiliation with the department –

MS. ROGERS: Good.

MR. COOPER: –except as partners to work on issues.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy office seems to no longer be an entity onto itself. Can you tell me what has happened there and what's happening with the Poverty Reduction Strategy?

MR. COOPER: Certainly.

The poverty reduction division still does exist. They are within our department. We've got a director and two staff; two management analyst staff. We've got them nicely linked with other individuals that do this horizontal policy work and who are focused on inclusion and social development. So there are nice partnerships between our director of the Disability Policy Office and the director of Seniors and Aging.

And in terms of actions and an action plan, certainly there's been a significant piece of work; we're continuing to improve investments for poverty reduction. I know at this point we're gathering together the actions that were undertaken in this year's budget to be able to convey everything – the increased investment that has occurred this year. I think the

investment is up by – I'm trying to remember, Rick, what the number is. We've gone from \$253 million to about \$270 million in poverty reduction initiatives for '17-'18.

MS. ROGERS: That are peppered throughout a number of programs?

MR. COOPER: Exactly, yes.

So the poverty reduction initiative is something that has always been a horizontal – it's about a whole-of-government approach –

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. COOPER: – and a whole-of-community approach and that's what's continuing.

With *The Way Forward* now and focus on community partnership, focus on health and all policies, our work with the disabilities community, housing first concepts, there are new elements that we're looking at to see how the poverty reduction actions going forward can link these things.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

MR. COOPER: Right. Individualized funding, of course, is a big initiative as well that has a poverty reduction element.

MS. ROGERS: Individualized funding.

MR. COOPER: Right.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Is there any specific work being done, taking into account the current economic situation, the forecast of increased unemployment, reduction in household income, cost of living? What's being done in terms of looking at that bigger picture?

CHAIR: Mr. Cooper, just before you respond; after you finish, we'll go back to Ms. Perry.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah, great.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

MR. COOPER: Yes, part of our role is continuing to monitor how the population is doing with respect to poverty levels. So we do

have a plan in our budget this year to purchase some data to make sure we're looking at these questions that you raise.

Essentially, the fundamental question is: How are people doing and what changes might we be seeing? So we will be purchasing data so that we can stay on top of those questions.

MS. ROGERS: Just to finish up that one. How current is the data that you're able to get? It's –

MR. COOPER: There's always a lag.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: I think it's a two-year lag, but I can't remember the date precisely from our –

MS. ROGERS: Yeah. That's hard when there are sometimes quick shifts in what's happening in (inaudible).

MR. COOPER: That's true. That's one of the challenges; lag indicators are a challenge.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you.

MR. COOPER: We certainly support, we infuse that with – we've got strong connections with community. We certainly understand what's happening on the ground as well.

MS. ROGERS: Great, thank you.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Just in the interest of not duplicating over and over, can we be provided with a copy for every line item: 1.2.02, .03 and .04 of the specific titles of positions that are eliminated and the specific amount of severance to be paid out in relation to the elimination of these positions, as well as the title and salary of the new positions, if any, that you're putting back as part of your whole restructuring piece?

MR. COOPER: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

In terms of Professional Services, what was cut last year? Or was there anything in particular that you didn't purchase that you otherwise would have to achieve the savings of \$26,300? And we're at 1.2.02.

MR. COOPER: 1.2.04.

MS. PERRY: Professional Services.

MR. COOPER: Okay.

Am I looking at the wrong – what page are we on?

OFFICIAL: 1.2.02, Corporate Services.

MR. COOPER: Oh, okay.

MS. PERRY: Last year, you had budgeted \$51,300 and you only spent \$25,000.

MR. COOPER: My apologies. I thought we were in a different section.

OFFICIAL: What section are we in there, Tracey?

MS. PERRY: 1.2.02, still.

OFFICIAL: Oh.

MS. PERRY: Because we're doing 02 to 04, right?

MR. COOPER: Okay, 1.2.02, Corporate Services. If you have it, you can speak to it.

MS. PERRY: My head hurts too.

MR. GRANDY: Yeah, sure.

MR. COOPER: Go ahead.

MR. GRANDY: Last year, there was a budget of \$50,000 – I think it was – and we spent \$25,000. I just have to check back.

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MR. GRANDY: Yeah, we spent \$25,000. The \$25,000 was a – just give me a second. We had a consultant working on the *Helping Women Quit*,

Healthy Living initiative. That was the only expenditure in that area.

The \$50,000 for '17-'18 includes \$10,000 for consultants to advise on quality initiatives, \$20,000 for the development of School Food Guidelines and breastfeeding initiative and \$20,000 to the Atlantic Collaborative on Injury Prevention.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. GRANDY: There are three items there for the next year, or for this current year, sorry.

MS. PERRY: Okay. Thank you.

Under Revenue, where does this revenue come from? What determines how much revenue is obtained in each year?

MR. COOPER: Under this item, the revenue is related to entrance fees from pools. There are three pools: one in Corner Brook, Gander and Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

MS. PERRY: It comes from what?

MR. COOPER: We operate three swimming pools in Corner Brook, Gander and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. This is revenue associated with people coming to swim.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under 1.2.03 now, Professional Services, there's a lot of variance there from the budgeted amount of \$83,800. You actually only spent \$17,000 and then this year you're budgeting \$389,600. I want to pick that apart a little bit. Why is it increasing, the \$389,000 this year, when you only spent \$17,000 last year?

MR. COOPER: Essentially, the largest item there relates to our structured decision-making model. It was one of the new initiatives announced in the budget. This is the implementation of the rollout of the structured decision-making approach which is part of our overall plan to improve clinical practice in the department.

It's married with the ISM, the Integrated Service Management computer program that's being

developed. We're anticipating ISM will be starting to roll out the end of this fiscal and we'll be marrying up the structured decision making. It's largely training that this is going to be used for, training of staff and some follow-up. That's what's happening and that's about \$305,000.

MS. PERRY: You expect that to be a consultant?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we've engaged with the Children's Research Centre out of the US. They're the group that have developed this kind of proprietary model, this structured decision-making model. It's an evidence-based model, well tested in use in other jurisdictions. We're going to be working with them on that.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you explain why last year you only spent \$17,000 when you had budgeted \$83,000?

MR. COOPER: Yes, the \$17,000 was spent on curriculum development for some training we're doing on collaborative investigation of child sexual abuse.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: That was what the department had planned and there were just fewer activates than expected.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

I want to go back a little bit. You know that question I just asked about Salaries? When you provide that information, can you give me PSN numbers as well and if they were eliminated or if there are any new ones?

MR. COOPER: We can certainly do that.

MS. PERRY: Thank you so much.

A lot to keep in our heads; you guys, too, I'm sure.

Purchased Services: how do you explain the drop of the budget to \$145,000?

MR. COOPER: Forgive me. We're talking about Purchased Services?

MS. PERRY: Yeah, 1.2.03.

MR. COOPER: Okay.

For this year we're down because we did the zero-based exercise. One hundred thousand dollars of the reduction is basically us backing out revenue that we only needed one time. There was money we needed. There was an appropriation required to support the Seniors Resource Centre. We don't need that in the year to come, so that's the lion's share of the change.

MS. PERRY: Okay. We couldn't find where the other \$100,000 went.

Is that the end of that subhead?

CHAIR: You're okay?

MS. PERRY: Or we're gone to 1.2.04?

CHAIR: 1.2.04.

MS. PERRY: Okay. We're good there.

CHAIR: So if you're good up to there, Ms. Rogers, are you fine up to what –

MS. ROGERS: Yes, thank you very much.

CHAIR: Okay.

Shall 1.2.01 to 1.2.04 carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.2.01 through 1.2.04 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the totals carry?

All those in favour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against?

Carried.

Shall 2.1.01 carry?

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Okay, this is the only subhead which includes funding for Child and Youth Services. Can the minister detail which subheadings from *Budget 2016* are contained here?

MR. GRANDY: There is one subhead from the previous year called – I think one is called regional operations, Regional Services and the other one is called Direct Client Services, I think: those two.

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MR. GRANDY: If you add those two together they should give you the '16-'17 original budget.

MS. PERRY: They come close. They give us \$132,484,500. There's a \$57,000 difference. Can you explain that?

MR. GRANDY: How much is there, \$57,000?

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MR. GRANDY: More, no, less – less or more?

MS. PERRY: Less.

MR. GRANDY: Anyway, I know \$57,000 was related to an adjustment that was paid and a budget adjustment for Labrador allowance. There were some retroactive payments. Staff who work in Labrador get what is called a Labrador allowance for travel.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. GRANDY: They signed a new agreement last year. It went back, I think, to '13-'14, or maybe '12-'13; I'm not sure, one of those years. The \$57,000 was for retroactive pay plus whatever was paid in '16-'17. That's the difference.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Which programs and functions are contained with this subhead?

MR. COOPER: This is essentially the continuation of all Child and Youth Services programs at the regional level. This is about the support to all caregivers, whether they be kin or Level IV care. This is the protective intervention program. It's, again, all children and youth in care. It's a Youth Services residential program, our Youth Services supportive services, Community Corrections and Open Custody residential services.

This is where we've got our 44 locations. This is the bulk of the service delivery from the former Child, Youth and Family Services Department.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under Salaries – and, again, for all of these I'd like the same information. Can the minister give us a detailed overview of what is happening here on this salary line? Last year \$44.8 million was budgeted but only \$44.6 million was used, and this year's budget has been reduced to \$43.7 million.

MR. COOPER: Last year our salaries were lower than expected because of, again, vacancies. We do have, as Susan referenced, a vacancy rate that vacillates between 7 per cent and 10 per cent depending on the day you're looking. So we have vacancies during the year. We have delays in filling positions. We have turnover in staff. I guess 99 per cent of our salary money was spent in this area.

In terms of the question regarding why we're down in the year to come. There are some adjustments made to the salary budget in relation to some prior year decisions. Again, there are four positions that were reduced as part of management restructuring.

We've had to back out money related to the Labrador Allowance Reduction, because that was retroactive pay we can't appropriate at this time. We've had zero-based budgeting changed to anticipate vacancies that may occur throughout the year.

MS. PERRY: So there are another four positions, because the four positions –

MR. COOPER: No, I've already referenced the positions. This is just where they are showing up.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you give an explanation of why Employee Benefits went over budget by \$65,000 last year?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we had employees with some lost time due to some medical issues. We had some expenditures related to medical needs we had. So it was addressing some of their requirements.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Can you detail what is contained in the line item for Transportation and Communications, and can you also elaborate on how \$146,800 was saved last year and then this year you're planning even further savings? We'll stop there and then I'll ask (inaudible).

MR. COOPER: We're down last year. Our revised budget is down not because of any one thing but just because – it's a large expenditure because this money is what is used to support all of our staff in travelling to see clients throughout the province. It supports all the other things you've heard – telecommunication, postage and courier – throughout our 44 locations.

Essentially, this was just less expenditure than expected in the '16-'17 year. We're down \$206,000 going into this year. There's a reduction associated with some prior-year budget decisions and we went through zero-based budgeting and reduced our budgetary requirement by about \$25,000 associated with that.

MS. PERRY: Okay, so there's no correlation to any kind of a decreased workload or anything that would explain why staff travelled to the tune of \$146,000 less than they did last year?

MR. COOPER: No. I think, again, in this area we're catching some of the change we're making in how we work. We're doing more by distance delivery.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: So that's changing. You might see there are more interactions with the courts that might be taking place through phone or teleconferencing.

MS. PERRY: Video conferencing.

MR. COOPER: Right.

Some of that is being caught there, but I can't tell you precisely. It's a big budget; we've got a lot of staff. There's going to be some variance.

MS. PERRY: Yes. And, of course, gas costs have increased significantly.

MR. COOPER: We would pay at the established government mileage rate.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

MS. PERRY: That's how you pay out.

Can you give an account of how money was saved last year for Supplies?

MR. COOPER: The Supplies here includes not only office supplies but also gasoline and maintenance for vehicles that we have largely in Labrador, heating fuel, household supplies. Essentially, again, it's a situation where we, at the end of the year, weren't on budget. There was less required than we had projected.

MS. PERRY: Okay, so you –

MR. COOPER: It's not a function of a management decision to not do something.

MS. PERRY: Right. In Labrador the employees use gas cards in government cars.

MR. COOPER: They use government vehicles.

MS. PERRY: A combination.

MR. COOPER: It might be a truck, a side by side, an ATV, a Ski-Doo.

MS. PERRY: Right.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Purchased Services, from budget '16 to budget '17, this line was reduced by \$700,900. Can you explain how you've done that?

MR. COOPER: Certainly.

Our major expense in this area is leases. So what you're seeing here is some adjustment for lease costs. The major reduction here is the zero-based budgeting process. I'm just trying to remember to be able to illustrate with some good examples.

Paul, do you want to give some examples of the sorts of Purchased Services?

MS. PERRY: Yeah, so like using zero-based budgeting, what would you have been doing that's no longer necessary? What's the impact on operations? What's coming out?

MR. GRANDY: I guess what we did with all the zero-based budgeting is we looked at what we thought we would need in all of these areas and we basically built from zero up. So, as Bruce mentioned, the biggest expense is leases and they're pretty fixed. We have a number of buildings we lease; we're committed to leasing, so they're pretty well fixed.

There were some other discretionary things in there that we would have looked at to see where we could make cuts or where we could do efficiencies. I'm just trying to think of one now that would come to mind that I can give you an example.

MR. COOPER: I can just give you an example of some of the things we looked at. We looked at our phone lines. How can we find efficiency in our phone lines? By taking message manager off phones, we were saving \$5 a phone.

MS. PERRY: Beautiful, I like that. People have to answer the phone more often, which is nice too. It's always nice to get a human on the other end.

MR. COOPER: Right.

So it's not one particular thing, it's a cluster of things. I'd say to you, the interesting thing about this year's process for us is that every division,

every director, the regional directors included, had to develop a plan for operational requirements for the year ahead. They had to ask themselves, what are the major projects and initiatives? They had to look at their volumes, their caseload volumes, their actual experience of expenditure.

They used data to get a better sense of how the work was being processed in their offices, and they're asking themselves: Is there a way I can get this item cheaper or do we need it? Is it a need or – so there was a lot of team work, a lot of directors learning from each other about (inaudible) and that is certainly true in our department. That's what happened. We did an internal defence process where every director had to come and build the case. That's the outcome here. So it's a whole lot of little things.

I thought it was important to answer this question this way because the big thing is there is a bit of a cultural change. When you have to start from nothing and build it up, it causes you to look further out. As opposed to the way we've done it in the past, and it's not an illegitimate way of planning, is to look at what you spent and then you're sort of defending that you needed that level.

MS. PERRY: Prior to being in politics, I worked in a government-funded organization, I guess. So I know what happens in March with the culture of government and if we could ever eliminate that, it would be fabulous.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry, the time has run out on the clock so I'll move, and if you still need some time here, we'll come back.

MS. PERRY: I have some more.

CHAIR: Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, can we have an update on the status of the review of the *Children and Youth Care and Protection Act*?

MR. COOPER: Essentially, the legislative review has concluded. This operated from last year through to the end of December. We had some ongoing sessions with Aboriginal people.

We've got an as-was-said report that's now posted online. If you could take a look at that, you'll see that our review focused on six major themes. We wanted to look at how we can improve information sharing; we wanted to look at how we can improve prevention; the notion of looking at some kind of regulatory regime with agencies in terms of licensing; looking at improving our permanency planning options as well as Youth Services and finally, strengthening our services to indigenous children and youth and families.

So we have 30 organizations; 173 survey responses.

MS. ROGERS: Wow.

MR. COOPER: And a submission that is – the advice has been compiled and we're on track to meet our commitment, if all goes well, of a fall piece of legislation.

MS. ROGERS: For the fall.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

Thank you.

Any plans specific – I know that you also are looking at this but the issue of our youth transitioning into adulthood who fall between the gaps who are really not ready for adulthood. What's being done in that area?

MR. COOPER: That is an issue we heard in spades in the review. We've looked at a variety of options and there's advice currently with government about some options for addressing that issue.

MS. ROGERS: And how will we know about those options?

MR. COOPER: Yeah, so you'll see in the legislation. We have to get through the process with the Cabinet decision-making process of course, but this is one of the key areas in the minister's mandate letter, a Youth Services review. We've certainly looked at those issues.

In addition, I'd say we've got excellent partnerships with youth-serving organizations. We've got a long-standing relationship –

MS. ROGERS: We do.

MR. COOPER: – with Choices for Youth. Government broadly does. There's a lot that happens to support young people with that organization.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: But beyond them, there are other groups, some of whom are non-profit, some not, who are working to support youth. We work in close partnership with them, but we're very much seized with the question you've raised.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, thank you very much.

I'm just so aware that we have so little time here left.

The announcement yesterday about moving to a program rather than a public tendering process for residential placements for children, can you talk a little bit more about that? Is there going to be any kind of report about what's working, what's not working, where the placements are?

MR. COOPER: Okay. I'll take those separately.

So the first question in terms of what the announcement was about, I'm sure you know the history that three years ago there was a move to an RFP.

MS. ROGERS: I sure do.

MR. COOPER: And for that point in time, that made sense. There's been a lot that has been learned through that process. There's been capacity that has grown and improved in all the organizations that provide care. But, as we were at the end of the term of these arrangements, we were faced with, perhaps, an unintended consequence of that approach, which is you'd be going to market with children.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: And you could have a situation where a young person who's in a very good care arrangement, if that provider loses it through an RFP process, they might have to move.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: That's not very child centred.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: So we worked with the providers. We have a new contractual arrangement. So what we said yesterday is we're still going to procure these services, but now that things have evolved in our relationship with the Level 4 providers, we're changing the nature of the relationship. It's going to be a model that we – there's going to be pre-qualification and we now know the players, we know the quality, so we're just going to use a rotational basis, unless we have evidence that it's in a child's best interest to not use a rotation. The same way we would do in any kind of preferred-vender model.

The beauty of that is – and we're already seeing it – the conversation now moves that we automatically change the culture of the relationship between ourselves and the providers. No longer are we dealing with business competitors. We're now dealing with partners who are caring for young people and children, and the conversation has already changed to: What can we do collectively? How can we share best practices? How can we continue to improve the quality of what we're providing? So that's both what you saw in our release and also a bit of the back story there.

Your other question around will we have reports; we don't have reports that we're providing, if you're asking about the kind of quality assessments. Every month social workers visit every child in the home. We do monthly reviews and we do a roll up of these reviews but we're reviewing the care of a particular child.

MS. ROGERS: That's right, yes.

MR. COOPER: So there's a real challenge with us compiling something and releasing something because if we release something about a house on Kershaw then all of a sudden we've identified oh, those kids that live down there,

they're part of one of these homes, and I didn't know that.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. COOPER: To your question, we don't have anything that we plan on releasing because there's risk to young people of that, but behind the veil, there's an awful lot of fantastic work taking place. There's been significant improvement in the quality issues inside. As you'd expect to see over three years, there's been evolution, an improvement, and we've got quality care being provided in a vast majority of care arrangements.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

That's really, really good to hear because I know the turmoil three years ago was very difficult for many of the youth. So if you look at doing social workers visiting individual children, looking at their needs – or youth – is there any kind of oversight in terms of the conglomerate rather than just the individual child, but seeing what's happening in group homes, et cetera, the programs, and oversight on that level as well?

MR. COOPER: Yes, there is. The monthly reviews are reviewed not only from the point of view of the home but also the provider, and then our annual review process takes a look at that as well.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great. Thank you.

Can we have a breakdown by region of the number and ages of children and youth who are in kinship arrangements, Level 2, 3 and 4, all of that?

MR. COOPER: We do have some statistics that we post online and we'll be able to provide you what we provide online. Sometimes in our data collection we can't provide really small numbers under five because of risk of identifying, but certainly we'll provide you what we gather.

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

The evaluation of the Level 4 residential care found staff turnover issues which the department asked the providers to fix – how is that?

MR. COOPER: Rick, do you want to take that one?

MR. R. HEALEY: As Bruce mentioned, over the last three years it's been a learning experience and we've done a tremendous amount of monitoring. So outside of the standards that are posted online and the policies that we hold the service providers to, on a monthly basis I might add, as part of that, we actually get the service providers to submit the number of staff that they have in the home and then compare it to the actual staff that were in the home the month before. We actually calculate the turnover rate and we accumulate that every single month.

What we're seeing is that, like most things, when you measure it, you track it and you look at it, behaviour changes. We've seen a substantive reduction in the turnover rates in all of our homes throughout all of our service providers from three years ago until now.

We're really pleased with the direction it's going on. As we move to this program model – just to add to what Bruce said about the co-operation, how the narrative has substantively shifted – what was once, I guess, could be perceived as a competitive model, now it's a collaborative model. We actually are putting together a joint table of our service providers on a quarterly basis where everybody comes together and discusses challenges, some good-news stories, how we can improve.

The narrative and the relationship have substantively shifted because right now we are full on in the best interest of the child; everybody is at the table for the same reason. There's no competition. There's no reason not to share information. We're really optimistic that we've really moved this forward.

MS. ROGERS: That's great news.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Rogers.

Do you have more questions to come back on that?

MS. ROGERS: I do.

CHAIR: Yes, okay.

So we'll just go to Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: I'm getting concerned now because it's 11:53 a.m. Are there any possibilities that we'll be able to come back for another hour? Or should Ms. Rogers and I just use our last 10 minutes each, fire the questions at you and you can provide them to us in writing after?

CHAIR: Coming back, I think, would be very difficult. The night before last we sat an extra 45 minutes in Municipal Affairs because the support at the Table that I saw at that time made me aware that we're really out of time with this and so we stayed on until about 9:45 that night.

MS. PERRY: Can we stay on now? But see, we're running into House time.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: We can give you another half an hour because we have the House.

CHAIR: Yeah.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

So we'll take another half an hour and then if we're still not done, we'll probably use our last 10 minutes each to provide a list of questions that can be answered after.

CHAIR: Well, if we stay an extra half an hour, we'd go about another 20 and then do your 10.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

CHAIR: We'll figure it out.

So we have an agreement that we will be done by 12:30 by all parties, correct?

Okay, Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Thank you all so much.

Allowances and Assistance, where does this money go and can you provide a list of all the programs; can we get a breakdown of them? And why was this over budget in the previous fiscal year?

MR. COOPER: The Allowances and Assistance is for direct payments to clients and to third parties on behalf of clients to provide a range of, basically, in-care services.

So we've got \$1.6 million related to adoption, adoption subsidies. We've got \$4.3 million around protection. We've got \$44.8 million regarding in-care; \$3 million for youth residential services; \$6.7 million for kinship and Youth Services is about \$142,000.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: This is basically – you're getting now into where the money goes to provide care for children.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under Grants and Subsidies, can we get a breakdown there as well of where all the Grants and Subsidies were allocated? And can you provide an explanation as to why you allocated \$500,000 more than you actually spent last year? Why was that amount \$500,000 less than you had budgeted?

MR. COOPER: Your first question: This is money that goes to Key Assets; Waypoints; Shalom; Blue Sky; the John Howard Society, their sites in Corner Brook and St. John's; Daybreak and Choices for Youth. These are all the providers of service to us.

MS. PERRY: Can we get the breakdown for each?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we can certainly provide that.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: I'm sorry, the second question you asked: Is why – can you restate that, I'm sorry?

MS. PERRY: You had budgeted \$500,000 more than you actually spent.

MR. COOPER: Right, so why are we down?

MS. PERRY: There's \$500,000 you didn't spend.

MR. COOPER: Right.

Essentially, what that is relating to is there was a history in the department of paying in advance for the month of April.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: And we didn't do it this year, we just carried it over, so that explains that.

MS. PERRY: And that didn't create any operational logistic issues for the entities?

MR. COOPER: No, they'd still be getting the cheque on the same day.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: Essentially.

MS. PERRY: In terms of your federal and provincial revenue, where is it coming from?

MR. COOPER: \$10 million is related to the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. We've got \$3 million regarding the Children's Special Allowance and \$1.7 million related to youth justice agreements.

MS. PERRY: Okay, and the provincial revenue of \$104,600? It wasn't budgeted for last year but it pops up in the revised.

MR. COOPER: Yeah, so that was revenue we didn't anticipate during the year. Do you remember where that was related to?

MR. GRANDY: Yeah.

Basically, I think that particular one was we lease a couple of locations that we share with one of the regional health authorities, so we pay the rent. They pay us back. We didn't receive the cheque in time last year to record it as a revenue in '15-'16.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. GRANDY: It came in in '16-'17. That's essentially what this is related to.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. GRANDY: We don't budget that. It's not something that we would budget for.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

3.1.01, Lisa, can we go there?

CHAIR: Yes.

No, no, no, sorry, if you're ready to move, we will call that section 2.1.01.

Ms. Rogers, are you ready to move beyond that one?

MS. ROGERS: Just a few quick questions.

What is the status of the agreement with the Innu First Nations to improve services and the agreement with Nunatsiavut and Key Assets to provide more Level 4 placements? How are things going in that area?

MR. COOPER: Things are very positive in both areas. The minister and some of their team were up in Labrador in September; had very productive meetings, made commitments to work together in a new way. There's been significant work taking place. There's a long list of things that are happening.

The most notable thing is that we're testing out some new ways of working with the Innu with the support of federal funding. There was about \$1 million given in last fiscal year. There's money yet to come for this year. It's looking at how we can improve recruitment of foster families, how we can redesign our service delivery model there. There's a cluster of initiatives. There are four different initiatives that we're working on with the Innu. Things are very positive in the relationship with the Innu.

With the Nunatsiavut Government, we continue to have a good working relationship. We are working with them on a number of proposals to, again, fundamentally try to change the way we're delivering services in those communities. Both are works in progress, but the arrow is pointed in the right direction.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, and so in terms of some of our indigenous children who are in care on the Island from Labrador, are there plans to be

reuniting with their cultural communities? What's ...?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Our number one priority is always to put children with their family or kin. We've identified the cultural differences in the Aboriginal community. Under the CYCP Act we are working to accomplish some goals. There have been significant gains, and I can assure you that we are working to bring the children back to their families.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

The other question I have is about services for vulnerable families. I know that there are some programs through – a pilot program through Key Assets. I've heard from families who are having to do anger management programs, but they have waiting lists. What's happening with waiting lists for services for vulnerable families?

MR. COOPER: There are a number of new services that we're either developing or we're doing in partnership. You referenced Key Assets. We also have a program with Waypoints regarding supporting foster families.

MS. ROGERS: Yes.

MR. COOPER: I think the best news of this year for us has been we are implementing, have started now, implementing the Triple P parenting program, it's a Positive Parenting Program.

MS. ROGERS: Yeah.

MR. COOPER: This is something that the eligibility is for those families who are on our protective intervention caseload. This is an Australian program, evidence-based education and support to parents and caregivers. It's a group approach or individualized sessions. It was ranked number one by the UN as evidence-based parenting approaches and based on 30 years of research. There are 25 countries that have adopted this; 11 of 13 Canadian jurisdictions and we started in April.

We did training throughout the year. We got all of our BMS's trained as trainers. We've got 10 communities, 11 offerings that this is started in April and our budget contains a plan for over

300 people going through that program over this year.

So that's a big change and it's something, certainly, the department had planned to roll out over three years and we accelerated it. We've gone right into implementation.

MS. ROGERS: So do the children have to be in protective care in order for the parents to –?

MR. COOPER: No, this is actually for families who are on the Protective Intervention caseload.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. And is there a wait-list for any families or ...?

MR. COOPER: It's just started and right now we can take 12 parents per groups; we have 11 groups. It's just getting ramped up. We're not at capacity yet.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great; great news.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

MS. ROGERS: What else do I have here, folks? Okay, that's all for that heading, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Okay.

And Ms. Perry is okay to move to the next –

MS. PERRY: Yes.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subhead 2.1.01 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the totals carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

CLERK: Subheads 3.1.01 to 3.1.06.

CHAIR: Correct.

Shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.06 carry?

Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm going to try and expedite this as best I can. Can I have for section 3.1.01, 02, 03, 04, 05 and 06 a list and detailed breakdown of every program, the amount of money spent on it last year and every program for this year and the amount of money budgeted for it, under Grants and Subsidies? Not for you to give it to me verbally. We can do that in writing because we'll be here all day and never get through it.

MR. COOPER: Yeah, we would. We have 1,000 in one category alone.

MS. PERRY: Yeah. So if we could just get the written information on that, that would be fine

MR. COOPER: Sure, yeah.

MS. PERRY: Now, in terms of 3.1.01, though, if you could just talk a little bit about some of the programs that are included here. In particular, can we have a list of who received funding and how much for each program? That's in addition to my – like under Grants and Subsidies, what I'm looking for a list in writing of what the programs are, how much was spent last year, how much is budgeted for this year. So outside of that, now I'm getting into questions we can answer. Can you give a list of who received funding and how much for each program?

MR. COOPER: Okay. So I'm presuming this is for follow-up information. Yeah, so I'd be happy to describe to you the broad program categories under this area.

MS. PERRY: Yeah, but can we get a list of who actually received grants as well?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we certainly can do that.

MS. PERRY: Okay, and how much.

MR. COOPER: This activity is focused on a cluster of funding for healthy living sport and rec programs. Essentially we've got four main categories of expenditure that happened under here, four main distributions that occur. We've got about \$2.1 million that's focused on recreation and physical development; we've got \$2.7 million that's focused on sport development, so provincial sports organizations and the community work; we've got \$1.4 million to support the actual provincial sport organizations; and we've got \$1.5 million that deals with healthy living activities.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: That's rounds out the \$7.8 million. So when we get your information we'll show you those are the columns that you'll see.

MS. PERRY: Perfect.

Okay and do you have –?

MR. COOPER: And then under each of those there's a cluster of – these are sort of agreement-based grants provided to organizations. I think the lion's share of these – I'm just trying to think, the balance between application-driven, Michelle, versus standing.

MS. M. HEALEY: Yeah, there would be a mix of our grant programs that are application based.

MS. PERRY: Yeah.

MS. M. HEALEY: Some organizations come with their own contributions and application submissions, but those from community-based organizations will apply every year for funding.

MS. PERRY: Okay. We'd like a list of who all the recipients were and how much each recipient received.

Under Grants and Subsidies, 3.1.01, why was there a savings of \$294,000 or a reduction of \$295,000 from the budget to the revised?

MR. COOPER: Again, it was just there were some grants and subsidies that we had in the plan that did not get spent. So there was just a –

MS. PERRY: Can we have a list of those?

MR. COOPER: A list of – well, we can give you what wasn't spent.

MS. PERRY: Yeah, we'd like to know the ones –

MR. COOPER: It's not as if there was –

MS. PERRY: What wasn't spent?

MR. COOPER: I don't think this is an example of something that we didn't do. It's not as if we had something planned that didn't happen, I don't believe. Some of this might have been application-based issues.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: Yeah, but we'll certainly take a look at that.

MS. PERRY: If you could identify that for us that would be great.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

MS. PERRY: Can you provide an account of what's being added up under Grants and Subsidies to give a budget increase up from \$7,478,000 last year to \$7,803,800 this year.

MR. GRANDY: Yeah, it's a prior-year budget decision. I don't know, Michelle, if you know?

MS. M. HEALEY: (Inaudible) specific. We can provide a specific list, yeah.

MS. PERRY: Okay, if you could provide them that would be great.

The federal money, again, where is it coming from and what's it for, and why didn't we receive the full amount as budgeted last year?

MR. COOPER: So this is the funding for – we've got some revenue for bilateral agreements on sport participation and also for the Smokers Help Line.

In terms of what we didn't get last year I'm not entirely sure what the variance is there, the \$3,400.

MR. GRANDY: Yes, there's a small difference between the actual amount of the bilateral agreement. They had a budgeted amount but it came in at less.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Under 3.1.02, can you give us a list of exactly what programs are included here for Community Sports Facilities, and again, a list of who received the funding and how much for each – and we won't go into it now. Support to Community Agencies, again a list of exactly what programs are included here, who received funding and how much for each.

3.1.04, can you confirm that this means there is going to be a cut of \$20,000 to the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre. We're seeing a difference there, a cut of \$20,000.

MR. COOPER: Yes, there is a reduction. Through the zero-based process we worked with the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre and again, the same kind of process we went through as a department. We worked with them on the zero-based budget and this is the number that was required to carry on operations. There's no change in operations to the Sports Centre as a function of this, but we'll continue to work with them over the year, and years to come.

We certainly don't anticipate any operating impacts. In fact, if anything, you look at the funding that was just provided to them, there's been some significant growth in the Sports Centre. They just opened a brand new piece and even with that growth, they're able to manage with the money that we've allocated this year.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

I'm going to slow down a little bit now. It feels like I'm running a marathon.

Seniors and Aging: Can you give us a list of who received funding and how much for each program?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we have that. We can give that to you. We can put that together in the package, if you wish.

MS. PERRY: Okay, you can put it in the package, too, then.

The same thing for Disability Policy Office, a list of exactly what programs are included here, a list of who received funding and how much, and then how come only \$843,600 of the budgeted \$944,500 was given out last year.

MR. COOPER: Can I just come back to your request for information on the DPO?

MS. PERRY: Sure.

MR. COOPER: There's certain information we can gladly give you when organizations got funded. Some of the programs that are here include accessible vehicle grants and a grant that would be given to an individual to help upgrade their home.

MS. PERRY: Yeah, I've seen some people (inaudible).

MR. COOPER: Okay, so we wouldn't be able to give you that. We'll give you the quantum, but not the name of the person.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

That would include the wheelchair accessibility units and stuff like that, right?

MR. COOPER: Right, yeah.

MS. PERRY: We've had some of those.

MR. COOPER: Right.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

MR. COOPER: Yeah, so we won't be able to give individual names to you.

MS. PERRY: Right, that's fine.

MR. COOPER: But organizations, yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay, not a problem. But you can say this amount was allocated to X number of individuals probably, something like that?

MR. COOPER: Yes, we have that information.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Back to Disability Policy Office; how come almost \$100,000 less than what you had budgeted was given out last year?

MR. COOPER: What we have here is a printing issue. By the time the revised Public Accounts come out, you'll see that in fact we spent the total vote in that area.

MS. PERRY: So that was actually –

MR. COOPER: There were some grants that were being analyzed and assessed through the month of March. They got processed through March and didn't make it to our cut-off.

MS. PERRY: That's a mistake in the Estimates then?

MR. COOPER: Well, it's only a mistake in the revised budget number. Finance is aware of that.

MR. GRANDY: Yeah, when we did up the projection that was the amount that was spent at the time and like Bruce said, they were revising it. I guess it's just a projection in time but by the end of the year, they did spend it all.

MS. PERRY: What should it be? What's the proper number?

MR. GRANDY: I think it's almost exactly what the budget is. It might be a little less than what the budget is, but it's pretty well – right now, they probably spent up to whatever the budget was.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

This year, the grant to the office was decreased to \$894,500. Can you tell us why that happened and what impact this is going to have on persons with disabilities?

MR. COOPER: Yes. There was a \$50,000 reduction in some of our grant programs.

There's a \$25,000 reduction in Inclusion Grants and a \$25,000 reduction in capacity grants.

We don't anticipate any significant impact because these are all application-based programs. There are no cuts coming to anybody. It will mean –

MS. PERRY: Less recipients.

MR. COOPER: – we have less money to spend on application-driven programs.

CHAIR: Ms. Perry, I'm going to interject here now because I know the last 16 minutes is valuable to both. Ms. Rogers will take her final 10 and then you can do your final wrap-up in five or six minutes.

MS. PERRY: Perfect.

CHAIR: Ms. Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

I just want to go back to the Disability Policy Office. What is the status of the new inclusion legislation?

MR. COOPER: That's something that's in the minister's mandate letter. As you know, this is something that the federal government is also looking at.

We're working with the federal government and want to make sure there's complementarity. I would say that the process of – we've started the process of developing the advice for government about what that can look like. There is work ongoing in terms of jurisdictional scanning and connection with the federal government.

Right now, our emphasis is on really getting the individualized funding and some other direct tangible actions for persons with disabilities. Our focus is there, but we will complete that piece of work in the term of the mandate letter.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: I can add to that.

The disability act; with my experience in the disability community, my view is that you have to form the pillars first, things like supportive decision making, individualized support

funding, building accessibility code, those types of things that we'll have aligned with other departments. I'm working with the other departments so we can establish those entities first before we actually put the disability act in place.

I would prefer to put the pillars in place first to ensure that we have the things we need for the overall act.

MS. ROGERS: Rather than having the act which would guide then all the other changes?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Well, jurisdictionally, that's not necessarily the truth.

I've consulted with persons with disabilities in the province and across Canada – I have experience consulting with people across Canada – and it does not prove that putting the act in place first works.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

What is allocated for making sure people with disabilities are part of the process in terms of looking ...?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: There are consultations being completed and we will do additional consultations.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: And just recently, the federal government did some consultations that we were engaged in.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. Are there allocations to support community engagement in reviewing the *Buildings Accessibility Act*?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: I'm working with the minister on the *Buildings Accessibility Act*.

MS. ROGERS: I've heard from people living with disabilities who want to ensure that they have input and that there's funding available so that they can have input as well in that process.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Right.

I can't speak for the minister, but what I can tell you is that his advisory committee had put forth recommendations to him that he accepted. I believe they're about to be implemented, but I cannot speak for anything else for the minister.

MS. ROGERS: Okay.

The operational budget for the Disability Policy Office; what is the operational budget for that office?

MR. COOPER: The operational budget lives over in the Policies and Programs Branch. You wouldn't want me to do the math here to get to the total number because it's all blended in, but we have a director. We have, I think, 3.5 staff. Is that right, Rick?

MR. R. HEALEY: Yes.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

Again, no changes in this year's budget in terms of the staffing allocation to that group.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, but you'd be able to give me the ...?

MR. COOPER: Sure.

MS. ROGERS: Great.

The reduction in the Inclusion Grants is the \$50,000 and that's the application base. Why do we have that?

MR. COOPER: The \$25,000 in Inclusion Grants and \$25,000 in capacity, the total spend is \$400,000. In terms of the why, I guess there was a policy decision made to look for savings throughout government and this was part of last year's decision making.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, although it's a big issue, the whole issue of inclusion. We have a lot of work to do, huh?

I just have one last question here. The whole area of government buildings and accessibility, where are we at with that? It's a huge problem. I know it's kind of an overall policy question.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: As the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities I hear your question, but it falls under Service NL. Again, I am collaborating with the minister, with the community and with community advocates to move it forward, and his advisory committee.

MS. ROGERS: I know this is not your department, but Service NL then would have to have resources allocated to address the accessibility issues in buildings.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes, and it is Transportation and Works also.

MS. ROGERS: Transportation and Works. Do you know what the status is of resources in order to address the inaccessibility in government buildings?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No, I cannot respond to that right now. I would have to consult with two ministers.

MS. ROGERS: That would be great.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Right.

MS. ROGERS: Okay, great.

I want to say thank you very much. I know that some of the work of your department is very, very difficult. I know how dedicated your staff is, either on the management and the executive level, and also front-line workers in all of these areas, whether it be sport and recreation or child protection. In these really tough times right now for our people, it is also your department that brings hope and some strengthening to the people of the province.

I want to thank you for your work and for your vision. Thank you so much for a great Estimates session and being very open to answering our questions. I really appreciate that.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Okay, Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Is there any funding for Jumpstart this year? No?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: No.

MS. PERRY: Any funding for age-friendly transportation?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Yes.

MS. PERRY: Okay and we'll find that in the list that you send us.

MR. COOPER: Yeah.

MS. PERRY: The budget documents note "\$571,200 to support sport development initiatives, including Canada's Sport for Life, coaching, Intra-Provincial Travel Subsidy and National Championship Travel Subsidy." Is that a reducing in funding over last year?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Where are you in the Estimates?

MS. PERRY: It's not in the *Estimates* book; it's in your materials. It just talks about \$571,000 to support sport development initiatives. Last year, when you added sport hosting, National Travel Subsidy, Canada Games, research and evaluation, it had dropped from – it was \$1,155,000 and dropped down to \$805,000. But it could be that different programs are falling under different numbers.

MR. COOPER: I'm going to pass the question to Michelle Healey. Forgive me.

MS. M. HEALEY: There's no change in the amount of investment. There was some change in the programs available. So there was a National Championship Travel Subsidy program or national travel subsidy program. That program was cancelled. Two new programs were introduced: a National Championship Travel Subsidy and an Intra-Provincial Travel Subsidy Program.

MS. PERRY: Did the dollar value change with the introduction of those two new programs?

MS. M. HEALEY: Not of the \$571,000. That dollar value didn't change.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

There was \$1.79 million to support initiatives under the Community Healthy Living Fund. *Budget 2016* reduced the Community Healthy Living Fund from \$2.108 million down to \$1.84 million. What's been cut there to bring it down to \$1.79 million for this year?

MR. COOPER: Michelle, do you want to take that?

MS. M. HEALEY: From the \$2.101 million there was a GRI decision that was related to the change in the number of districts. We have a grant program that is notionally allocated by district. So we moved from 48 to 40 districts which brought us down to that decision, which was implemented in '16-'17. So we were at a \$1.84 million investment in the Community Healthy Living Fund in '16-'17 and '17-'18 we're at an investment level of \$1.79 million. So we've had a slight reduction.

MS. PERRY: Are you decreasing it proportionally per district or will some districts lose more than others?

MS. M. HEALEY: No, this program is application based, so we receive applications from all over the province and the funding is distributed all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

MS. PERRY: Okay, \$1.3 million for Kids Eat Smart Foundation, Food First Newfoundland and Labrador and the School Lunch Association for healthy eating initiatives. Is this a reduction in funding or the same level as previous years?

MR. COOPER: (Inaudible) funding has remained the same for those organizations.

MS. PERRY: Okay, and again same question: \$1 million for healthy active living initiatives such as Active Schools, Healthy School Planner and ParticipACTION, is that amount the same as it was last year or has it been reduced?

MR. COOPER: It's the same.

MS. PERRY: It's the same, okay.

I just have two more questions pertaining to Seniors and I'm done.

The Liberal government introduced the Newfoundland and Labrador Income Supplement and Seniors' Benefit and continued it in 2017, but when you introduced this in 2016 you eliminated the Home Heating Rebate and HST credit. Can you provide for us what you were spending on the Home Heating Rebate and HST credit versus this program?

MR. COOPER: This program is operated by the Department of Finance. We've worked with Finance on some policy elements, but this would be a question better positioned for them.

MS. PERRY: For Finance, okay.

In terms of the Seniors' Advocate and – okay, I'm going to be nice first and be like Gerry and thank all of you so very, very much for the extra time this morning as well, and hats off to all of you for the very, very important special work you do.

But I do have one last question pertaining to the Seniors' Advocate and that is: What assurances can we have that this position will be filled by a non-partisan position and that Bill 1 will actually be honoured and the person to be hired will be the best person for the job and not someone with political affiliation?

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: The Independent Appointments Commission will recruit the individual. We voted on the Independent Appointments Commission here in the House. That is the process that will be followed.

MS. PERRY: Okay.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay, shall I – sorry, I'm too excited here.

Shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.06 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 through 3.1.06 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of Children, Seniors and Social Development and 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 Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation carried without amendment.

CHAIR: I'd like to thank everyone as well for their co-operation, and I'm a happy girl because that's the end of Estimates for 2017.

Everybody have a wonderful rest of the day.

Thank you.

MS. GAMBIN-WALSH: Thank you.

The Committee adjourned.