



**PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Second Session
Fiftieth General Assembly

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

April 9, 2025 - Issue 22

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Assembly
Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Chair: Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA

Vice-Chair: Chris Tibbs, MHA

Members: Perry Trimper, MHA
Lucy Stoyles, MHA
Jamie Korab, MHA
James Dinn, MHA
Paul Dinn, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Evan Beazley (A)

Appearing:

Department of Justice and Public Safety

Hon. Bernard Davis, MHA, Minister
Karen Stone, KC, Deputy Minister
Debbie Dunphy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Services
Mike Noseworthy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Courts and Corporate Services
Lorelei Roberts, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety and Correctional Services
Denise Woodrow, Assistant Deputy Minister, Legal Services
Lisa Stead, KC, Director, Public Prosecutions
Joanne Turner, Director, Provincial Court Services
Patti Hurley, Departmental Controller
Danielle Gillam, Manager of Budgeting
Debbie Marnell, Director of Communications
Pat Roche, Chief of Police, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
Andrew Green, Executive Director, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
Shelley Organ, Chief Executive Officer, Supreme Court

Also Present

Hon. Elvis Loveless, MHA, Minister of Digital Government and Service NL
Hon. Pam Parsons, MHA, Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality
John Hogan, MHA
Helen Conway Ottenheimer, MHA
Jim McKenna, MHA
Jack Norman, Government Members' Caucus
Colby Greeley, Official Opposition Caucus
Megan Winter, Official Opposition Caucus
Scott Fleming, Third Party Caucus

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Elvis Loveless, MHA for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, substitutes for Perry Trimper, MHA for Lake Melville.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Pam Parsons, MHA for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, substitutes for Jamie Korab, MHA for Waterford Valley.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Helen Conway Ottenheimer, MHA for Harbour Main, substitutes for Paul Dinn, MHA for Topsail - Paradise.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, John Hogan, MHA for Windsor Lake, substitutes for Lucy Stoyles, MHA for Mount Pearl North.

The Committee met at 5:33 p.m. in the House of Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Gambin-Walsh): We have quorum so I'm going to call the meeting to order.

I'm going to announce the substitutes here: Substituting for Lake Melville, MHA Trimper, we have Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, Minister Loveless; substituting for Mount Pearl North, MHA Lucy Stoyles, when he arrives, is MHA Hogan for Windsor Lake; for Topsail - Paradise, MHA Dinn, we have Harbour Main, MHA Conway Ottenheimer; and for Waterford Valley, for MHA Korab, we have Harbour Grace - Port de Grave, Minister Pam Parsons.

Typically about halfway through we'll take a 10-minute break. I just want to remind everyone to please wave if your light doesn't come on; wait for your light to come on and say your name and position each time you speak because they need that for transcription purposes. The water coolers are located down here in the back and up here, and there are glasses down there and I ask that you not adjust the chairs, please.

I'll now ask the Committee Members, substitutes and caucus employees on my

right to introduce themselves, starting with MHA Conway Ottenheimer.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I'm MHA Helen Conway Ottenheimer for Harbour Main.

M. WINTER: Hi, I'm Megan Winter, Researcher and Policy Analyst with the Office of the Official Opposition.

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

C. GREELEY: Colby Greeley, Office of the Official Opposition, Researcher.

J. DINN: Jim Dinn, MHA for St. John's Centre.

S. FLEMING: Scott Fleming, Researcher, Third Party caucus.

E. LOVELESS: Elvis Loveless, MHA, Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

P. PARSONS: Pam Parsons, MHA for Harbour Grace - Port de Grave District.

J. MCKENNA: Jim McKenna, MHA, Fogo Island - Cape Freels.

J. NORMAN: Jack Norman, Political Assistant, Government Members' Office.

J. HOGAN: John Hogan, MHA, Windsor Lake.

CHAIR: Okay.

I now ask the departmental officials to introduce themselves. We'll start with the minister with introductions.

B. DAVIS: Perfect, Madam Chair.

I can introduce everybody when I'm speaking if you'd like, if that's okay, or do you want them to do it on the record for themselves.

CHAIR: We need to do it individually, please.

B. DAVIS: Minister Bernie Davis, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and MHA for Virginia Waters - Pleasantville.

K. STONE: Karen Stone, Deputy Minister.

D. DUNPHY: Debbie Dunphy, Assistant Deputy Minister of Emergency Services.

D. WOODROW: Denise Woodrow, Assistant Deputy Minister for Legal Services.

L. STEAD: Lisa Stead, ADM, Criminal Law.

P. ROCHE: Chief Patrick Roche, Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

L. ROBERTS: Lorelei Roberts, Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for Public Safety and Correctional Services.

P. HURLEY: Patti Hurley, Departmental Controller.

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

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

M. NOSEWORTHY: Michael Noseworthy, Assistant Deputy Minister, Courts and Corporate Services.

D. GILLAM: Danielle Gillam, Manager of Budgeting.

D. MARNELL: Debbie Marnell, Director of Communications.

A. GREEN: Andrew Green, Executive Director of Support Services for the RNC.

CHAIR: I think that's everyone, yes?

Okay. I just want to bring the Committee's attention to the minutes of April 26, 2024. I'll ask for a mover for these minutes.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So moved.

CHAIR: MHA Conway Ottenheimer.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: We'll now proceed with the Estimates review process. Once I ask the Clerk to call the first subheading group for the head of expenditures, I'll proceed then to recognize the minister, who will get 15 minutes. Then, I will proceed to introduce the first responding questioner from the Committee. You will get 15 minutes for questions in the first round. After the first round, questions will proceed in rounds of 10 minutes for each, alternating between Members of Committee.

I will now ask the Clerk to call the first subhead.

CLERK (Beazley): For the Department of Justice and Public Safety, 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive, Executive and Support Services.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive, Executive and Support Services, carry?

Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Chair.

Good evening everyone. Welcome to the Estimates for *Budget 2025* for the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

I've already nixed some of my speech, which is great. I was going to introduce the people behind me which are awesome individuals that we're going to get the opportunity to hear a bit from and, first of all, I'd like to take a moment to say a big thank you to the members of the team here behind me, but not just those that are here this evening, all those that work along side of those individuals in the Department of

Justice and Public Safety for their hard work and dedication that they do each and every day for the people that we represent.

It's a very large department with a lot of moving parts, more than I think people realize. I didn't realize it. I'm here now but I didn't realize it until I got here how big and operational it was. It's a department that operates, obviously, 24-7. When one incident occurs, it may cause numerous divisions within the department to use various resources and supports at any given time. So I'd like to say thank you to them for the work they do on a daily basis. It's my pleasure to work with such a group of dedicated professionals.

First and foremost, I'm pleased to say *Budget 2025* includes over \$50 million in new initiatives for the Department of Justice and Public Safety. I would like to take a couple of minutes to highlight some of those important Justice and Public Safety initiatives here this evening.

Under policing and corrections, Newfoundland and Labrador is privileged to have not one but two dedicated police forces – the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Newfoundland and Labrador detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As Minister of Justice and Public Safety, I've had the pleasure and privilege of seeing the work that these two incredible forces do first-hand. It's no small task, I assure you.

The RNC and the RCMP are making a positive difference in our communities to serve our citizens and helping to provide them safety and security. I cannot thank the officers from both the RNC and the RCMP enough for the great work they do in our communities. We continue to invest in the RNC and the RCMP to support safety and security for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. These investments are a top priority for our government, as well as me as minister responsible for this area.

Budget 2025 includes nearly \$20 million over the next two years to boost our policing initiatives. This is a testament to the dedication to foster safer environments and this is in addition to the \$40 million that we've already added to the budget over the last five years. *Budget 2025* includes a new 10-member joint task force unit comprised of RNC and RCMP officers targeting weapons, drugs, contraband enforcement, as well as critical incident response.

We don't have to look very far to how many drug busts and activities that we've been able to – I say a collective we or the royal we, as they say – uncover through these joint task forces. That's why we see investment in another one is only going to bolster that and make it more successful than the previous ones that we've already had.

Five new RCMP officers in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, as recommended in the public safety review that was completed by the Policing Transformation Working Group; an RNC leadership position for the Intimate Partner Violence Unit, as well as another administrative support – thanks to one of my colleagues for the investment for that, as well; he happens to be here tonight – and support for ongoing police training, equipment, fleet and operational requirements.

Budget 2025 also includes 10 new RNC officers for the Northeast Avalon. I would also like to highlight the fact that starting in 2026-2027 there are going to be an additional 19 police officers and the good thing about the lead-in for that, we can plan of that and we can get them trained to fill in those areas that they would need to be placed in, whether that be an RNC detachment or an RCMP detachment. These officers will be allocated based on the resource requirements for the communities, led by the Policing Transformation Working Group.

Our support extends further than personnel. It encompasses ongoing police training, provision of essential equipment, fleet enhancement, as well as operational requirements. These investments assist the officers to be better prepared and well resourced as they're ready to face the challenging and changing modern-day-type policing that's required.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Policing Transformation Working Group. They've been established since November 2023 and are helpful in guiding the future of policing services for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The working group has been evaluating the province's current policing model, researching best practices from other jurisdictions and engaging with key stakeholders such as municipalities and community organizations about policing services and community safety. Through these extensive engagements, key stakeholders, over 80 groups so far, have been consulted to date. Groups continue to inform the best way forward to ensure effective public safety in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We're also pleased with the incredible response of the group's public survey that we just finished in December 2024. There has been more than 4,400 engagements with the survey. Feedback is being considered as we speak, right now, and will inform the future work.

We remain committed to replacing Her Majesty's Penitentiary. We continue to invest in temporary infrastructure improvements and increase staffing levels to ensure that the staff and inmates experience improved conditions and outcomes while we're waiting for the new facility to be completed. I would like to thank the staff of the province's correction facilities and the community service providers that work with them. Their jobs are not easy

ones but the work is very important and appreciated.

I would also like to note that in February of this year, we passed a new *Correctional Services Act* and regulations were proclaimed. These long-awaited legislative changes and regulations represent a significant step forward in a modern correction system that prioritizes safe, secure and improved conditions for inmates and staff.

With our court system, our province's court system is always looking for future ways for us to improve levels and quality of the services provided to the public and those that work within the system. Thank you to the judges, Crown attorneys, corrections officers, sheriff's officers, court officers, administrative staff, victim services, probationary services, as well as all those who contribute in any important role of the daily operations of the justice system.

This year, through *Budget 2025*, \$3.4 million is being allocated as part of a \$24 million, multi-year investment for new tools and technologies to enhance access to justice and strengthen public trust in the justice system. To support the continuum of justice in Newfoundland and Labrador, this multi-year investment supports 25 new corrections officers, 18 Crown attorneys, 14 new deputy sheriffs and a manager of court security in Labrador. This funding is also supporting the digital transformation for the entire justice system, upgrading systems, hardware, software and processes to improve access to justice and streamlining service delivery.

Our path towards reconciliation is through listening, understanding and mutual respect. The provincial government acknowledges the wrongs of the past and focuses our attention on the matters that are important to Indigenous people. Through the independent inquiry into the treatment, experiences and outcomes for Innu in the child protection system, we will acquire a

better understanding of the treatment experiences and care that Innu children have received in the current system and, more importantly, how to improve in the future.

The submission date for the final report for this inquiry has been extended to October 31, 2026. The extension demonstrates our willingness to work with the independent inquiry to be responsive to the inquiry panels identified needs for them to conduct their work properly. In *Budget 2025*, we're providing an additional \$5 million to continue this work.

Emergency Services: We have approximately 6,000 volunteer firefighters who give of their time and talent to protect our families, homes, businesses throughout our province. This crucial role allows the rest of us to feel safe and protected at home. The reality is when people are running away from the fire, these individuals are running toward it. It's more than just fires; it's motor vehicle accidents, medical calls and other emergencies.

We're all grateful for the many sacrifices that the firefighters, as well as their families, make to keep Newfoundlanders and Labradorians safe. I thank them for their dedication, day in and day out. In saying that, we continue to prioritize funding for fire protective vehicles and equipment with a commitment of \$3.7 million, which is doubled in the recent years.

I would also like to highlight the provincial government invested over \$4.2 million to replace over 400 self-contained breathing apparatus – or SCBAs – units in 82 volunteer fire departments throughout the province. This is in addition to the annual funding that is provided to the Emergency Services branch.

I'm getting close, almost done. With the changing climate, they're seeing more changing weather patterns, natural disasters and emergencies. They are

happening anywhere and everywhere and we have a first-hand knowledge of that right here at home.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the importance of the tremendous evacuation efforts in the Churchill Falls and Labrador City wildfires last year. Two of the largest evacuations in the province's history were experienced almost back to back. I commend all those individuals who rose to the challenge to support others in their time of need and I thank everyone for their tireless work effort to protect and support our communities.

As part of the emergency response to the Labrador wildfires, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provided more than \$3.5 million in emergency financial assistance to individual households, businesses and other entities. Including \$3 million to over 3,000 households for primary residents who were evacuated in order, about \$180,000 to more than 360 employed and self-employed residents of Labrador City and Wabush whose employment was impacted by the wildfires, and \$150,000 to 72 eligible businesses in Labrador City and Wabush that were impacted by the fires.

I'm pleased to say that *Budget 2025* includes \$3.5 million for disaster assistance. The province's disaster financial assistance program will residential homeowners and tenants, small business, not-for-profit organizations, co-operatives, local authorities and public sector with uninsurable losses and damage caused by eligible disasters. And I want to stress that eligible disasters, because I don't want to give people a false impression that if – if it's an insurable peril you should be insured for it, and I encourage people to look with their provider to that. It's very important.

Those are just a few highlights from *Budget 2025* from the Department of Justice and Public Safety. We'll have some more exciting announcements to follow in the coming weeks and months. I look forward to

taking the questions from each and every one. I think Members of our Opposition would like to start with Fire and Emergency Services area. I think that's 5.1.02. I'm not the Chair, but I will let the Chair go in that direction.

CHAIR: Yes, I was just going to say my understanding is you have a mutual agreement to start with Fire and Emergency Services. So, prior to starting with the questions, I'm going to ask the Clerk to read the fifth subhead.

CLERK: For the Department of Justice and Public Safety, 5.1.01 to 5.1.05 inclusive, Fire and Emergency Services.

CHAIR: Shall 5.1.01 to 5.1.05 inclusive, Fire and Emergency Services, carry?

The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll jump right into it, Minister.

Minister, last year's budget included funding for the outside municipality boundary program. How much of this has been claimed?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

I don't have that number right in front of me. I think I can get Debbie – oh, \$279,000.

C. TIBBS: Perfect, thank you very much.

Minister, what is the criteria which is used to assess the funding provided through that program?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'll turn that over to Debbie on that one.

CHAIR: Assistant Deputy Minister Dunphy.

D. DUNPHY: Any fire departments that register with the Fire Services Division and through the 911 office as well for response to motor vehicle accidents outside the municipal boundary are eligible to submit a claim to the Fire Services Division for reimbursement. But it is important to note that only one department can claim for an event.

C. TIBBS: Understandable. Thank you.

Minister, if I could just come back to the SCBAs for one second. How many more SCBA units are due to expire across the province, or have we caught them all?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: That's a very good question. I don't think there's any way for us to know that directly. When we reached out and gave a call to all the volunteer fire departments across the province to let them know that these SCBAs are expiring, this particular type, if you had them, you could avail of the program that we have, some 82 communities, I think it was, over 400 SCBAs were replaced during that program at a cost of over \$4.2 million.

I don't know how many more are out there that could be expiring. They keep track of that on a regular basis. This was a one – I don't like to say a one-time deal, but we knew that this was a particular change that was happening with respect to this particular SCBA, and we knew that there was a significant number of them. Most of the SCBAs that would be expiring on a regular basis will be smaller numbers that can be planned for based on a request that could come in normally through the regular program. But this was a bigger deal from that perspective.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, we just talked about the municipal boundary, the compensation there. If two departments do show up to the same MVA, how do you decide which department would get that funding, that compensation?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: That's a very good question. We would hope that only one would be showing up to that particular site. But I will turn it over to our ADM responsible for that to give

—

D. DUNPHY: Fire departments have identified their boundaries with the 911 office, as well as the fire commissioner's office. So that is who we would expect to respond. My guess if there is a mutual aid agreement, and for some reason a fellow department responded in their absence, I think that would be acceptable, but again it would be the expectation that the fire department that has that boundary is the one who would respond and would be eligible for the assistance.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'd just like to add that from my visits with the volunteer firefighters across the province, that I have had the opportunity — because I haven't seen them all of course. It's been very well received, and they like the aspect that we've done that.

We made that change because we knew that for fire departments and municipalities it was costing them money to go out and do things that are outside their boundary, and we felt the need to try to help them with that. As you can see, they had 270 claims or so of that nature, which is impressive in and of itself, but we thank them for the work of taking care of us when they go out and do that work.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, I just want to take a moment and just go to the funding that was allotted for this year. I know we've had some discussion about it before. Could you take a minute or so and just walk me through the process of how the final funding came to be? What meetings would have taken place? Who would have been at these meetings, when, where? And finally, when did you get to the final assumption that this is going to be our funding after speaking with the fire commissioner and your wonderful staff?

B. DAVIS: Very good question. Do we want to wait until 5.1.04 because that's coming up —?

C. TIBBS: We can.

B. DAVIS: It's not based in this. This is just the operation — I can't say just — it's the operation of the fire commissioner's office. I can see how you'd want to try and do it there, but there is actually a tab for that in 5.1.04, which would be FES Vehicles and Equipment.

C. TIBBS: Okay.

B. DAVIS: So if you want to wait until there, I can try to address it now, if you like, but I'm trying to keep us on —

C. TIBBS: No, we can pass. I can move on to 5.1.02 now, Emergency.

B. DAVIS: Okay.

C. TIBBS: That's fine.

Minister, what is the status of the adoption of the province-wide emergency services radio system, which was supposed to be completed in June 2024?

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

The province-wide radio system is doing very well right now. We've got significant uptake. Obviously, we haven't got

everybody in the entire province on that, but we've got a significant amount of services on it: obviously the RCMP, Canadian Coast Guard, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Department of National Defence.

We can give you a full list of who's on the list, as well as some interesting ones, like the City of St. John's, but the full province is covered. We just haven't got everybody on the system yet because they're waiting to get the equipment to do it and, obviously, the time to go through, because there is a training component that goes along with it – we have a staff that are doing very well with it. We've got over nine staff that work on this on a regular basis and they're doing some great work on expanding that and the more we put on this, the better linkages and synergies we get throughout the province.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister. Fantastic.

In regard to Transportation and Communications, can you please outline why last year Transportation and Communications went over budget, spending \$604,500? How was this year's budget of \$559,800 determined, for the discrepancy?

B. DAVIS: The increase for the budget would be for increased helicopter searches. That would be part of that, the contract – the rescue costs in the province would be Transportation and Communications. In addition to that, the provincial Emergency Air Services Program, that's the lion's share of where that would have come from. Obviously, based on the budget going to \$559,000, that's a reflection on the new equipment that's been put in place for that.

C. TIBBS: Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

In regard to federal revenue, what is the \$10.8 million there to support?

B. DAVIS: That is the collections from the radio system user fees from federal agencies.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

I move onto 5.1.03, Disaster Assistance. In regard to Professional Services, why did Professional Services go over budget last year, spending \$482,900?

B. DAVIS: Funding was provided for adjuster and auditor fees. That's part of that. The variance of why it went over by \$300,000 was to do with transfer of property for residents with Hurricane Fiona impact zone and the activation of NL-DFAP in January 5 storm surge event. That's why we're budgeting that.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

In regard to Purchased Services, why did Purchased Services go over budget last year, spending \$131,400?

B. DAVIS: Related to the Labrador West fire response.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

In Allowances and Assistance, can you outline where the \$24 million went last year and what the breakdown is for this year's \$1.7 million?

B. DAVIS: The payments to residents and businesses for damages incurred during disasters which would be eligible under the assistance from the federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements and that's the same for the variances that you would see in that whole section.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Underneath Grants and Subsidies, can you outline where the \$8.4 million went last year and what the breakdown is for this year's \$1.6 million?

B. DAVIS: The \$8.4 million was provided payments to municipalities for damages incurred during the disasters in which they were eligible for that assistance of the

federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

I'll move on to 5.1.04, Fire Protection Vehicles and Equipment: How many requests for funding were received last year and how much for trucks and how much for equipment, the breakdown?

B. DAVIS: Excellent question and I'm glad you asked.

Last year we had applications for vehicles, about \$19 million, that were requested. That was 45 different vehicle requests from communities. There was also 155 equipment requests from some same communities or some different communities, depending on what they required, at about another \$9.1 million.

If you take that into consideration for a \$3.7-million program, it was stretched pretty thin on those, but we did get the opportunity to approve five new pumper trucks, six used pumper trucks and vehicles – that was what was requested in many cases – a new tanker and a new pickup truck over that year, but like I said to you many times before, it's all about when you take the snapshot in time. Some of the, as an example, trucks would have been – equipment is a little different, like bunker gear and things like that. That's faster receiving but we could order a truck today and it may not be delivered for, leading out of COVID it may be three years, but now it's getting down to the two-year mark.

Hopefully it'll get down to even a quicker period where we request it for whether it's Bonavista or wherever from that prospective – like, I had the opportunity to go to Avondale a couple of weeks ago and they received their truck. That was a 2022 request for a truck.

You asked a question of how much trucks cost. It ranges depending on what bells and

whistles they want to put on the truck. We're seeing recently, an approved truck would be, say we approve it at what the request is for the quote, I'd say \$670,000 or \$620,000. It's coming in now, because of the fear with tariffs and others and inflationary pressures, somewhere around \$780,000 or \$800,000.

There's a significant increase, and we've seen another increase in that a couple of years ago. Members of this House would have seen that after COVID, that also spiked but, I mean, we're working toward that and it's working with the communities and working with our fire commissioner's office to try to find what is the best use. When someone gets a new vehicle, many times that vehicle that they had may not be good enough for the community that they are in because of the use and the type of ability that they need it for, but it may be great for another community.

We've seen repurposing of those vehicles. We try to keep those vehicles in similar communities in that region. I hope that answers your question.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, there are some significant concerns regarding the allocation of fire equipment funding objectivity, particularly in the years 2022 to 2024. In rendering the decisions to allocate funding, is the Minister presented with a ranked list based on need – an actual hard-copy paper ranked list?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: No, there is no list that's ranked like that.

As you see, the requests are far reaching. Let's use this past year as an example, that \$19 million would come in and let's be very clear, a lot of the requests that people are asking for – I'm not here to say that the request that X community had versus another community is not warranted. I'm sure they all are. We have a limited amount

of resources so you look at many of the things that I highlighted before: the mutual aid agreements, what kind of work they do, what's in the region next to them to make sure that they can cover off those things that happen on a regular basis.

So I think that's where we are but, to answer your question, there's no ranked list.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

If we could just take a couple minutes now maybe and you could outline how this allocation gets out. Like, what happens beforehand? Who is involved? How long before this process do these start? Are there minutes for these meetings that you have with the fire commissioner and their office? Can you break down how your department have come to the final decision for the allocation for this year, please?

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

The applications would be received – they've started even now. Communities, volunteer fire departments and municipalities are working on those applications for this fiscal year now and, in some cases, have already submitted some.

They would be submitted, they would be vetted by them, looking at getting quotes for what they are looking for, whether it be bunker gear or equipment like a fire truck or a tanker or a rural response unit, all those things. They would look at that. They would submit that. They would tell us what their current allotment of equipment is. We would also know that because the fire commissioner keeps a very good handle on what each community has in their, I guess, equipment bank.

Those applications would come in to the fire commissioner's office. I'm looking to Debbie just in case. If I misstep on one of these, I want her to jump in and just clarify. In this case, his staff would look at those and make sure – if they're asking for something that

doesn't seem to fit with what they would need, they would go back and work with that community and say: Okay, well, you're a community of 200 people and there's a fire department right next door to you just got a new pumper truck. Do you need a new pumper as well at \$680,000? They'll ask, do you need a used one or do you need a pickup truck with a SpaceKap to carry a pump?

In some cases they don't have fire hydrants and you're asking for a pumper truck to come in when you'd have to take water out of a pond. That's not an ideal situation. So they would work with individuals to find those solutions and get it down to what the absolute need would be for the community. Then that list would come in to our staff. They would look at that and then we would sit down and have a conversation about – this could be over two or three meetings just getting together to say, where are we with how much is the request saying. Then they'll look at this and we'll say, okay, where are the problems that we see with each individual application or where is the need that we can help in this region.

We look at it from a regional basis. If there are mutual aid agreements, if there are opportunities for us to find solutions within a fire department that's neighbouring or sometimes they'll ask for things, not that they don't actually need, but if you're not on the highway and taking out people that would be in accidents, well, you probably don't need the jaws of life, as an example.

That's the steps we go through from that. I don't know, Debbie, if I've missed any that you wanted to add in?

CHAIR: ADM Dunphy.

D. DUNPHY: The only thing I would say, Minister, and I think you captured it, is there are many conversations. The fire commissioner will meet with myself and the minister after him and his staff have met and, through those discussions, there are

often questions that we ask our fire protection officers to go back to the community and have further discussion.

We'll look at what's been recently awarded. Again, as the minister said, the regional communities close by any mutual aid agreements. All those things taken into consideration, decisions are made with the best information that we have.

CHAIR: The Member's time is expired.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

I have just a few questions. With regard to the fire in Deer Lake at the Deer Lake hotel, I'm just wondering what lessons have been learned from that whole experience?

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

That's an active investigation. I don't want to speak about that. I know that our fire commissioner is engaged in that. I think the RCMP are involved as well. That's as much as I'm willing to say about the – obviously, we work with communities and if communities, or even businesses, reach out to the fire commission office, they provide any type of advice or support that they can to help those.

I think it would be wrong of me to comment on an active investigation but it's a very good question and obviously whatever comes out of the investigation, we'll look at, at the time, and make appropriate decisions based on what would come out of that investigation.

J. DINN: All right, thank you.

Chair, Disaster Assistance, 5.1.03, I'm just wondering what, if any, outstanding disaster claims are included in this chunk of funding.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair, very good question.

It's a moving target, let me say, because it depends on where we're to in the claims process. There's a significant amount of money that would be paid out to a disaster that would be Fiona, at the time. There would be applications that would be coming in for the February – or January, was it? The January event. So there would be claims coming in for that, that would be assessed and then we would look at that.

I think maybe I can ask ADM Dunphy if there's any detail that she can give you that's better than that. I know it's a moving target all the time.

J. DINN: Before, Chair, just to clarify if I may –

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: In asking that question then, recognizing it's a moving target, you must have an estimate as to worst-case scenarios versus okay where it is, but that's what I'm after as well.

Thank you.

B. DAVIS: I'll take a stab at the first one that you said, Mr. Dinn.

I think any time we look at a disaster, we look at what people are calling in to our office and then we'll make an assessment to say, okay, has it reached a particular threshold, which I think is \$2 million. If we think it's going to reach that, that's when we'll put a call out to say it meets the threshold for the provincial program to come in.

I guess we don't really know what we're going to get until we see the applications come in but based on the calls that would come into our office, we look at it and say, okay, this looks like it's going to go pass the \$2-million threshold, that would be the initial provincial boundary for what we would come into place for, and then when the

applications come in, if that goes further than that, then we'll make the assumptions on how we're going to deal with that from there.

It is a target that we don't necessarily know exactly what we're going to see until all the applications are filed. You don't need to look any further than Fiona with Port aux Basques and the Southwest Coast of the province. I mean, that was a moving target for a couple of years now. I'm sure Debbie has the scars to prove it.

It is a challenge to determine exactly how much is going to be there until you actually see all the applications and actually get them paid out. I'll turn it over to Debbie if she wants to add in to any of that.

CHAIR: ADM Dunphy.

D. DUNPHY: What we have included here, Mr. Dinn, is some funding for the January 5 event based on the preliminary observations and applications that we received, but that process of the adjuster going out and doing the assessment and determining the amounts is ongoing now. There is also some funding here for some municipal infrastructure work still relating to Fiona and Hurricane Larry. The majority of the Hurricane Fiona assistance to individuals has concluded; we've got about two left.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Then knowing that these are extreme weather events probably – well not probably – related to climate change, and we're probably going to have more of those, has there been an assessment of potential damages down the road?

I guess if actuaries can determine what premiums you need to pay, I'm just wondering if you're looking at projections, okay, what are potential costs, and what do we need to be prepared for, especially in these cases, because I'm assuming you

know it's not going to be a dollar, but it could be, depending on each community, an assessment of what could be the potential damage.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

In my previous role as minister of Environment and Climate Change, we would be looking at this through water resources, and looking at that through storm surge, and things that they would be looking at from Climate Change Canada as well as our own department here in the province.

So, from our standpoint, we're budgeting what we think is a possible or plausible number for that. I can't stand here today and say I'm going to be 100 per cent accurate with that number, because I know we'll be wrong. Maybe we won't have any disasters, and hopefully, God, we don't.

But in any given year, you could have multiple disasters, like we had with wildfires, like we had with Fiona, like we had with our January storm, that storm surge that came in through parts of the province. So we don't know exactly how far-reaching those will be. We know they're going to be happening; we know they are going to probably happen more often and be more severe. So that's what we have a contingency fund for as a government, to help in those cases, which is what we used and that's why the federal government has a disaster relief fund as well, to help with us.

We budget what we think we can get through, knowing full well that if it meets a certain threshold there is a federal government backstop that will help, as well as the provincial government will help on the smaller type events that would not reach the federal requirements.

I'll look to the ADM if she wants to add anything, but I think I was partially okay on that answer.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: I guess where I'm going with this, Chair, is, look, if I didn't have insurance on my house, I'd have to do a rough estimate as to what it's going to cost to replace and rebuild there. So I'd have to have some idea, or even in purchasing the insurance, what I am going to need to cover that. That's what I'm really asking there. What is the future assessment of potential monetary liabilities to the province in offering that? I understand you had the federal backstop but knowing that these are going to become more recent, that's where I think maybe we should have a clear potential cost of these events.

Just to go on then with 5.1.03, and related to the two big wildfires in Labrador last June and July, how much money went to help for residents evacuating the fires? I'm looking at, I guess, the total cost overall of destruction. I know there's money there that you can see the increases. I'm assuming they're related to it, Professional Services and Allowances and Assistance. I'm sure that's all tied to it. But I guess what was the overall assessment of the damage to the resource, the disruption to business, to life, to sending people out, any estimate as to what the total cost of those events were?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you. A very good question.

I can say from a grants and subsidies standpoint, there is about \$3.6 million. That's a small number because I know it was more than that because after the opportunity with Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, who would have a cost associated with that as well because they would have the firefighters in the woods doing the work, you'll also pick up some of that with the RNC as well in the detachment that would be up there providing some

support. You would also pick that up in a couple of other areas.

So I could work to try to get you a number for that. I don't have it readily available, but I do know based on the grants and subsidies that we had for assistance to roughly 3,300 households that came from JPS and IPGS as well, it was about \$3.65 million.

J. DINN: I guess overall, too, you're probably looking at loss of wages, salaries.

B. DAVIS: Yes.

J. DINN: So I'm assuming that it's a lot more than \$3.5 million.

B. DAVIS: That would be a very good assumption.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

That's it.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Grand Falls-Windsor - Buchans.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just have a couple of questions left, and one pertaining to 5.1.05, the NL 911. What is the current staffing at the 911 division and how many staff and vacancies are there?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: The total staff complement of seven, we have three contractual, one policy analyst, one administrative officer and a project manager. I think we have one vacancy now. That's the one that's vacant that we're working on trying to fill.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

With the changes to the road ambulance system, more volunteer fire departments may be answering calls now and stuff. When they get low on supplies or if they're using supplies for any of these calls, are

they compensated in some way by the government?

I mean, these are small departments and they run very small budgets anyway. If they're using gloves or any other equipment, the Department of Health – is there any compensation to these departments if they make a call when it comes to the to health itself?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you. That's a very good question.

It's not through our department, although, when they apply for – I wouldn't say supplies – equipment, like bunker gear and extraction equipment, those things would be permissible under our program.

The consumables like that wouldn't be but that's a question that would probably be better directed to Health and Community Services when you have the Estimates with them. It's a very good question.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

If I can just come back to the allocation of funds again, we realize now it's a very comprehensive system that you and your department do with the fire commissioner's office about how you come up with this final decision. Is there a documentation of these meetings or minutes for these meetings of what's being said, what's being thrown out there or what's being brainstormed? Is there any sort of documentation whatsoever for these meetings that are being had before the run-up to this is the final allotment?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: There are no minutes or documentation other than the documents that would have come in with the requests from the communities.

There's a, for lack of a better term, booklet that would have the equipment that's been requested. Like I said, I think it was 45 trucks that were requested at \$19 million, that would appear in a format that would say, okay, here's the number of communities, here's what they're requesting, here's what they currently have in their system and here's, you know, the work they do. Then, subsequent to that, there would be another – in the same document I think –

OFFICIAL: Separate.

B. DAVIS: – a separate one but it's similar – they would have the departments ask for particular gear. What gear they would need.

Just so we're clear, priority for equipment is things that, like if you're an offensive fire department – bunker gear is an important piece for anything. So if people are asking for bunker gear, we're working very hard to try to get them the bunker gear they require.

C. TIBBS: Sure.

B. DAVIS: SCBAs would be very important. You can't fight a fire if you can't breathe so it's very important that we get those. We prioritize things that people are asking for.

Sometimes departments are asking for things that are a wish list, like we all would want, but that's not doable with the amount of funding that we have. I'm always looking for and advocating for more resources to try to help more. I quite honestly say this to every fire department here, I'd love to be able to say yes to everybody because they do fantastic work and there's no reason to believe if they didn't get it this year, they're not going to get it next year.

A prime example of that would be in Trinity where there was a truck that went off the road a year before. It happened so we have to try to replace that. That's what we did this year. Sometimes emergency things happen like you'll be in a fire department and you go

to get some work done on your truck and you find out that it's not roadworthy anymore. We get the calls at the eleventh hour to say, my truck is not working and I can't fill up from the pond because I can't get a truck down there. What are we going to do?

Then we've got to try to pivot as quick as we can so that's what we try to do. Sometimes that happens in locations where you don't plan for it. It's through the application process but, still, it's a very quick thing.

C. TIBBS: Thank you, Minister.

Is there a documented priority list itself?

B. DAVIS: No priority list because they're all priorities.

C. TIBBS: Good answer.

Minister, my last question: Is there anything of documentation within the fire commissioner's office that they would have passed along to you that would be separate from your department and that they would have themselves – documentation or priority lists?

B. DAVIS: I'm not sure. I don't necessarily see each individual application.

The applications are vetted by them and then they would be catalogued, for lack of a better term, to say what the ask is. An application could be five pages. I don't see the five pages of the application and the quotes that are associated with that. They go through that and then they break the quote out to say here's the value of what it is they're looking for. This is the type of truck they're looking for; actually with pictures too, which is nice because I had no idea what a pumper looks like other than when I got into this job. So it gives you an idea of what they're looking for and then the cost associated with that and what the need would be.

If department X just got a new pumper truck three years ago, well, the likelihood of them getting through another pumper or something similar to that – unless something happened that they required it because of an emergency situation. Most departments are planned enough where they come in to say, okay, we'd like to have this over the next number of years so let's start applying now.

They're very understanding when we call them – not me specifically, but the fire commissioner's office – to say listen. They understand that there's not a limitless amount of money here to do that so they're trying their best to come up with that and some departments go their own way and fund it themselves completely, like Pouch Cove. I've been down there and they showed me. They're really proud of the truck they bought completely by themselves. No aspect from us at all, right?

C. TIBBS: Yes. Perfect.

Thank you, Minister. That's all I had.

CHAIR: Okay.

Any further questions?

Seeing no further questions, I now ask the Clerk to recall the grouping.

CLERK: 5.1.01 to 5.1.05 inclusive, Fire and Emergency Services.

CHAIR: Shall 5.1.01 to 5.01.5, Fire and Emergency Services, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 5.1.01 through 5.1.05 carried.

CHAIR: I now ask the Clerk to recall the first grouping.

CLERK: 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive, Executive and Support Services.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive, Executive and Support Services, carry?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: First of all, I'd like to say thank you to all of the Department of Justice officials who are present here today.

I can say, I think this is my seventh Justice and Public Safety budget Estimates, I've always been very impressed with the quality of answers, the expertise involved and the fact that there has been such a willingness by the minister in the past and the officials to really co-operate and try to answer the questions. So I really appreciate this because this is a very important part of the entire budget process.

Getting into the subhead 1.1.01, Transportation and Communications, last year there was an overage of \$40,900 that was spent. Could you please, Minister, provide a rationale for that?

B. DAVIS: Oh, the \$15,000 over, that was increased travel based on the cost of travel inflation for one, but we have three ministerial equivalents federally that we would have to go to meetings with. That would be ministerial meetings and FPTs that would result in additional travel. Some departments only have one; we have three that we answer to federally. They have three different meetings throughout the year.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Minister, who would that be those federal ministers?

You said they're departments, what departments would that be?

B. DAVIS: Fire and emergency services would be one. I don't know the federal title for it, but it would be –

OFFICIAL: Emergency Preparedness.

B. DAVIS: – Emergency Preparedness, it would be the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and Public Safety. So that's the three.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

Also, with 1.2.01. Executive Support, under Transportation and Communications, last year there was an overage there as well; \$77,600 was spent. Can you please provide a rationale, Minister, under 1.2.01, Executive Support?

B. DAVIS: So that's a similar answer to what would be before. It would be increased travel based on departmental business for the FTPs because they would provide support at that table as well. They would have their own deputies' tables as well, but this also would be in Policing Transformation Working Group consultations for the executive that would be travelling, as an example, for meetings in Labrador that they would have had.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

Under 1.2.02., Administrative and Policy Support, first of all, with respect to the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court, could you please advise us how many are currently in that program, and how many have completed it?

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

I'll answer initially and then I'll turn it over to Michael to give you a little bit more detail.

We've seen some success in that area. We operate in St. John's, Stephenville and Grand Falls-Windsor. Obviously, it's working with John Howard Society, of course, and other stakeholders that would be involved in that. We see doing specialty courses as an example of how you can expand and get the access to justice in a more timely fashion. Also, the correct justice for the cause of action that would be there.

I'll turn it over to Michael who can give you a little bit more specifics on that, but I think we've got numbers of 31 have completed the program in St. John's, four completed the program in Grand Falls, nine completed the program in Stephenville, and then I can give you the current people that are in the program as well. Not their names of course, but there are 26 in the program in St. John's that are currently under that program, eight in Grand Falls-Windsor and eight in Stephenville.

I'll throw it over to Michael if there's anything else he would like to add.

CHAIR: Mike Noseworthy.

M. NOSEWORTHY: Thank you.

Just a couple of things I'd add to build onto the minister's comments, and that is that the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court that he mentioned the numbers for in Grand Falls-Windsor, that court opened pretty recently, just in August 2022. That court also has a screening court available for people who live in Gander as well. There's also a screening court for the Stephenville Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court that exists in Corner Brook, just to expand that coverage to people who live in those areas but don't live in the exact centre where the court is.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

I can see from last year that the numbers have increased, so that's good to see.

I also would like to know if there has been an evaluation of any kind of the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Court; an evaluation completed, for example, to determine if it's meeting its mandate and the goals that it needs and helping people. So just wondering if there's been any type of evaluation to measure that.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: A very good question.

I don't use the word "constant" but it's a consistent evaluation process that we're looking at there. There's always an opportunity for us to look for improvements if we see them. So we see that this is working very well based on the numbers and you see in Grand Falls-Windsor it coming up, since just August, seeing those numbers and helping those individuals that would need that type of intervention.

So I would see this is more of an opportunity to expand over time to other centres because I think this is positive but if Michael would like to add anything to that because he's more intimately involved with each of the sections within the court.

CHAIR: ADM Noseworthy.

M. NOSEWORTHY: No, I think, Minister, you captured it well. We are constantly evaluating and you'll see from the history, like I mentioned, when those speciality courts opened, we're constantly evaluating and looking at potential for expansion, as well as the possibility of those screening courts.

So that's something that's happened throughout. We do also have funding for a policy position that has recently been hired to do an evaluation of all of those speciality courts. That position has recently been filled and that would be in addition to all the ongoing performance monitoring that the minister mentioned there.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Speaking of specialty courts, I move to the Mental Health Court. How many people are currently in that program and how many have completed that as well? I understand that's in St. John's.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

Yes, the statistics that we have – there are eight completed the program and there are nine currently in the program right now. Obviously, we're reassured that those individuals are receiving the type of justice continuum that they need.

It is my suggestion in this that I think it's a positive specialty court. Everywhere I go with my federal colleagues, when I see them or talk to them, this is the way of the future for justice, I would think, looking at specialty courts on how we're going to deal with individuals that are the most vulnerable in our society. If we can support them in particular ways, that's what we're going to continue to do.

So just for the statistics you asked for, eight completed the program and nine currently in it.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Again, the same question with respect to evaluation of this court, if it has been determined if it's meeting its objectives. Has there been any way to measure or evaluate that?

B. DAVIS: The exact same answer that we had. That position that we just hired recently, that's going to be evaluating all the three of the specialty courts that we have. They're going to continue to look at that. In addition to the performance monitoring we do already ourselves, this is just an extra ability to see, okay, what can we do better, if we need to do better, what can we do to support more, how can we expand it further if that's what is required and where do we

expand next. It's just the next step in what we're doing. That position is an important piece for us for developing the future of these.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Has there been any decision with respect to expanding the mental health court outside of St. John's?

B. DAVIS: No, not at this time. But that's the first step in the person that we've put in place. They're going to be looking at what options are there, is there more expansion that we could do to encourage more individuals through that court here and is there any support where we have satellites or other opportunities across the province where we see the options that could come.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

With respect to the Drug Treatment Court, the same question, how many people are currently in that program and have completed?

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

The drug treatment participants, this is in three different areas. In St. John's, there are six participants right now and four people have completed; Corner Brook, three participants and we have none completed; and in Grand Falls, we have one right now participating in that program.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

Is there –?

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Oh, okay.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, how many people are currently employed in the department and how many positions are currently vacant?

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

I can get this information for you as well, but there are 1,875 positions as of March 31, 2025. I can give the breakdown of permanent and temporary because I think that will be your next question. It's 1,381 permanent, 356 temporary and 138 contractual. Over the time frame, if I can be so bold as thinking where you're going to go with that, the vacancies as of March 31, 2025, would've been 280.

J. DINN: Chair, would it be possible to have a breakdown of where the vacancies are exactly?

Thank you.

I presume, Minister, that the department is still using zero-based budgeting – okay.

B. DAVIS: Yes, the department is still using zero-based budgeting. I don't think I have a list of where the vacancies are; I'm looking.

Patti, do we have a list of the vacancies?

P. HURLEY: No, but we can get.

B. DAVIS: No. We can get you a list of where the vacancies are.

As I said, we're an operational department so there is movement within the department. Some of them are not very long-term vacancies, it just happened that they moved into a different position. We're backfilling those positions.

There is an opportunity for recruitment, and I may take the opportunity now with all the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people who are watching and listening or listening not watching, to take the opportunity to say if you're interested in working in Justice and Public Safety, please

send your resumes to us. We'd love to have you. It is an awesome place to work and we would love to have you apply.

J. DINN: Thank you.

What work has been accomplished in the past year on the implementation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan that was released on June 3, 2021?

B. DAVIS: Sorry, can I get that repeated? I didn't have my earpiece in and you're speaking a little low, which is uncharacteristic for you.

J. DINN: No, it's not. I'm keeping calm, protecting my voice.

What work has been accomplished in the past year on the implementation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan that was released June 3, 2021?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

We have led significant work in that. There are 196 recommendations contained in the *Hear Our Voices* report. We're working through those; obviously, I can give you an update on what we've got completed or working on. The focus is on relationship building between GNL, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Indigenous women to address the root causes of the inequality.

That's going to be partially in another department as well, but we work very closely together in ministerial committees so we're going to continue to do that. Obviously, when we receive reports like this, we take it very seriously and some of the recommendations are easier to

implement than others; it's just changes in how we do things.

We're going to continue to work towards that end. I hope that answered your question. I can get you a little bit more of a detailed answer on that about what specific ones have been completed and what we're in process on.

J. DINN: If I may then, of the 196 recommendations, how many of them are the responsibility of your department, Justice and Public Safety, and of those that your department is to be responsible for, how many of those have been completed or are just about completed?

We'll start with those that are completed.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: That's a very good question. I don't have that here at my fingertips. I will endeavor to have that for you and I'll look to which of those 196 are ours in our department and I'll give you a breakdown of where we are in the completion of those and what the plan is – not necessarily what the plan is because we're working towards all of them, I would assume, but my suggestion is I'll have that for you. I don't have it here.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Part of that then, Minister, I guess, the anticipated timeline by which you would have those completed for your department, if that's possible as well.

Okay.

B. DAVIS: Yeah, we can add that to our list to get to you.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Would it be possible to have an update on the work of the Policing Transformation Working Group?

B. DAVIS: Absolutely. I love talking about the Policing Transformation Working Group. That was established in November of 2023. It was a previous minister who had the foresight to put some really good working commitments together.

The Policing Transformation Working Group was mandated to evaluate the current policing model that we have in the province; conduct public engagement, which we've had very good success on; provide ongoing advice; and ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receive the most effective and efficient policing services as possible, considering the best practices in other jurisdictions as well.

So that was their mandate. They've had extensive consultations across. I expect that there will be a What We Heard document from that consultation in the near future. It's a significant body of work. There are 4,400 interactions that were involved in that survey that was out there. That's unheard of in government standpoint for us to be able to get that kind of engagement which is a testament on how important it is for the public.

We're going to continue to look at that. They're looking at examples of the evolving profile of crime, oversight and accountability – how that looks. We brought pieces of legislation to the House of Assembly on police oversight that we had great debates on, looking at that. That comes out of the Policing Transformation Working Group. Looking at how we can look at recruitment and retention. What other aspects we can look at for community policing. All of those things are going to be what we look at with respect to this Policing Transformation Working Group.

I'm very pleased with the amount of work and engagement they've had publicly and I look forward to hearing from them and seeing what comes next.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Minister, earlier you had announced Law Enforcement Oversight Commission legislation. I'm just wondering, the proposed changes and how they compare to the proposal that was put forward by First Light for a civilian oversight commission of police services.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, a very good question.

We worked very closely with stakeholders in the development of that piece of legislation. We looked at best practices across the country; worked with our police forces to look at that. We looked at the RCMP who had some oversight processes in place. We just wanted to make the process a little easier for the public to be involved in.

We improved that oversight and discipline by an independent commissioner. They can initiate an investigation without a complaint if they think it's a systemic problem within the RNC and they'll be publishing – which is an interesting piece that I think people glossed over a little bit – the de-identified summaries of the investigations, which is really important because that adds another piece of accountability and oversight; because I think people in the public perceive that there are more nefarious activities happening within the police force than there actually is happening.

I think this is a perfect opportunity for us to open the blinds and make sure people see that, when we see there are 25 complaints, as an example – I'm just picking that out of the air so don't quote me for the 25 complaints – 15, 18 or 20 of those complaints could be late for work or could be: They were rude to me because they gave me a ticket.

Some of those things are going to be picked up when we add body-worn cameras to the RCMP's repertoire as well, because that's not only for protection of the people that we all represent and the people that the RNC and RCMP are servicing, it's also for the

protection of the officers. From what I hear from them and what I hear from the general public, that day is going to be a very positive day for everybody. We see it going through the RCMP now. I think it's through 70 or 80 per cent of the RCMP detachments. We're in conversations with the RNC now about looking at how we can best implement those tools for the betterment of the people in the community.

J. DINN: So, Minister, are you saying that this is a civilian oversight committee?

B. DAVIS: What I'm saying is it's a step in that direction. This is a civilian-led commissioner, who will determine when – when you come in with a one-window opportunity for someone to make a complaint, a lot of people previously didn't know exactly how to make a complaint about a police officer. Now they have one window where they can come in to the independent public civilian commissioner who will look at it and then determine if it can go in two different directions. It can go as an HR matter, internal to not of public interest, right now, and go to the chief to look at. Or it can be of public interest and have some benefit for it to be investigated by the commissioner and their team.

So that's the two aspects of it, and I think that's clarity for the public. I think it's clarity for the police officers. It's clarity for the commissioner, and it's clarity for some of the stakeholders that we met with leading into this who are happy with the steps we've taken. Obviously, some would want you to go further, and I can appreciate that too, but, as I've always said, you've got to walk before you can run.

CHAIR: The Member's time is expired.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Returning to the Drug Treatment Court, is there an expansion of the Drug Treatment Court planned? Because I believe in the Estimates last year, one of your officials said there was a focus on expanding the court to Central and Western. Has that been completed?

B. DAVIS: As we did with Grand Falls-Windsor, so it's in Central there now, which is good, and we're seeing that there's one participant taking part in that now, that individual that we hired, that we mentioned, is looking at those three specialty courts, as I've said. That's going to provide some good insight into where expansion should be, if we need to, or if we let them develop a little further before we move into the expansion.

We're always considered looking at those options, and I'll turn it over to ADM Noseworthy to expand on what I've said because he will correct anything I didn't say that was correct.

CHAIR: ADM Noseworthy.

M. NOSEWORTHY: Thank you.

No correction necessary, Minister, but thank you.

I just wanted to add, to follow up on the Member's question in reference to last year. You'll notice, obviously, that number of one participant is quite low. That court only recently opened, so that is the expansion that you're referring to last year. It opened in January of just this past year, so that's the expansion.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, ADM Noseworthy.

The tobacco class action litigation, could you please provide an update on that case?

B. DAVIS: Yes, thank you.

We know we're getting closer to the end of that process. I know it's been a significant

time coming, and I know that Denise has done a lot of work in this area, so I'll throw it over to Denise if she wants to give a little bit more of an update. I guess, hopefully, stayed tuned on where we're going to be going on that in the next little bit.

CHAIR: Denise Woodrow.

D. WOODROW: So the tobacco has been ongoing since 1998. This year, it's got sanction through the CCAA court. There's a settlement of \$24 billion going to provinces. Newfoundland and Labrador will get a percentage of that \$24 billion. It's based loosely on population and health care costs recoveries.

The percentage is about 2.187 per cent.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: The easiest answer is stay tuned, for the third time.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Yes, just to be clear, so \$24 billion going to the provinces and you say that it's 2.187 per cent of that is expected to come to Newfoundland and Labrador?

CHAIR: Denise Woodrow.

D. WOODROW: It's approximately around \$500 million.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'd like to add that that's over a number of years. I don't have the years in front of me, but we can get that information for you. There will be a potential announcement on that anyway over the next little bit. We're getting to the point now where we can actually ascertain the exact amount that we would be getting, as well as less legal fees and things that would be.

This was started when I was just graduating high school. So it's been on the go a long time. There are legal fees that would need to be accounted for and that, as you're well aware. I would say stay tuned; it won't be very long.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

The mobile mental health crisis team, I'm wondering if you could please provide a breakdown of how many teams are now fully staffed and operational?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: We can get back to you with that. I don't have it here at my fingertips, but we can get back to you with that data.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Also, under 1.2.03, Legal Information Management, I noticed last year when there was discussion about the Policing Transformation Working Group, or the team, I think it was indicated that salaries were included there for the five-person team. That was reflected in that budget item. So I just have a couple of questions about that.

So the police transformation team, that is comprised of four individuals, is that correct?

B. DAVIS: Sorry, could you give me the section that you were looking at again?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: It's 1.2.03, Legal Information Management, under Salaries. I think there was a reference last year. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but there was a reference there with respect to the salaries that were included for the five-person police transformation team. Is that correct?

CHAIR: Patti Hurley.

P. HURLEY: The salaries for the police transformation team is under Administration and Policy Support, 1.2.02.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, I'll get to that then.

I think I just have a few more questions for this subhead: 1.3.01, Fines Administration. What is the current value of the outstanding fines?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: The outstanding fines as of February 28, 2025, is \$51.671 million – not a number I'm very proud of.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: No, I wouldn't be either.

B. DAVIS: Do you want me to give you a breakdown of where that's to? I've got it in front of me, so it's just as well for me to do it.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: You might as well. Yes, go ahead.

B. DAVIS: Just for full clarity: \$39.2 million is fines receivable; \$3.5 million is late payment penalties; \$8.8 million is victim fine surcharges; 346,000 tickets and 136,000 unique individuals responsible for those tickets. But outstanding fines that we've been able to collect, which has been nice, is \$9.7 million.

So I'm happy that there – if I'm sitting here next year, that number is going to be significantly higher and the other one is going to be lower.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I would agree with that.

B. DAVIS: Yes.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: For a couple of years now, there has been much discussion about the fine options program.

Last year it was indicated that regulations were being drafted. Is there a more recent update?

B. DAVIS: No, I don't have one here, but I'll talk to Micheal. He's the ADM responsible for Fines Administration as well. So I'll throw it over to Michael. He's got a little bit more of the detail on that for you.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

CHAIR: ADM Noseworthy.

M. NOSEWORTHY: The Fines Administration Division continues to look at the best ways to ensure they have the right mechanisms in place to collect outstanding fines.

That division has been focusing on encouraging individuals who have overdue outstanding fines to enter into payment arrangements whenever they're able to, and staff in the division are available to discuss those options with anyone who has overdue fines. We currently have 407 active payment arrangements set up and, as the minister referenced, we collected over \$9.7 million in fines in the last fiscal year.

I also want to add that the implementation of the new on-demand call centre by Fines Administration that was recently put in place enables the handling of increased call volumes which we also hope will lead to improved revenue and collection outcomes on that front as well.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, ADM Noseworthy.

I recall for the last number of years the answers have pretty much been consistent in terms of when I ask about the fine options program and, although these efforts that you've mentioned certainly do provide some assistance, when we're looking at a huge \$51 million, clearly, more has to be done there.

I'm just wondering if you could commit to a timeline with respect to the fine options program, because we can all agree on the importance and value of having such a program to address this massive amount of outstanding fines.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

I can't commit to a timeline here today, but what I can say to you is that number is something that I want to improve on. That fine number is significantly old and there has to be ways that we deal with that as well. Some of those individuals you're not going to be able to collect from, so there is some ability for us to have to do write-offs on that – I hate to even say that word – because there are some you're never going to collect on that list.

It's better for us to be transparent and open about that here and that's why I'm saying it to you, but I also believe, the more payment options that people have and the more ability it is to easily make those payment plans, that's going to help; and part of what's going to help is what I mentioned earlier about the digital transformation within the Justice Department, that's going to be in Fines Administration as well.

Over the next number of years, there are going to be significant improvements in how we do things. Whether that be cameras helping slow traffic down and people issued tickets that way, those are things that we're going to be doing with ensuring that we have the right complement of staff to do that work and digitizing those operations, because you want to try to make it as easy as possible and get those payment options for people to pay very quickly.

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

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Early on, I think in the opening comments, Minister, you talked about the money or the funding that was going into the police forces for public safety enforcement, whether it's equipment, vehicles, so on and so forth, expanding the number of officers and such like. I'm not saying that's not a good thing but in some ways it's that's treating the symptoms and not the issues.

I'll ask you this in this way: I'm looking at the collaboration that your department has with other departments, whether it's Health and Community Services, the Education Department, CSSD or others, and I keep going back to this example because it's probably the clearest one. In St. Thomas in Ontario where Indwell, a supportive housing organization, moved in, to the point that the effect was so great – it was a high crime area – the crime dropped so significantly that the police force had to redirect their resources elsewhere.

I've seen the crime go up in my district significantly in the last five years but there's also been an increase in poverty, a lack of supports and so on and so forth. We had the shooting of Omar and I'm just seeing another person who was in my district.

I'm just trying to think here that you've got the mental health courts and so on, but I'm just wondering as part of harm-reduction but also a safety issue, the kind of collaboration that takes place with other departments in a coordinated effort. I would assume that for some of the people who might come under the purview of Justice and/or enforcement, they're also probably receiving services from CSSD and some of the others.

I can tell you, in education, students I've had are probably receiving services from more than one. They're in trouble with the law. They've been in the youth correctional centre. You name it. I'm just looking at the collaboration there as a part of that overall strategy.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you, and I agree.

The social determinants of health are something that we're wrestling with here; not necessarily in this department, although we work very closely with Health and Community Services and CSSD and Education. We sit on multiple committees together where we've got Relationships First NL, which is doing some restorative justice initiatives that are funded across a couple of different departments that we deal with. All of those are in an attempt to try to get to the individuals before we actually get them into the justice system themselves.

I think investments, like you mentioned in housing and wraparound supports, are things that we're doing, but obviously there are people that are within that justice system now that are causing those problems within in the system. We are working very closely to try to align ourselves with the social determinants of health; trying to work with poverty reduction; trying to work with housing. You know, we've got health in corrections now which is doing some great work – subcommittees that work together to address the criminal factors that would be part of why people are making those decisions that they're making.

There are a variety of reasons. I think some people jump to judge why someone makes a bad decision without knowing the things that led to that decision. That's why I'm such a big supporter of the Gladue reports that we're doing within Justice and Health, helping to fund and continuing to expand on. I think that's an important piece for us all.

So I guess, to answer your question, you're right in that we're solving a symptom of something by investing in policing services, because we've got to with where we are right now, but I think as we go forward on a longer term basis, hopefully, we can get to those social determinants of health which will make it much less people to have to deal with in the future.

J. DINN: If I may, Chair, I use the example of – this is in the news – Susan Evoy in my district. The gentleman who was living in the house next to her was receiving funding from several government departments to a tune of almost \$4,000. Eventually, because the response was, well, call the police if you see something suspicious, it was put back, I think unfairly, on the police in this case and they were at their wit's end.

In meeting with the departments, it was very clear – and I asked the question, did you check on this person – like, the kinds of supports were inadequate. They said, well, it's not our job; we just pay the money, but there was a silo and, I would say, in the end, what happened to this gentleman, as far as I know, he ended up back in jail. That should never have happened but I would say, it cannot be a police response. There are other measures there that were, I would say, inadequate. So that's where I'm going with this.

I think we could have saved ourselves a lot of money and probably done a better job to help this person, and there are more of them like that. So that's where I'm going with that. But I would like to see, I guess, more of that collaboration and not just simply a police response to things, because there are a lot of underlying problems.

If I may, with 1.2.02, have all recommendations made in the Auditor General's report, *Adult Custody & Community Corrections*, in December 2022 been completed, and if not, which remain outstanding?

B. DAVIS: I'm just trying to get back there. Just give me one second.

J. DINN: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'm going to pass it over to Lorelei.

CHAIR: Lorelei Roberts.

L. ROBERTS: In terms of the Auditor General's report, that was in 2022, and there were six recommendations. Six recommendations are either complete or in progress, and there's quite a bit of work that's been done on them.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Which, if any, then, remain outstanding, or are they all being worked on, or how many are completed of those things?

CHAIR: Lorelei Roberts.

L. ROBERTS: In terms of what remains outstanding is the policies. There were 33 subsections for case management policies, and six have been fully drafted, four near completion, and six additional subsections have been added and are fully drafted. So there's active work ongoing with policy work.

In terms of training, there's ongoing training. In terms of recommendation 4, which was programming, there is work ongoing with John Howard Society on that. In terms of release planning, that's ongoing. There has been much success with regard to joint protocols for those released in community corrections or community, and there's more work under way in that. In terms of supervision and compliance, those ones are addressed.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

Is the department currently looking into training for lawyers to prevent them from retraumatizing victims or survivors of violent crime when they testify in court? Where are we with that?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: There is constant training that is done – I'll speak, I guess, globally – with all members in the Department of Justice

whether they be lawyers, Crown attorneys; I know the judges in Provincial Court, Supreme Court and Court of Appeal are always doing training to help in those areas. Now, not specifically for that, but not exclusively for that either.

So there are opportunities for them to receive training. I can probably pull together a list of what's been done from the Provincial Court side because I've seen that and talked to them about it, and I know our staff in our departments receive training on a regular basis, for a variety of different things.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Has the department done any preparatory work to amend the *Proceedings Against the Crown Act*? This was discussed last year as part of the amendments needed to deal with such cases as Jack Whalen's.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'd also like to add to the previous one, I think, for some more clarity. I think the Law Society also regulates the lawyers as well, so they require them to have training that would be in this case as well. I can also go over to Lisa if she would like to add anything, or if anything needs to be added that would add a bit more clarity for your previous question (inaudible) –

CHAIR: Lisa Stead.

L. STEAD: Crown attorneys get training every year; there are requirements under the Law Society, but we do a lot to train as well. We send numerous Crown attorneys every year to Crown school, which is run by the Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association. We're invited there. We go there and there are specialized topics such as sexual violence, intimate partner violence, crimes against children. So Crown attorneys do those topics, and as well we have an AGM every year where we cover different topics,

but always have victims' issues as part of our agenda.

So I can speak to Crown attorneys. With respect to other lawyers, yes, the Law Society has requirements about CLE and that would relate to their practice areas, and some of that is self-directed. I know, as well, Legal Aid does a meeting every year. I would imagine they have some training, but I can't speak to what that is. The judge does regulate the courtroom, and we are aware, from news releases from judges' organizations, that they do continuing education. They have yearly meetings as well, and I think they address these issues as well. Just to add to what the minister said.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

The Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So that concludes my questions for that subhead.

CHAIR: Okay.

The Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: If I may just pick up on that one, because I still have the *Proceedings Against the Crown Act*, but with regard to the training, the petitions we've presented, obviously, when we presented them, all the measures that have been listed here were in place previous to that. Would that be fair to say, that the various training, when it comes to the judges who are in control of the court, there is (inaudible) and so on, all those measures were in place prior to our petitions, or have they come about since?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I want just a little bit more clarity. If he could just tell me, since ...?

J. DINN: When we presented these petitions and we talked about the fact that survivors of sexual assault were

traumatized, I'm asking then the examples that were just given with regard to the measures that are in place, were they the result of the petitions or did they exist before the petitions were presented?

If I may, if they were in place before the petitions were presented, it would suggest that the measures are not enough. They're insufficient and inadequate.

So I think even in the petition, there was some very clear examples of what not to do. Keep in mind, these petitions were compiled by people who had actually been through the process. That's what I'm trying to get at.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

I know from the conversations I've had with the chief judge for the Provincial Court that they're focused on training significantly, making sure that judges are as best trained as they possibly can be based on jurisdictions, based on changing aspects of the law, changing ways in which we deal with individuals like you've described through your petition. So I don't want to say that it was in relation to your petitions because I think it started before that. But I also think that they change on a regular basis to meet the need of what's going on in the public.

An example would be judges received training on sexual assault on a regular basis, and that's one of the things that they're very proud of, that they're trying their best to ensure that the judges have the best experience and training that they can based on what changes that are happening not just in our province, although they look at that, not just in our own country, which they look at as well, but also around the globe.

I know that they are looking at that, but we can get some more information about that for you after this process as well.

J. DINN: I appreciate it.

With regard to the other question, has the department done any preparatory work to amend the *Proceedings Against the Crown Act*? This was discussed last year as part of the amendments needed to deal with cases such as Jack Whalen's.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

I'll pass that over to Denise who'll give us an update on that as well.

Thank you for the question.

D. WOODROW: Work is ongoing.

J. DINN: Work is ongoing. Thank you.

The last question that deals with Fines Administration. So \$51.71 million in outstanding and, just to make sure I understand this, \$9.7 million collected? Would that be correct, \$9.7 million collected?

B. DAVIS: Yes.

J. DINN: And the rest is about to be written off or in the process of being collected.

So of the \$9.7 million that's collected, how outstanding were those fines? Are they more than a year old, more than two years old? I'm just trying to get an idea of the \$9.7 million in particular.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: To answer your question, yes.

J. DINN: Okay.

B. DAVIS: Some would be relatively quick, maybe within the last year, and some would be a couple of years old. I can get you the breakdown of that I think. I can get you some more information about details on how long some of those fines would be outstanding before we collected them. I can

also get, probably, some information around how long that \$51,671,500 has been outstanding, because there is a portion of that that would be outstanding more longer term.

That number is a snapshot in time. As I said, every day there are more and there are more that are paid. As ADM Noseworthy said, or Michael as I prefer to call him, there are about 407 payment plans that we want to continue to push to get the money collected that can be collected. As I said and as I committed to MHA Ottenheimer here today, I want to see that number down significantly lower and collections up higher.

J. DINN: Okay.

If I may, Chair, I guess where I'm going with it is, if someone who is given a ticket, is convicted of it and has to pay the fine in January but doesn't have to renew his licence until November of that year, that's an outstanding fine?

B. DAVIS: Yes,

J. DINN: Chances are, though, that person is going to – I'll pay that off when I go to renew my licence, okay?

B. DAVIS: Correct.

J. DINN: To me that would be typical. You're going to get that within a year.

I guess what I'm looking at is that the \$9.7 million is probably most of those people who are going to pay, I would assume, without having to go to a collection agency. They're probably paying it up anyway, but that still leaves, if I look at, a collected 20 per cent overall, so 80 per cent of the fines, that's \$9.7 million of \$51.67 million? That's 20 per cent.

There are 407 active repayments open, is this part of that \$9.7 million? If not, how much money does that amount represent of

that \$51.671 million of those active payments that are open?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Yes, the payment arrangements will be part of the outstanding fines.

There will be a portion of those collected that would be outstanding currently. Some of those collections through March 31 of that \$9.7 million would be part of that 407 as well. Some would have been collected that would have been a portion of those and the others that are not collected as of yet – I'll use you as an example. Say you owe \$1000 and you made a payment plan of \$100 a month or \$100 a year, whatever that payment plan is. You would be picked up in paying a portion of that throughout the year that you paid it in but the other portion that's outstanding would be part of that \$51 million.

J. DINN: So how much are we talking about?

B. DAVIS: That's a very good question. I can get that data for you. I don't have it broken down by individual like that. I mean, I'm sure we have that but I can get that information for you.

I can get you what you asked earlier – just for clarity, to make sure we get the right stuff, it was how much is long-standing? How much of that payment process would have been just regular I got a ticket and I'm paying on my registration when I do register my vehicle. That stuff should be easy for us.

J. DINN: Within a year.

B. DAVIS: Right.

J. DINN: If I may, Chair, this is the other thing: I'm assuming that part of that \$9.7 million collected is covered under the 407 active payments that are owed?

B. DAVIS: Correct.

J. DINN: Still there's a substantial amount of money that is not going to be collected.

B. DAVIS: Well, yes –

J. DINN: I guess it comes down to then, as a teacher we had one clear rule: if you make a rule, enforce it. If you don't intend to enforce it, don't make the rule because you make a mockery of it.

So I guess right here, and you've admitted it, there are some of these that you're not going to be able to collect. To me, \$51 million is a significant chunk of change. I have been to Motor Vehicle Registration early on many, many years ago and I thought having \$200 outstanding was an embarrassment until five people ahead of me are in the \$5,000 range. I said, I'm not so bad.

Nevertheless, if they're not paying it off and there's no attempt to collect it, it sends a very clear message, really, what difference does it make? I think that, to me, this has to be addressed, and in some way – if it can't be in cash, there has to be some other way that that person can pay it. Also, if they need their vehicle for work, too. There has got to be a way to find redress for this as well, or not give them any tickets.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Yeah, so I don't think the not giving a ticket is an option. I do believe there's more that can be done. I'm not going to sit here and say that we've turned over every rock to try to get this.

My mother used to have a saying that you can't get blood from a turnip and, in some cases, we're dealing with people that are – and, MHA Dinn, I know in the previous questions that you've asked about what we can do to support individuals. Some of these individuals are the most vulnerable in our society and they have made mistakes, and they've compounded because they've made those mistakes and they haven't fixed

them. We can't lock them up, as Pierre Poilievre would want us to do –

J. DINN: I'm not suggesting it.

B. DAVIS: No, I know you're not. That's why I'm saying it that way. I know you're not suggesting that.

What we're trying to do is find ways for the collections for payment plans. We're trying to find ways for them to be easy to pay. Obviously, getting them to pay early enough before they get to be long-standing makes it a little easier, and working out a payment plan with our staff is the best course of action.

There is \$3.5 million in late payment penalties. I'm willing to bet that if you wanted to work out an agreement – there are ways that we can save you some money on what you owe – I don't want to – like, all I'm saying to you is there are ways. If we want to collect some of the money, we're going to work with them. That's what our staff is doing. We've seen some success getting 20 per cent. I view that as a positive thing. I'd like it to be 50 per cent.

This year, right now, we're going to do everything we possibly can to get that number of collections up higher and the outstanding fines down lower. I can commit to that as of now.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

I ask the Members if there are any additional questions under Executive and Support Services.

MHA Dinn? No. MHA Ottenheimer?

Okay, I ask the Clerk to recall the grouping.

CLERK: 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive, Executive and Support Services.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.3.01 inclusive, Executive and Support Services, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.3.01 carried.

CHAIR: We are going to take a 10-minute break now. It's 7:21. See you back at 7:31.

Recess

CHAIR (Gambin-Walsh): Okay, folks, we shall start again.

I will now ask the Clerk to call the next subhead.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.4.01 inclusive, Legal and Related Services.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.4.01 inclusive, Legal and Related Services, carry?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

On November 13, 2024, there was funding announced for 18 new Crown attorneys. Minister, how many of these 18 have been hired?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you very much.

That was an announcement regarding this budget here, so there was going to be six hired for this year, six hired for next year and six hired for the year after.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

Under Salaries, this year the budget is planned to increase to almost \$9.4 million. Why is that, and is that all new Crown attorneys?

B. DAVIS: Yes.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Is there any new support staff for the new Crown attorneys?

B. DAVIS: Could you repeat that again, sorry?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: With respect to support staff, is there going to be any new support staff to assist the new Crown attorneys? Has that been allocated for?

B. DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Those Crown attorneys that would bring our complement, I guess, to 51 Crown attorneys. Three of those were vacant. There are six that we're planning on hiring. I think your question dealt with the support staff or auxiliary staff?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Correct.

B. DAVIS: Not in the budget based on the six Crowns, we're going to make do with what we have from an administrative standpoint there. I think when we get to the next level of hiring more, we'll be looking at options that we may need to support those individuals with more resources as well.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

That completes my questions for subhead 02.

CHAIR: Okay.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

2.1.01, Civil Law: Is it possible to have a brief update on how far along we are on the legal challenge to the federal equalization program?

B. DAVIS: I'll pass it over to ADM Woodrow.

D. WOODROW: Equalization challenges is ongoing at court. At this point, there are applications being considered for interveners.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: 2.3.01, Legal Aid: How many people are currently employed in Legal Aid and how many of those are lawyers? How many vacancies are there, if any?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

Sixty-four practising lawyers, two lawyers that are senior management/executive positions. There are nine vacant positions. Recruitment is ongoing across the province. I think the active caseload, because I think you asked that question once before, was 90 files per lawyer.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Are the nine vacant positions lawyers?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'll pass it over to ADM Woodrow. My understanding is yes, but I want to make sure that's clear because it could be some administrative support as well, so ADM Woodrow.

CHAIR: ADM Woodrow.

D. WOODROW: Yes, the nine positions are for lawyers.

J. DINN: How long have these positions been vacant?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: A variety of times, in short order, some – I think ADM Woodrow has a better understanding, but we're in the active recruitment phase for those nine positions. As I've said before, we're an operational department with a lot of moving people that move around a little bit, too. So this could happen. Like, if you ask me next week, there could be six vacancies because we've hired three, and there could be three others that are going to move somewhere else.

ADM Woodrow.

CHAIR: ADM Woodrow.

D. WOODROW: To build on what the minister said, that's true. It's a lot of comings and goings with lawyers moving throughout the system, but also Legal Aid added six positions. So six of the nine are new positions that they're actively recruiting for.

J. DINN: If I may, if I want to quantify it, what's the longest vacant position versus the shortest one? The new ones versus – I'm just trying to get a range. Is it, like, we're talking about a month to a year or we just send out the ad for new lawyers and it's only, what, six weeks? I'm just trying to get an idea of how long are these positions vacant or unfilled.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: It takes a variety of time to get through the HR process. Depending on where they're to, how much leave time someone may need to give notice to another employer to come in to work with us. But as the ADM did just say, there were six new positions, so very recent. The other three, I think we could potentially give you some timelines. I don't know if she has it at her fingertips there now, but I don't think

they're very long open. But I can pass it over to ADM Woodrow, as well.

J. DINN: If I may, Chair, before I go, I guess when was the approval for the six new positions given, maybe when the ad was sent out versus – that's what I'm after here. What's the time between which those positions were approved to now, those six and the other three?

D. WOODROW: I'll have to get the timing. I'm not sure of the timing between when the board of directors would have approved it versus when they're advertising but Legal Aid is always actively looking for lawyers just to always have a full complement of staff.

J. DINN: Thank you.

And I guess if this was approved two months ago and the ad was put out two weeks after that – that's what I'm after. What's the time on it; because I would assume these are going to have impacts on people's legal proceedings.

Is there a problem with retention at Legal Aid?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: No.

We've made some significant gains there over the past number of years under the previous minister. It's my understanding and I've had the opportunity to meet with the board of directors, as well as the management there, and I think in general terms, the lawyers are happy at the location they are and enjoy the work. It's a passion that they would have working in Legal Aid. I've met a number of them and they're very excited about the work they do.

Obviously, there are opportunities that come up from time to time where people would leave Legal Aid and come within government to do a body of work, and then

go back to Legal Aid. So that would be a vacancy that's caused at Legal Aid. The lawyer is still within the system and their permanent position would lie with Legal Aid but they're here on a contract doing a particular body of work. Whether that be an inquiry or some other, that's what they would be doing.

So I guess, to answer your question, I think it's the natural movement that would happen. As we've said, there are 64 practicing lawyers; six of those nine that are vacant are new positions that are created so no one left to cause those. They're just new positions that we've got to fill. Of those three, one or two of them could be in the department doing a particular body of work or somewhere else and maybe one of those left.

We can give you some more detail of how long term it is. I think your question is valid but the six brand new lawyers, that's going to only make the people that need legal aid and use legal aid, their situation, be a little faster and better for them.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Under 2.3.03, Other Inquiries, do you anticipate any further delays in the release of the report by the Commission of the Inquiry Respecting the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Let me first of all say that this is an independent inquiry. We don't direct them; we support them from a financial perspective and anything we can do to aid them, we will but it is an independent inquiry.

Justice Igloliorte asked us for an extension based on what they would need to do their work. They're actually in Labrador right now working on this. The timelines they gave us was the October 31, 2026. I hope that they

hit that target because I want to see the work that comes out of that inquiry.

J. DINN: Thank you.

2.3.05, Human Rights: How many active complaints is the Commission currently looking into and does this represent an increase or a decrease over recent years? The number of active complaints and whether it's an increase or a decrease.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: We have 233 active complaints as of March 31. There were 345 files closed in 2024-2025 and in 2023-2024, there were 319.

The numbers themselves dictate that it has gone down, but I don't want to just say that without it being a snapshot in time because I think it's important that we realize that this is the point at which we're talking about it now. I don't want to give you wrong information but that's the numbers that exist as of today. The supposition I'm going to make from that is that it's down but I don't want to give that clarity without knowing fully.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Under 2.3.06, Office of the Public Trustee, I'm just wondering, Minister, if you have responded to Mr. Scott Hounsell and Charlene Dalley's request to meet with you regarding the disposition of his sister's remains?

You might remember this was in the news. He was supposed to have been notified about his sister being buried and he found out that she had been cremated and buried without any contact. He's been trying to reach out. He's reached out to various people within the department and has received the response but so far nothing that would be satisfactory nor to his request to meet him. I'm just wondering because he does have some serious concerns.

CHAIR: Minister Davis

B. DAVIS: Absolutely, I met with him.

I don't want to get the day wrong but within days of being aware of the story, I met with Scott and discussed that with him. He was talking about making sure that the system didn't have that happen to somebody else and that's part of the reason we brought in the legislation that we brought into the House of Assembly that fall.

Any situation that would happen like Mr. Hounsell described is disappointing to me. We want to make sure, and I know the Public Trustee wants to make sure, that things don't happen. So that's part of the reason why that legislation was brought in in the fall, to rectify that situation that could potentially happen. Obviously, in this case, the communication wasn't as strong as it needs to be.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

Does the Member have additional questions under Legal and Related Services?

J. DINN: Yes.

Just in follow up on that, since March 25th you have met with Mr. Hounsell, because his last email is: I understand that Minister Davis was to follow up and meet with us? I haven't received any updates so I'm assuming you haven't met with him since March 25.

B. DAVIS: Since March –

J. DINN: 25th.

B. DAVIS: No – March 25th? I'll have to get the time frame.

I've met with him since the stories. We talked to the Public Trustee and we were going to circle back with him, for sure. We had some information and I'm not sure if the timeline would be exact that we've chatted

with him since March 25th. I know that we did chat with him. Initially, we were working on some things that he wanted us to look into, which we've since found out. We're going to be going back to him with that information.

J. DINN: Thanks.

Part of that, if I may, Chair, in response, I think in an email from Ms. Woodrow to Mr. Hounsell, it says that the documentation provided to the court, and subsequently to the Office of the Public Trustee, indicated that there were no family members or next of kin who had interest in being involved in the estate.

That was despite the fact that Mr. Hounsell had made it very clear that he was and that there was a next of kin. I think that's he's trying to understand how this happened, especially since it's the disposition of his sister's body, a loved one's body. I'm just hoping and assuming you will have those answers for him –

B. DAVIS: Yes.

J. DINN: – as to how that happened, despite the fact that he was in communication with the Office of the Public Trustee and officials.

Okay. Thank you.

That's it for me.

CHAIR: Seeing no further questions, I will ask the Clerk to recall the grouping.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.4.01 inclusive, Legal and Related Services.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.4.01 inclusive, Legal and Related Services, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.4.01 carried.

CHAIR: I ask the Clerk to call the next grouping.

CLERK: 3.1.01 to 3.2.01 inclusive, Law Courts.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 to 3.2.01 inclusive, Law Courts, carry?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, are any of the courts experiencing backlogs, lengthy trial delays, and that includes either Supreme and/or Provincial Court?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

It's a broad statement and I don't want to get it wrong if I say no. You're asking all three courts together and I think there's less of a backlog in some of the courts than there is in, say, Provincial Court as an example, or Supreme; maybe Appeal is not much of a delay. I've met with all three courts.

I'll turn it over to Michael just to see if he wants to add on that but we also have, they introduced themselves early, Joanne Turner as well as Shelley Organ here from both the Provincial and Supreme Court.

So I think I'll pass it over to Mike first and if either one of those individuals want to add to that we can.

CHAIR: ADM Noseworthy.

M. NOSEWORTHY: Thank you.

So as the minister mentioned, it's a broad question and the answer is different, as you can appreciate, between courts and between court centres.

Maybe what I will say, before I turn it over to my colleagues, the heads of administration from each of the courts, is just that the time to have a trial scheduled or hear a matter at those different court centres, depending on a wide variety of factors, is something that we're working on closely in collaboration between the department, court staff and the judiciary. We're constantly looking at different ways we can address those concerns. Whether it's looking at staffing, operations and looking at digital solutions as well, it's something that's certainly top of mind for us in the department and a source of regular discussions that we have, again, between court administration and the judiciary.

Maybe then I'll turn it over to each of Shelley and then Joanne to answer for their respective courts, if I could.

CHAIR: Shelley Organ.

S. ORGAN: Yes.

For the Supreme Court, I can say we judge a backlog on the time to trial or dates set for trial, so next available dates. With the exception of Corner Brook, I can confidently say we do not have a backlog. In Corner Brook, we are booking cases out now a year. Years ago that was acceptable; it's not any longer, and we're working on solutions to that.

For the rest of the courts and judicial centres, we can book a one-week trial, for instance, in the mid to late fall. That's reasonable because there's preparation time and things like that.

Also, I'd like to note just for Supreme Court, most of our cases, civil and family, are self-

driven so it is hard to talk about backlogs and time to trials, dispositions and clearance rates.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Can I just respond to –?

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Just with respect to that, would you be able to give a number of cases that you have that are experiencing lengthy delays, like for a year for example? Is that something you could do?

S. ORGAN: So in Corner Brook for instance – I guess a contributor to those delays this past year or two is our number of initiated cases. Our filings have increased, especially in the criminal and family. So in Corner Brook, we have I think, about 29 cases. That's double to what it was two years ago. That's active right now. That is being set down for trial or waiting for trial dates.

Does that answer your question? I might have –

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes. Thank you, Ms. Organ.

S. ORGAN: Okay.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'd like to also add that we've approved – I say we approved because it is through Supreme Court – a federal appointment of the judge of course, but we're waiting on the federal government to approve another judge for Corner Brook region. We've put the auxiliary services around it but we're waiting for the new judge to be appointed from the federal government which, in turn, will reduce that backlog. I'm happy to say that in St. John's – and other than Corner Brook – we've got it

under control. We can always improve and that's part of the reason why, in this budget, we've invested a significant amount of money in digital transformation of the courts.

We want to make it more functional and make sure that we put corrections officers and sheriff officers in place, which is why, as I say, in the continuum of justice, you can't just invest in policing services. You have to invest in the other side as well from the court side because if you invest in police resources only, well then, obviously, you're going to have more criminals taken off the road and they have to go through that system. You've got to have people on the other side of the system too to support that total transition through that continuum that we talk about all the time.

So I hope that answers your question. We see the judge as going to be a big asset in that region. They'll also going to circuit to Central as well because we see that is an option as well.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

With respect to the Provincial Court, could we have an answer there too, please?

CHAIR: Joanne Turner.

J. TURNER: In recognition that there is a heavy course load with the Provincial Court, we are working with stakeholders to better streamline more effective scheduling changes.

We're doing things like: Sentencing days, where we can focus on some cases and get our clearance rates increased; increased and more intensive pre-trial conferencing, just to ensure things are ready to go to court when the cases are scheduled; case management day, where cases such as sexual assault, perhaps aggravated assault

and indictable offenses are triaged and kind of kept an eye to within the schedule; virtual assistance from court centre to court centre is aimed at achieving efficiency which we hope to increase access to earlier trial and sentencing dates.

As well, with respect to next trial dates, I do have that information with me today to share. Depending on the court centre, if I'm looking at St. John's for example – this is as of last week – this changes on a daily basis. We're looking at mid-August in St. John's and early June for civil; for Harbour Grace for example, mid to late July of 2025; Grand Bank, mid to late July of 2025, as well; Clarendville, a similar date; Gander, early June; Grand Falls-Windsor, late May of 2025; Corner Brook is late June of 2025; Stephenville, mid-June to early July and civil cases are late August; Happy Valley-Goose Bay, mid-July and civil is late June; and in Wabush, late June and civil is late June, as well.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

We know and, I mean, we can even hear in the media, for example, one of the cases last month, in March, it was a civil case in which 23 fraud charges were all withdrawn and it was primarily attributed to the lengthy delay. The case was thrown out.

So that brings me to Jordan applications. How many Jordan applications have been made in both Provincial and Supreme Court?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: So for the best available information, which is by the day, I'll turn it over to Lisa who will provide that as of today or as of yesterday, I think.

You can provide that, Lisa, if you don't mind.

CHAIR: Lisa Stead.

L. STEAD: I can say that as of today, there are five scheduled section 11.b hearings. In terms of applications filed, I can't speak to that. Often, applications are filed and never perfected or it might be served on the Crown and never filed with the court.

So in terms of cases that are scheduled to be heard, I can say there are five today that are scheduled between Friday and I think mid-July.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Would you be able to identify the general nature of those cases, like, in terms of offences?

L. STEAD: I believe there some that are driving offences, impaired driving. I am trying to think of the ones – I saw the list. I think there are some break and enters and there may be a sexual assault. Those are the ones that are scheduled.

They are in Wabush and in St. John's and Harbour Grace are the court locations of the Provincial Court. There are none in Supreme Court.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

As well, under Provincial Court, has the analysis been completed regarding returning the Provincial Court to Sheshatshiu and what was the policy analysis recommendation on that? That was mentioned in last year's Estimates.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: So there has been a little bit of a delay in there, but I'll let the ADM Noseworthy answer to where it's to right now.

CHAIR: ADM Noseworthy.

M. NOSEWORTHY: Thank you.

As the minister mentioned, the timing is a bit different than we had anticipated. I can share that that policy analyst position has recently been hired. I do want to clarify that the role of that position is to do an evaluation of all court centres, including Circuit Courts throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and make recommendations on that basis.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: The hon. Member's time is expired.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: No, that's it.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Just a second here.

One final question with respect to the provincial courthouse in Stephenville Crossing, I'm just curious to clarify which department is overseeing the renovations. Considering the quote that came in which was quite expensive, I'm wondering was any work done to lower the cost or to look for an alternative venue.

CHAIR: Minister Davis,

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

That would be best directed at Transportation and Infrastructure but very good question.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

We'll do that.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

That's it for my questions here.

CHAIR: Seeing no further questions, I ask the Clerk to recall the subhead.

CLERK: 3.1.01 to 3.2.01 inclusive, Law Courts.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 to 3.02.01 inclusive, Law Courts, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 through 3.2.01 carried.

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

CLERK: 4.1.01 to 4.2.02 inclusive, Public Protection.

CHAIR: Shall 4.1.01 to 4.2.02 inclusive, Public Protection, carry?

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Last year's budget included funding for 10 additional RNC front-line officers. Are all of these positions filled?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

Over the last three years, ending this year, we put in place 30 new officers, 10 each

year. I'll turn it over to the Chief of Police to let you know if they've all been hired. I know there's a significant amount of recruits in the – I hate to use the word "hopper," but in the training session for that, but there's a significant number of recruits that are coming through.

I will turn it over to the Chief before I get myself in trouble talking about hoppers.

CHAIR: Chief Roche.

P. ROCHE: Good day. Thank you for your question.

We currently have 17 cadets at the Atlantic Police Academy in training. They will be back the end of this May. They'll commence then their on-the-job training program, which will take them until mid to late August which they will graduate and come back and be sworn in as police officers.

Commencing in late July, 12 other cadets will be attending a second program at the Atlantic Police Academy. This is the first year they have had two classes going through. Those cadets will follow the same sort of program. They'll go away and they'll be back late December, January for their on-the-job training.

Commencing next January, I'm guaranteed 15 seats, but I will be visiting the Atlantic Police Academy and have executive meetings with the director there next week to request an additional five seats for potentially 20 seats next January and I'm looking for 15 to 20 again next July.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you very much, Chief.

The minister said there were 19 new RNC officers in 2026-2027. I just need the clarification. Is that in addition to the new recruits that as you referenced just now, Chief, that you get every year? I'm just wondering about that 19; is that an

additional? I think the 19 is the graduating class but I'll need clarification on that.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: No, that's a very good question. The 19 are police officers, not necessarily RNC. There will be a portion of them RNC of course, and the other portion could be RCMP. As I've said, in 2026-2027, they're going to be based on the need in the community, determined by consultations with the Policing Transformation Working Group and the communities and the policing establishments that will be there.

So that is in addition to the 10 that we have currently in this fiscal year. The 10 is a bit of a misnomer as well because it's more like 15 police officers this year because the joint task force that we announced as well is a 10-person unit that's comprised of five RNC and five RCMP – actually, four and four and then two federal policing people as well.

Ten is what we committed to over a three-year period, 10 each year, and the other additional four are coming from the joint task force that we just announced in November that you spoke about a little earlier in our conversations, about not necessarily that, but about the announcements in November.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

So how many RNC officers retired last year?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: In 2024-2025, there were eight that retired.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

And how many are eligible for retirement currently?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Twenty-seven that are eligible to retire. They're eligible to retire, but some of them could be 15 years into the service, so it's not likely that there will be 27 retire, but there will be some that will retire, there's no doubt.

That's why we're aggressively recruiting, and the Chief identified earlier the aggressive recruiting strategy that we have. And that's just the new hires that are going to APA in PEI. There is another set of recruitment that's happening for experienced officers, and I don't want to steal the Chief's thunder on any of this stuff, if he wants to jump in, he can. But they're doing people that would want to come home. That could be RCMP officers from another jurisdiction, that could be OPP, or any of those experienced officers that would want to come home, with some success.

You will have noticed in social media that there's an extensive recruitment campaign, the faces of the RNC. I think it's a beautiful campaign that they've done. Working very hard to understand – making it a desirable opportunity for people to want to work in the police service, which is what we want. And kudos to them for the work they've done from that perspective. We've got a very positive recruitment side – I know we're talking about the RNC now – we've got a positive recruitment side as well for the RCMP, and if you had any questions about that, I can talk about that as well.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

For clarification, the chief has mentioned the recruits, the 17 and the 20, in July. What I want to ask is, are there any new RNC officers outside of or on top of the APA classes?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: The timing of the APA classes are not necessarily lining up with the announcements that we've made about

policing. Those 10 police officers that we announced for this year will come out of that class.

There are some assumptions that there are going to be retirements; there are going to be vacancy factors; there are going to be things that we're going to be replacing those other recruits that are coming out of APA to fill those; potential retirements, potential movements within the police force that will go to some other police force. There will be a home for all of those individuals that are going through the APA program. That's why there's such a strong vetting process that the chief and his group goes through.

So, yes, you're seeing numbers of 17 and 12. Some of that will be filling positions that are already not necessarily vacant – there are some that are vacant, of course – some could retire, as well as the complement of the 10 that we're looking at for this year.

The other five, one I missed earlier, was the executive position for the IPV unit that we put in place as well in the fall of the year.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So can I just clarify how many experienced police hires?

B. DAVIS: I opened the door so it's just as well for you to walk through it. I'll ask the chief to do that.

CHAIR: Chief Roche.

P. ROCHE: Again, thank you for the question.

Over the course, we are always recruiting for experienced officers. Over the last year or so, we've hired, I believe it was seven experienced officers. One in the last month and a half who was a military officer, joined our organization. We've hired from other agencies across the country, just not from the RCMP.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

P. ROCHE: Does that answer your question, Ma'am?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yes, it does. Thank you.

P. ROCHE: Thank you.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Under Supplies, could you please outline why the Supplies line is increasing? Last year it went over budget and this year it has a planned increase as well, and that's under 4.1.01, Supplies.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

That variance in funding is other departmental initiatives that are going to be announced in the coming days and weeks.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: So can I ask what they are?

B. DAVIS: You can –

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I can ask but you're not going to answer.

B. DAVIS: You can ask but I'll come to departmental initiatives, and I'll steal a word from Minister Loveless out there: stay tuned.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. All right, I definitely will.

So under Purchased Services, can you please outline why Purchased Services went over budget last year, spending \$3.1 million?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Yeah.

That would be fleet repairs or maintenance, vehicle rentals, recruitment, advertising,

training and other related costs associated with that.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: The Supplies: Does that involve the body cams? Is that involved with this?

B. DAVIS: No, mostly to do – and I'll ask if the chief if the chief wants Andrew to, but Andrew can give you a little bit of an update on that. Bear in mind, that it's not about announcement things yet, I guess.

CHAIR: Andrew Green.

A. GREEN: So did you ask specifically about Purchased Services?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Supplies.

A. GREEN: Supplies?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Oh, no, well, Purchased Services and Supplies.

A. GREEN: Yeah, so for Purchased Services, we seen a large increase in our repairs and maintenance costs that everybody in the community is seeing. It's about 150 per cent more than what it was in the previous year.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay.

With respect to Supplies, I'll go back to my question about the body cams. Would that have been included there, because it went over budget and this year there's a planned increase as well?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Yeah, that wouldn't be part of that.

As I said earlier, we're in discussions on that with the RNC through the chief. We meet on a regular basis on that. I can give you one example of a departmental initiative that you talked about earlier. It would be JFOs, joint force operations. That would be

one that we've announced already that would be reflective in departmental initiatives that would be coming forward.

Some of those costs associated with equipment, they would be required to have vehicles and/or equipment so that would be one. Obviously, there's an initiative there that we talked about recruitment with APA from a training standpoint. That would be part of that as well. I'd just like to give you at least some crumbs along the way to make sure.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Yeah. That's good. Well, that's kind of you. Thank you.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

I just have a few questions, first on numbers. How many police officers are currently in the force? Just the numbers, and how many officers left in the previous year not related to retirement?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: There are 424 officers and 112 civilians, so there are more than 500 people helping police our communities in the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary area. There was eight that retired, as I said earlier; there were 11 that left either voluntarily or involuntarily.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

Under 4.1.03, RNC Public Complaints Commission, how many public complaints did the Commission receive in the past 12 months, and is this an increase or decrease over the year before that?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: There were 114 complaints filed as of March 31, and there was, I think, 57

complaints that were concluded in 2024-2025.

As I said before, it's a snapshot in time. Some complaints can go on extended periods of time based on – not necessarily the Commissioner or the investigation. It could be that one party is not ready to come forward with those questions or answers to the questions that the Commissioner may have.

As I said before, I can get you the detail if it's an increase or not at some other time. I don't know that to be the sure but I can get that for you.

J. DINN: Yeah. Thank you.

4.1.04: How many cases is the Serious Incident Response Team currently investigating?

B. DAVIS: Sorry, Jim can you say that again?

J. DINN: Sure thing. How many cases is SERT currently investigating – that's 4.1.04.

B. DAVIS: Thank you. I thought that's what you said, I just wanted to make sure.

There were 47 files open in '24-'25 as of March 31, 2025. There were 38 files that were closed in '24-'25 and there are 11 active files currently.

J. DINN: Thank you.

In 4.2.01, Adult Corrections, how many classification officer and community officer positions are currently vacant, and how many total positions are there?

B. DAVIS: Okay.

As of March 31, there are eight classification officer positions: four at HMP, one at Labrador Correctional Centre, one at the Women's Correctional Centre, one at West Coast Correctional Centre and one at

Bishop Falls Correctional Centre; and there are three vacant that are actively under recruitment.

J. DINN: Thank you.

What initiatives are currently being undertaken to address the staffing shortages at HMP, and are there any changes to the job vacancy numbers as a result?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: We've got four, not just for classification officers.

I'll speak in more broad terms. There was 67 correction officers that were vacancies, 28 of those were filled, 15 recruits are currently graduating from APA, 29 recruits are currently in training, seven recruits are confirmed to start training in June of this year.

It's a good number to get past our 67 vacancies that we had. We're working very hard to actively recruit individuals but let there be no mistake that one of the stumbling blocks is, obviously, HMP itself. I'm not going to hide behind that. That's something that we need to address.

We've made a commitment, as the government, that we're going to be building a new correction facility. That is a commitment that's going to be honoured by this minister that sits in this chair and our Premier has been very clear on that and we're going to be moving forward on that at some point, hopefully, in the very near future. We're working through that process and that will, undoubtedly, make it a little easier for recruitment standpoint.

We made some very good strides in that area. I turn it over to Lorelei who works very hard in the correction side and see if she had anything to add based on what I had but I'm sure there are going to be other

questions so she can definitely jump in now or wait.

CHAIR: ADM Roberts.

L. ROBERTS: Minister, you summed it up quite accurately. There has been quite a bit of movement in terms of recruitment. You know, we are actively recruiting all the time and we're having very good success in terms of people's interest in attending training and, as you can just imagine, we do have training offered back to back and we do have a number of people who are interested in it.

In addition to that, we do also hire experienced officers and advertise for that consistently. We do have a number of people who have put their names forward for that. So, as you can see, throughout the year we had a number of vacancies and we've done quite good in filling them.

Keep in mind we've had new positions added so, as we add the new positions, we have to recruit for those positions. We're always in catch-up phase to recruit for those positions, so they're added on any numbers that we have which becomes a new vacancy.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Chair, I go back to the minister with regard to the new HMP. I think the phrase he used was in the very near future. So I'm asking him to define the very near future as best he can; is it a month, two months, a year, 10 years before the term runs out?

B. DAVIS: So we've been working very hard on working with Transportation and Infrastructure on that very file. I can't say within a day or hours, but it's going to be soon. We're working through that process and as it gets a little closer, you're going to be involved in some way in being at that announcement, I'm hopeful.

That's where I'm to with this now; it's an important piece, a commitment that we've made. It's not something that I would be waiting on in any length of time. I want to move as quick as we possibly can on it, and I know that our government is committed to that.

J. DINN: Thank you, Minister, and Chair.

I would say that a large part of the recruitment and retention for the HMP is conditions, so until we have that solved, we're going to have this perennial problem.

Is there any change in the amount of money that the province receives from the federal government for housing federal prisoners in our facilities?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I don't think there's a change in the quantum that we receive per person; I think it's the same amount per inmate per day of \$376.85. But as we're aware, our corrections system has a high remand population, which is not convicted of anything at this point, but they are housed as a protection for the community or the criminality or the actions that they've taken, so when they go through the court proceedings, then it will be dealt with from a federal side as well as a provincial side.

I hope that answered your question. If you want some more detail than that, I can ask Lorelei to jump in as well, but it hasn't changed the amount of money from them that we receive from them per day, per inmate, but the number of days that they're under federal processes is probably less because they're in remand.

J. DINN: Thank you.

How many federal prisoners are currently being held, and what portion of the inmate population does this represent, and have those figures increased or decreased over the last year or so?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I was just looking to the brain trust behind me on that one, but it varies from day to day. I can try to get that; we don't have that at our fingertips for you, but it does change from day to day, week to week. I don't have that here for you right now.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

Would it be possible to have the numbers of inmates currently in each facility as well as the maximum capacity of those facilities?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Yes, so our inmate counts vary from day to day, as I said before. At any given time, there could be between 350 and 400 inmates within our corrections facilities, and that's been a consistent thing over the past number of months.

J. DINN: Thank you.

I was just looking for the numbers per facility, Chair.

B. DAVIS: I can try to get that for you, but as I said, it varies from day to day.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: The Member's time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

Returning to 4.1.01, RNC, how are calls for service triaged?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'm not to even take an opportunity at that because we support them – we're not operational. The operational decisions of the RNC lie within the purview of the RNC themselves, so I'll

turn it over to Chief Roche to answer that question.

CHAIR: Chief Roche.

P. ROCHE: Thank you for your question.

In relation to triage, you mean when someone calls to make a complaint. So there are different priority calls, obviously. So emergency calls are our first priority. Depending on the nature, they go through our communications centre and will be dispatched to officers working that particular shift and that time of day, obviously.

There are other calls, called nature types, that can be reported online, and that we would encourage people do so. So minor thefts and that sort of thing that can be reported through our online service and then followed up by an operational investigation unit which we established about a year ago. Which alleviates the number of investigations which patrol officers then carry on patrol, so it makes time more efficient for the officers.

Does that answer your question?

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Well, it does somewhat, but, Chief, I'm just wondering, for example, if you have a call of a crime of violence versus a call of property crime versus another minor offence, is there a system in place in which you triage them in terms of the seriousness of the crime?

P. ROCHE: Yes, as I said, there's priority one, two, three and four, depending on the nature of the call, if it's a violent crime or a crime in process, shall we say, as opposed to you came home and found your shovel missing from your backyard. So that's how they are prioritized as. If you are calling as in some recent incidents occurring in our city lately, it's an immediate response by officers.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

What is the average response time for each level of triage?

P. ROCHE: Again, thank you for your question.

I will have to get back to you on that. I can't tell you that off the top of my head here, tonight.

Sometimes, again, if it's a 911 call, it would be moments, minutes shall we say, depending on where the officers are coming from. Others could be a little longer than that, shall we say.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you.

I assume there is some data though to explain that.

P. ROCHE: Very much so. I can certainly get the data for you and have that available for you, probably in very short order actually. Not tonight mind you but within the next few days.

Andrew, make note.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you very much, Chief.

P. ROCHE: Thank you.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Subhead 4.1.02, Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Do we have statistics or does the minister have statistics on how often police visit the remote communities of Northern Labrador? If so, are there periods when communities, such as Postville, may not have any police presence in the community?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

It's a very good question. I don't have the answer to that directly for you. I can ask the RCMP for that, as they are a contract police

force for us, but what I can say, we've seen some great success with the RCMP over the past six or eight months. We've got Assistant Commissioner Pat Cahill, a Newfoundlander and Labradorian – I have two Pats as chiefs of police that work very well together and there are some synergies that you get from having that. I know a significant number of my colleagues across the country really envy the position that we are in as a province with two very well-trained, skilled police forces that work so good together.

To answer the question in a longer way, I'm trying not to be long, but there's a significant recruitment drive that's been happening with the RCMP that would alleviate some of those problems to harder-to-recruit areas. They've made some changes with their recruitment process. It used to be, with RCMP, that you would be posted anywhere but now, you can choose to be posted in your home province, maybe not your home community, but your home province. They endeavor to do all those things.

There's a significant number of RCMP officers currently in training at the depot that would be 14 of which – no sorry, 40 cadets are posted to B Division right now as we speak from '24-'25 and, then, there are 14 graduates in April and June of this year that will be there. They've also recruited five experienced officers from other locations around the country that are from Newfoundland and Labrador that wanted to come home.

They've done some significant work. That will alleviate some of those concerns, but you're not wrong in the fact that some of those Northern communities are challenging to get to on a daily basis. They do try to get there as much as they possibly can.

I hope that answers your question and I'll endeavour to get you some more detail in the future.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I appreciate that, thank you.

The pre-budget submission from the National Police Federation outlined how calls for service for the RCMP in the province has increased, they gave the time frame from 2014 to 2023. They also noted that there was a population growth by about 4 per cent.

Why has the number of police officers per 100,000 people decreased; because, in essence, what this means is that the RCMP are responding to more calls but yet they have fewer officers available.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I have met with the group, that you just highlighted, on a couple of occasions. I think we've had at least two, if not three, meetings with the association for the RCMP – very strong meetings. They're on our better-than-quarterly meeting schedule. We want to hear their concerns. We understand that they've voiced some concerns on those. That's part of the reason why the Policing Transformation Working Group is working with the RCMP in those communities as well, to see how that looks on a go-forward basis.

We're working very closely with our federal colleagues on the negotiation side of the contract that expires in 2032. That sounds like a long time away, but you've got to plan for what could be coming in the future, if anything was to change. So we're working closely with them.

As far as it goes from a recruitment standpoint, there has been vacancies in the RCMP; longer term vacancies in some rural communities around our province that we're endeavouring to get filled. That's what I highlighted with the changes in recruitment. We're working very closely with that. We're going to continue to work hard with the RCMP in that contract policing but operational decisions on where our officers

are placed is based on the needs of the communities.

The Policing Transformation Working Group worked with the community of Goose Bay just recently and it was identified, through working with the community, that there was a gap of five officers that needed to be filled. To support that, that's what we put in place to try to rectify some of the concerns that were happening in that community from a policing perspective.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

Yes, I too have met with the National Police Federation, especially in regard to the pre-budget submission. I note that they have been calling for 25 new RCMP officers in the province for this budget. So how many new positions will be created this year?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: We created five in Happy Valley-Goose Bay that I highlighted just now, and we identified that there would be 19 additional resources in '26-'27 to potentially go between the two forces based on need in the community. We've also added four RCMP officers for the joint task force that we put in place.

That's nine that we've already put in place for this budget. They're asking for 25 and there are 19 that would be potentially coming in. Some portion of those would be RCMP, of course, that'll come in '25-'26. We're always looking at working with our stakeholders, such as the group we highlighted and are talking about here now, as well we meet with Assistant Commissioner Cahill on a very regular basis to ascertain the concerns that they may have with respect to community policing in, what they would have, 80 per cent of geography in Newfoundland and Labrador.

They do fantastic work in what they do. Obviously any resources that we can put in

place, we will be always looking at ways we can support them.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

I think it would be very beneficial, and I'm wondering since the RCMP are not represented here tonight, would the minister arrange for a meeting so that I could ask questions about things that you've referenced; for example, with respect to the remote communities of Northern Labrador? It would be really beneficial if we could have that meeting.

B. DAVIS: Oh, just one second. I think Lorelei can answer a question that we asked earlier.

Sorry about that.

L. ROBERTS: Sorry about that. The RCMP has a contract with us. We work with the RCMP through that contract.

The RCMP does regularly patrol Postville and they patrol it through – oh, God, I have to say the word – Makkovik, sorry. I have to think about it before I say it. They regularly patrol it from Makkovik because that's where they're stationed. So it is on their regular patrol and they do have the resources, for example, like boats, Ski-Doos and all the types of resources and tools that they require in order to patrol those areas. So that is on their regular patrol list.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Just to answer your question: Yes, I have no problem with coordinating that.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you so much.

CHAIR: The Member's time is expired.

Does the Member for St. John's Centre have any further questions?

J. DINN: Yes. Thank you, Chair, just a couple more.

Are there any plans to make the electronic monitoring program province wide?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

We do have an electronic monitoring process. I think we have 60 units, of which 39 are utilized. We have them available to us, but it's not our call to determine who goes into those. It's determined by the court.

There are conditional sentence orders, 12 probationary orders, two on temporary absences. That's the ones that we currently have in the 39 offenders that are electronic monitoring, but we do have more capacity to add to that, but it's not in our purview to determine who goes into those. It's based on judge and, I guess, the type of activities that they've been involved in and if the conditions of their release can be handled through electronic monitoring.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Under 4.2.02, Youth Secure Custody – and this might be a question for Transportation and Infrastructure, but your department, we would assume, must hold some responsibility for the condition of the youth detention centre. So what actions are you taking currently to ameliorate the conditions at the youth detention facility in Whitbourne?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you for the question.

Yes, the maintenance and infrastructure does lie in Transportation and Infrastructure, but my understanding is the replacement of

the roof for units and the repairs inside are out for tender right now. So that will be done. That's been a process that we've been working with them.

Obviously, we're always looking to ensure that infrastructure, that is in Justice and Public Safety, is at the best level it can, but that's working with Transportation and Infrastructure and, in this case, the replacement of the roof is going to tender as we speak.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

If I had one last question, I guess – I thought I had it here, but with regard to the traffic cameras, where are we with those – I don't know if that would be your department or not – with rolling these out?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: It's a shared responsibility. Two of the ministers who happen to be in this room right now, that are going to be doing something with that – and I'll use his words, because he's actually here. He may say stay tuned and I'm sure he would agree with me, and you won't have to wait too long.

J. DINN: I would assume that if these cameras are going up, they're going to be signs there letting people know that there are cameras in the area, because it's not so much to – well, it's no use catching them if we can't get the fines. So it's better to warn them and force them to slow down. Just a thought.

B. DAVIS: It's about deterring, and the public safety in those communities. Thank you for bringing up that question; it's a very good one. It's an exciting day for Justice and Public Safety when we get the opportunity to work with my colleague from Service NL and implement something that I think is going to be very good for the people of this province, and it can expand hopefully quick.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Thank you, Chair, I'll be staying tuned.

B. DAVIS: Excellent. Love it!

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: 4.2.01, Adult Corrections: There was \$50 million allocated over two years for some temporary infrastructure improvements to improve conditions at HMP. What improvements have already been completed?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I'm trying to find my note on that.

There have been some improvements done already, the open-air courts, as an example. I'll turn it over to Lorelei who would be able to give you up-to-date actions of what has been taking place. Obviously, we know there is a – I hate to use the words "stop-gap measure," but there is an opportunity to make sure that we provide the best services we can, given the antiquated facility that we're working with.

So there have to be investments made, and the previous minister moved on those, which was an important decision, and now we'll get some work done on that.

I'll turn it over to Lorelei to give us an update, and I'm waiting with bated breath to hear it.

CHAIR: ADM Roberts.

L. ROBERTS: We currently have two trailers set up for programming. One of the trailers has Locke's construction or contracting just putting the finishing touches on it; it's quite a lovely new trailer. We have another one that we offer ABE and other types of programming.

We also have the two open-air courts with basketball nets installed; they're ready to go now, ready for use. There is going to be a structure constructed inside the secure area and that will provide new space for admissions and change rooms and storage of property, and the construction on that building is proposed to start in July 2025.

We're in the process, and it's ongoing, of updating the video surveillance system and other security systems in the facility. The tender has been sent out and the awarding of the contract is about to occur, and some maintenance is currently being done to prepare for that.

The renovation of the space for new video visitation and video court booths have been identified, and this will take place once the new outbuilding is in place and we're able to move things to that.

We've also done some work with our inmate advisory committee to look at what program needs are required for the individuals that are currently housed at the HMP. And access to programming, as the minister mentioned, we've done a lot with our recruitment and retention with our correctional officers at the HMP and that helps improve access to programming.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you.

So you've basically indicated what improvements have already been completed. What improvements are planned or have you mentioned all of them that are planned, and how much has been set aside for this coming fiscal year?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I think ADM Roberts gave a fulsome list of what's planned and what has been implemented based on the \$15 million-ish that was approved by the previous minister to do through the budget process. Obviously, it takes a little longer than we would like to do. You're dealing

with a corrections facility, so you have to go through all those extra processes and procedures to ensure the safety of everybody involved.

But those things are moving quickly, and we're excited about what we see as helping make the facility a little bit better for those individuals that are housed there.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Thank you, Minister.

In October 2024, you issued a news release that spoke about the new program trailer and associated programming. How many people have actually participated in the ABE, the Adult Basic Education programming, since then?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: As the ADM had mentioned, the final touches are on those portable units are being finalized. I don't think in those particular units if they have had anybody go through them yet but I do – I'll turn it over to ADM Roberts to go through that with you.

CHAIR: ADM Roberts.

L. ROBERTS: ABE is operational at the HMP. They started in September and, essentially, individuals who are interested to participate in ABE do participate. Interestingly enough, I was there for a visit the other day and they mentioned that they have in excess of 20 to 30 people who are in various stages working through courses with ABE.

So, again, depending on the time of stay and that sort of thing, folks at the HMP, it will depend on how they progress through and their interest in progressing through.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

In that news release, there was a mention of the New Day, the Safety and Repair, the

anger solutions, Seeking Safety and First Light programs. Do you have any numbers about any of the inmates that have participated in those programs?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: I didn't get the chance to say this earlier, I just want to say thank you to the volunteer groups and stakeholders that do the fantastic work within all of our corrections facilities, not just HMP, because they do significant work in all the corrections facilities.

I've had the opportunity to tour some other facilities as well and see how beneficial it can be when you have the right mix for programming and ABE, and those programs happen in every place with volunteers in many cases. Obviously, we have some support we provide those groups do that fantastic work and I think we can get that information for you if Lorelei doesn't already have it.

I'm guessing she probably already has it so I would let her go and let you know that.

CHAIR: ADM Roberts.

L. ROBERTS: In terms of the number of people that go through, I don't have a complete count but, essentially, we do offer Seeking Safety, anger solutions, Safety and Repair and New Day programs and it's open to any inmate who would like to attend. Given that individuals may be on remand, they may or may not wish to attend but, if they want to attend and they do indicate they wish to attend, we will accommodate them.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

Has any rehabilitative programming been cancelled or delayed because of lack of staffing, staff vacancies, sick leave, et cetera, at HMP?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: Thank you.

Like in any corrections facility, there is ebb and flow that happens when either something is in lockdown or something changes in the facility where the priority has always been medical appointments, lawyers, court proceedings that they would have to go to and, obviously, visitations would rank there as well.

So if there is, we try to limit that as much as we possibly can, but there has been, from time to time, a program that can't go ahead because of something that's happening within the confines of whatever corrections facility it is. That happens in every corrections facility across the country, and around the world I would think, but it does happen from time to time. I don't have the numbers of that for you, but I can try to get those if they are available.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay. Thank you, Minister.

There was \$150 million received from the federal government last year, how was that money used?

CHAIR: Minister Davis.

B. DAVIS: When we build the facility, that will be used for the new corrections facility and, hopefully, much more.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

I'm not sure if this was stated earlier but what is the current capacity at HMP right now?

B. DAVIS: I don't have that number for you. I think I said earlier to a question that our colleague had asked, it ranges on a day-to-day basis between 350 and 400 in all of our corrections facilities.

At any point at a day in time it could be 15 or 17 in Corner Brook, it could be 220 in HMP, it could be 64 in the West Coast corrections facility. It changes on the day-to-day but our complement is fairly consistent between 350 and 400 at all of our facilities.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: Okay, thank you.

4.2.02, Youth Secure Custody: In February, CBC reported infrastructure and capacity problems at the youth centre. What action since then has been taken to repair the facility?

B. DAVIS: It's a very good question, thank you. It's a very good question.

I highlighted earlier that the four units that we have, obviously, there's a roof issue that's being tendered now to do that. When that roof issue is finished, the inside work will be done. That will expand the ability to utilize a couple of extra units.

One of the things that is in youth corrections, there could be orders in which you can't be in the presence of another youth that's in there and, where we have that facility, that puts a little bit more of a strain on it. It could be one youth or two youths in one unit and two or three in another unit, which requires more staff to deal with those concerns. So we're always monitoring that situation, and we'll continue to monitor that situation.

There was a time in which the Youth Correctional Centre was empty – not too long ago. So, obviously, there are things that have changed in the community that we are living. We're very cognizant of that. We're working very closely with our corrections folks to try to provide the best services we can to those individuals and sometimes those orders that are put in place for not being able to be in the presence of another individual, that puts a little bit more of a strain on it but that's stuff

that we have to deal with in the justice system that is very important for the development of those young people.

We want to make sure they have the best chance at success. These are the individuals you want to invest the infrastructure and the programming into to try to help them make better choices in the future for the longer term for them.

CHAIR: The Member's time is expired.

The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

J. DINN: I have no questions, Chair, except to say thank you to the minister and his staff for answering our questions, and also to Chief Roche and his staff for your patience tonight and providing us with the information.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

H. CONWAY OTTENHEIMER: I have no further questions.

I, as well, want to say thank you to everyone for your participation here this evening. I really appreciate it.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Okay. Seeing no further questions for the subhead, I now ask the Clerk to recall the grouping.

CLERK: 4.1.01 to 4.2.02 inclusive, Public Protection.

CHAIR: Shall 4.1.01 to 4.2.02 inclusive, Public Protection, carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

This meeting is adjourned.

On motion, subhead 4.1.01 through 4.2.02, Public Protection, carried.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.

CLERK: The total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Justice and Public Safety, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Department of Justice and Public Safety carried?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Justice and Public Safety carried without amendment.

CHAIR: We thank the minister and the departmental staff and officials and the Committee for your attendance here this evening.

The next meeting will be Friday, April 11, at 1:00 p.m. to consider the Estimates of the Department of Education.

I'll ask for a mover to adjournment.

J. HOGAN: So moved.

CHAIR: Moved by the Member for Windsor Lake.