



Fifth Session, 40th Parliament

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Victoria

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Issue No. 14

HON. LINDA REID, MLA, CHAIR
AND SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Victoria

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Chair:

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly)

Members:

Hon. Michael de Jong, QC (Abbotsford West BC Liberal)

Mike Farnworth (Port Coquitlam NDP)

Eric Foster (Vernon-Monashee BC Liberal)

Shane Simpson (Vancouver-Hastings NDP)

Jackie Tegart (Fraser-Nicola BC Liberal)

Clerk:

Craig James (Clerk of the House)

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MINUTES

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Thursday, December 1, 2016
11:30 a.m.
Douglas Fir Committee Room
Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C.**



Present: Hon. Linda Reid, MLA (Speaker and Chair); Hon. Michael de Jong, QC, MLA; Mike Farnworth, MLA; Eric Foster, MLA; Shane Simpson, MLA; Jackie Tegart, MLA

Legislative Assembly Officials Present: Craig James, Clerk of the House; Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees; Hilary Woodward, Executive Financial Officer; Gary Lenz, Sergeant-at-Arms; Brian Urquhart, Director, Financial Services

Others in Attendance: Paul Nyquist, Office of the Auditor General; Bruce Perry, Office of the Auditor General

1. The Chair called the Committee to order at 11:37 a.m.
2. **Resolved**, that the Committee approve the agenda as circulated. (Jackie Tegart, MLA)
3. **Resolved**, that the Legislative Assembly Management Committee adopt the minutes of its meeting dated October 19, 2016 and that the minutes be posted to the Committee's website. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)
4. **Resolved**, that the Legislative Assembly Management Committee accept the minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee dated November 2, November 17, November 21, 2016 and December 1, 2016. (Hon. Michael de Jong, Q.C., MLA)
5. The Committee considered the December 1, 2016 report of the Finance and Audit Committee.
6. The Committee considered the *Legislative Assembly Accountability Report 2015-16*.
7. **Resolved**, that pursuant to the *Legislative Assembly Management Committee Act*, the Committee adopt the *Legislative Assembly Accountability Report 2015-16* as presented today; approve the Financial Statements of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia for the year ended March 31, 2016; and further that a copy of the report be deposited with the Office of the Clerk and that the Speaker present the report to the House at the earliest opportunity. (Hon. Michael de Jong, Q.C., MLA)
8. The Committee considered the report titled *Members Information Technology Review and Recommendations: Productivity, Flexibility and Efficiency in the 41st Parliament*.
9. **Resolved**, that the Legislative Assembly Management Committee adopt the report titled *Members Information Technology Review and Recommendations: Productivity, Flexibility and Efficiency in the 41st Parliament*. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)
10. **Resolved**, that the Committee approve an annual grant of up to \$10,000 for the BC Youth Parliament, subject to the development of an Assembly grant policy and preparation of a funding letter. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)
11. The Committee considered various items relating to the Members' transitional assistance policy.

12. Resolved, that the transitional assistance policy utilize a simple definition of “employment monies” which includes but is not limited to salaries, wages, commissions, bonuses, self-employment income, and any amounts paid for serving on a governance board. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)

13. Resolved, that the transitional assistance policy include the provision to send a request for confirmation of employment monies to each former Member in receipt of transitional allowance on a quarterly basis. The former Member would be required to respond to the request for confirmation, regardless if the former Member had received any employment monies. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)

14. Resolved, that the transitional assistance policy include definitions of career counselling, education and training costs or examples of eligible retraining costs under these categories and that reimbursement is based on presentation of receipts. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)

15. Resolved, that the transitional assistance policy provide reimbursement to former Members for career retraining programs if the former Member enrolls in such a program during the 15 month eligibility period, although the retraining program may conclude after the 15 month period ends and that reimbursement is based on presentation of receipts. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)

16. The Committee reviewed and considered the *External Use of Chamber and Committee Rooms* policy.

17. Resolved, that the Committee approve the *External Use of Chamber and Committee Rooms Policy* as amended to indicate that cost recoveries shall be permissible. (Jackie Tegart, MLA)

18. The Committee considered the policy regarding the caucus funding formula.

19. Resolved, that the Committee adopt as policy the current practice regarding the caucus funding formula as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee. (Jackie Tegart, MLA)

20. The Committee considered adjustments to the non-capital and capital project approval thresholds and discussed possible options.

21. Resolved, that the Legislative Assembly Management Committee grant delegated authority to the Finance and Audit Committee to approve any unbudgeted or unanticipated operating expenditures within the fiscal year, up to a maximum of \$25,000. (Mike Farnworth, MLA)

22. The Office of the Auditor General noted that the Financial Statements of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia for the year ended March 31, 2016 have been audited and received an unmodified opinion, in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Auditing Standards.

23. The Speaker noted that the Victoria Foundation appeared before the Finance and Audit Committee and ongoing work continues towards establishing a Legislative Assembly Heritage Preservation and Restoration Fund.

24. The Committee considered constituency office financial management including the centralization of constituency office expenses.

25. Resolved, that the Committee approve in principle the move to a centralized accounting system with the intention to implement the centralization of constituency office expenses in the new 41st Parliament, and further, that Financial Services prepare information to share with and to respond to caucus information requests. (Shane Simpson, MLA)

26. The Committee noted the Finance and Audit Committee’s consideration of Constituency Assistant’s Severance policy.

27. The Clerk presented the 2017/18 Vote 1 Legislative Assembly budget submission and provided an overview of key Assembly initiatives.

The Committee considered and discussed the budget submission and agreed to consider options regarding planning for the renovation or replacement of the Armories. The Committee also agreed to reduce the proposed consultation budget for 2017/18 capital projects to \$250,000.

28. The Committee discussed the replacement of the front driveway, including electrical and drainage infrastructure upgrades. It was agreed that the Committee examine this project in conjunction with other priority capital projects for the next fiscal year.

29. **Resolved**, that the Committee approve the estimates of expenditure for fiscal year 2017/18 for the Legislative Assembly for Vote 1 as amended. (Jackie Tegart, MLA)

30. **Resolved**, that the Speaker transmit the estimates of expenditure for fiscal year 2017/18 for the Legislative Assembly for Vote 1 to the Minister of Finance on behalf of the Committee. (Jackie Tegart, MLA)

31. The Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair at 1:28 p.m.

Hon. Linda Reid, MLA
Speaker and Chair

Craig James
Clerk of the House

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2016

The committee met at 11:37 a.m.

[Madame Speaker in the chair.]

Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Madame Speaker: Good afternoon, all. Thank you all for coming. I sincerely appreciate your attendance. Legislative Assembly Management Committee of December 1, 2016, in the Douglas Fir Committee Room. A motion to approve the agenda as circulated?

J. Tegart: So moved.

Madame Speaker: Moved by Tegart, seconded by Mr. Simpson.

Motion approved.

Madame Speaker: Review of the previous minutes of October 19, 2016 — tab 2 in your document. Any business arising?

Hon. M. de Jong: Did the...? It's referred to a couple of times. Do we have a chamber use policy now? Do we have a draft?

C. James (Clerk of the House): We do. I don't.... Kate, do you have a copy of it?

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees): I do.

Hon. M. de Jong: I think I got everything.

Madame Speaker: Just by way of background, Minister, our intention is to continue to safeguard access for Youth Parliament student-learning opportunities for those who will be benefiting and/or delivering a parliamentary experience, and for others, we take them on a case-by-case basis in terms of cost recovery or waiving of the cost.

Hon. M. de Jong: Quite right. I just saw the reference to the policy several times in the material, and I didn't recall seeing it, so that's fine.

Madame Speaker: Any other items in terms of business arising?

Motion to accept the minutes as circulated? Moved by Farnworth, seconded by Tegart.

Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes Finance and Audit Committee

Madame Speaker: Finance and audit committee: previous minutes of September 27, November 2 and November 17. The minutes are behind tab 3.

Hon. M. de Jong: I read somewhere that there's a whole collection of recommended motions. Are we doing that now?

[1140]

C. James (Clerk of the House): It's actually contained in a finance and audit committee report, which refers to the previous meeting, so it may be a little better to deal with them at that point.

Hon. M. de Jong: Yes, okay. That's my question. When we get to those. The only question I had, then, is.... In the minutes of November 17, there is reference to a meeting on November 21. I didn't get the minutes for that. Did a meeting happen?

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): Yes, a meeting was held by conference call on November 21. I thought we had the minutes in your package, Minister. If that's not the case, I'll....

Hon. M. de Jong: I got the minutes for the 27th of September, November 2 and November 17. November 17 refers to the next meeting on the 21st, but I didn't get any minutes.

H. Woodward: I believe those minutes would have been passed this morning by the finance and audit committee.

C. James (Clerk of the House): That's correct, yeah.

Hon. M. de Jong: Are we dealing with them today? Did something arise?

C. James (Clerk of the House): There were a couple of issues that did arise in terms of the election period, so it wouldn't hurt for a member to bring that forward when we get to it.

M. Farnworth: We clarified the policy around signage and Facebook accounts in that the Elections B.C. recommendations will stay in place. They supersede the existing legislative ones. So you don't have to cover up the sign on your office.

The other one was that on your Facebook account and your Twitter account, you have to take out the word "MLA." But other than that, it's no longer viewed as election.... It's not campaign advertising.

Hon. M. de Jong: So I just have to make that adjustment to my Facebook account.

M. Farnworth: Yes, exactly.

Hon. M. de Jong: I'm on that.

M. Farnworth: When was the last post on there? The election of — what? — 1996?

J. Tegart: The other thing was that Facebook and Twitter are not seen as a cost, so there's no requirement to have the financial agent on every tweet or Facebook post.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Just for the information of members who weren't at the finance and audit committee meeting this morning, we invited the Chief Electoral Officer and two of his senior officials to attend in order for members to ask questions about the election campaign — advertising, and so on. Perhaps Jackie could talk to Eric about the signage questions that he had, as well, which would be very helpful.

Madame Speaker: What is currently being distributed are the minutes from the meeting directly preceding this one. When you receive them, please take a moment, and we can easily accept and approve on a go-forward basis as well. Hot off the press.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Items 6 and 7 are the ones that you should focus in on.

M. Farnworth: Sorry — of the December 1...?

C. James (Clerk of the House): Yes, this morning's meeting. We apologize. We sat from 10:30 to 11:30, and of course, this meeting started at 11:30.

E. Foster: As I look at 6 and 7, these are at the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer. Is that correct?

[1145]

C. James (Clerk of the House): That's correct. We're also getting a letter from him stipulating or laying out the responses that he provided the finance and audit committee this morning so that we can circulate that to all members.

E. Foster: Excellent. That was my question. Great.

Madame Speaker: That's going to, hopefully, capture the most frequently asked questions for distribution to both caucuses.

E. Foster: Perfect.

Hon. M. de Jong: The next item in my tab 4 is "Decision items..." There we go: December 1 decision items. We'll just deal with all of those under the decision items that have flowed from these meetings.

Madame Speaker: As soon as we approve the minutes of all of these dates — November 2, November 17, November 21 and December 1 — we'll move directly to the decision items.

Hon. M. de Jong: So moved.

Motion approved.

Finance and Audit Committee Report

Madame Speaker: That brings us to the information you've just received from Hilary Woodward for decision. Item 1, Legislative Assembly *Accountability Report, 2014-15*.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Members have in their possession the finance and audit committee report, as of this morning. In it are some decision items for this committee to consider and some information items.

The first item is the Legislative Assembly *Accountability Report, 2014-15*. There is a motion that is about to be distributed to adopt the report. The report has been prepared by the Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees and staff in her office but also with the input from all of the assembly branches. It has been previously circulated. If you wish to have more time to consider it, that's fine too. There's also a summary that has been prepared that is a little more concise.

Hon. M. de Jong: With respect to the budget and any of the other stuff, is there any time sensitivity? I mean, someone worked hard on this; I think we should read it as opposed to just blanket...

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): The accountability report, Minister, refers to the previous fiscal year, the fiscal year ending March 31, so it doesn't include within it any commitments for the forthcoming fiscal year.

It, of course, features a high-level overview of all of the accomplishments and planning of various assembly departments and key performance indicators, but the heart of the report is the audited financial statements, which have been carefully prepared by our financial services team, and reviewed, as well, by our Office of the Auditor General representatives here.

Hon. M. de Jong: Well, that's good. If there's no urgent requirement to adopt it today, let's give people a chance to read it and do it at the next go-round, unless that causes some....

C. James (Clerk of the House): Well, the only slight problem might be that one of the accountability measures is timely publishing of the accountability report, which we may not meet if we don't have it adopted. But certainly, we can defer until a later date.

Madame Speaker: The finance and audit committee, Minister, recommends it to you. We have certainly evaluated over three separate meetings.

Hon. M. de Jong: Okay, why don't we do this? Why don't we move to accept it and place it on the agenda if anything arises once people have reviewed it — put it on the agenda next time for any issues arising out of the accountability report?

Madame Speaker: Moved by de Jong, seconded by Mr. Simpson, perhaps?

Do you want to speak to it before it's passed?

H. Woodward: Yeah, just a question. The document itself includes the audited financial statements, so what we were looking for.... We have some gentlemen from the Office of the Auditor General looking for the approval of the audited financial statements, which form a component of that report — if that could be separated out.

Madame Speaker: Let me read you the actual wording. "Pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Management Committee Act, the committee adopt the Legislative Assembly *Accountability Report, 2015-16*, as presented and approve the financial statements of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia for the year ended March 31, 2016, and further, that a copy of the report be deposited with the Office of the Clerk and the Speaker, present to report to the House at the earliest opportunity."

Wording still works with everyone present? It's been moved and seconded.

Motion approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Great. That brings us to item No. 2, the members' technology review for the 41st parliament. The finance and audit committee has received the report and has adopted it itself.

[1150]

This particular report was commissioned by me. The first time we did this was at the tail end of the last parliament. It worked very well, and it's even more comprehensive this time around. This review was led by the Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees.

Kate, do you have any comments to make on it?

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): I'm happy to speak to any particular details. I would also answer any questions that you might have.

On page 7 of the report is a high-level summary of the recommendations that have been brought forward with the intent to support the productivity of members in the upcoming 41st parliament. In response to requests from members of the finance and audit committee, we have also expanded, with respect to smartphones, the availability of additional Android models for the forthcoming parliament. So there is a range of recommendations here to support members' work and their technology in their constituency offices and in their legislative offices as well.

Happy to answer any questions you might have. The report forms the basis of the information technology budget submission, which is also before the committee for consideration at today's meeting.

Madame Speaker: Questions arise? Otherwise, the motion reads: "The Legislative Assembly Management Committee will adopt the report titled *Members Information Technology Review Recommendations: Productivity, Flexibility and Efficiency in the 41st Parliament*."

Looking for a mover. Mr. Farnworth. Seconder, Jackie Tegart.

J. Tegart: There were questions brought up previously in regards to computers and technology and that sort of thing — replacement computers. Those questions were answered in regards to the maintenance and the support systems for those. I know that it was a question that MLA Foster was concerned about. I think those have been addressed, and I thank the committee for the work they've done.

S. Simpson: Just to follow up on that, I think that's true. There were some questions about why the cost of computer X, if you went to Best Buy, would be different than what we're paying. I think the explanation about additional security measures, additional software, a variety of those things that are installed and part of the computers — the hardware that we have and the software combined — explains some of the additions in those costs.

The only other comment I would make, after 11½ years, is that I see my Blackberry fading away very quickly, as we have the demise of the Blackberry as the preferred or chosen smartphone here. We'll all be moving on to other things, somewhat sadly, but that's the way it is.

Motion approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Number 3, British Columbia Youth Parliament funding request. The Speaker has received a request for a grant to the British Columbia Youth Parliament in the amount of \$10,000.

The members are welcome to discuss this matter. We will be preparing a grant policy that could be reviewed by the finance and audit committee and subsequently approved by the Legislative Assembly Management

Committee, as this is our first time being involved, if this committee agrees, in granting funds to another entity.

M. Farnworth: I move the motion.

Madame Speaker: I appreciate that. Secunder? Jackie Tegart.

Motion approved.

Madame Speaker: This brings us to item 4, members' transitional assistance.

C. James (Clerk of the House): The finance and audit committee reviewed and approved the revised members' transitional assistance policy. The proposed changes are in response to recommendations by the Office of the Auditor General following their review of the policy.

The policy is changed, essentially, in this respect. At the end of the last parliament, the finance and audit committee and LAMC agreed that members who availed themselves of the transitional assistance were to report to the Clerk of the House if and when they received funds that, perhaps, should be reported and deducted from the transitional assistance.

[1155]

The current policy is reporting on a quarterly basis, with me, the Clerk of the House, contacting all members who are participating in the transitional assistance to respond, as I say, on a quarterly basis as to whether or not they have any moneys that should be deducted from the transitional assistance itself. That seems, for the time being, to appease our auditors. We think it's a workable solution that is not onerous on the part of the office or the members themselves.

M. Farnworth: I move the recommendation.

Madame Speaker: So moved. I'm looking for a secunder.

C. James (Clerk of the House): There are four recommendations listed on the sheet. We can do them seriatim, as they say, or we can do them all at once.

M. Farnworth: Do them all at once.

Madame Speaker: Jackie seconded.

Motion approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Number 5, the external use of chamber and parliamentary committee rooms policy. This is a policy that has been worked on by the Deputy Clerk and Clerk of Committees. The finance and audit committee recommended the adoption of the new

external use of chamber and committee rooms policy.

Kate, do you have anything to add to that?

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): I'm happy to answer any questions. I know the minister has a copy of the policy in his hands at this time. The policy had not been recirculated to members of the finance and audit committee, having been considered at a number of previous meetings.

The intent, as was noted earlier, was to provide some guidance to assembly staff with respect to assisting external groups with use of either parliamentary committee rooms or, if approved, the legislative chamber itself to support a number of activities ranging from youth parliaments or other activities with a parliamentary focus, such as an interjurisdictional parliamentary conference.

On occasion, there have also been requests from other groups such as UBC's Institute For Future Legislators, for example, or the Equal Voice group. We wanted to ensure that we had a policy in place to ensure that we could manage those requests appropriately and in a cost-effective manner. If the Office of the Speaker or the Clerk wished to waive costs for certain groups, that is permitted under the policy. Nonetheless, it allows us to have an initial conversation to assist those external groups with their inquiries.

Hon. M. de Jong: What would the costs be?

C. James (Clerk of the House): They're primarily, now, costs relating to extra staffing time.

Hon. M. de Jong: I know. But have we got...? On the application form, does it say what the cost is?

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): The cost could range — depending on the length of the event, the number of days involved and whether it's over a weekend — anywhere between \$2,000 and \$5,000, if there are substantive staffing costs required, catering costs, additional IT equipment to be moved in. On occasion, we've had a lot of overtime costs associated with those events.

As long as they would fall within the parameters of the approved policy with respect to a connection to the work of parliament or in some way connected with our commitment to work to engage with youth, for example, and to build an understanding and appreciation of the Westminster model... Those kinds of activities would give us some discretion to continue our close working relationship with those groups. But they would also enable us to define where, for example, other local facilities might play a better role in hosting a conference — sort of a comparator — to encourage the groups to, perhaps, seek other opportunities for their event.

Hon. M. de Jong: Right. Fair enough. What we're now formalizing, I think, is a good idea — the terms of engage-

ment when an external group wants to come in and use the thing. Has there been any cost recovery to this point?

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): No, not to this point in time.

Hon. M. de Jong: All right. So now there's going to be a change. One of these groups — Canada's information and privacy commission, Canadian Women Voters Congress, the Preston Manning Centre for Building Democracy — is going to come, and they're going to fill out this form. I guess they're going to fill it out.

How much is it going to cost, and are we going to get the internal trap line saying: "Well, you only charged those guys 500 bucks, and now you want to charge us 5,000 bucks"?

Madame Speaker: Those examples all have a connection to this place, so we would waive those fees, if it's about learning the parliamentary process.

Hon. M. de Jong: Who would we charge? Who would we foresee charging?

C. James (Clerk of the House): It would be on an ad hoc basis in terms of the type of request, the nature of the applicant and whether it is parliamentary-related or not. [1200]

What we're trying to avoid — I believe it's happened in the past, but Kate can correct me — is the prospect of those who wish to use the chamber, for instance, or this room charging a fee for their participants. If they do charge a fee, then that would presumably be a precursor to trying to recover costs associated with permitting them to use either the chamber or this committee room.

M. Farnworth: I just want to be clear. The only people being able to use the chamber are going to be organizations or groups that are interested or have an involvement in terms of parliamentary democracy and the Westminster model. So we can.... They would actually not pay anything.

But let's say, I don't know, the Westbuild Real Estate Association thinks it'd be a cool idea to go sit in the chamber and have a conference here. They would get to come and have their conference here, but they would have to pay for it?

C. James (Clerk of the House): No.

M. Farnworth: No. Good, because I was going to say that I don't think the chamber should be used for.... It's not a fundraising venue. It's not a quaint place to hold a conference venue. It's the legislative chamber.

Hon. M. de Jong: It's not a conference centre.

M. Farnworth: It's not a conference centre — exactly. Which then brings us to.... Okay, then. If you rule that out, who else is left?

Hon. M. de Jong: Who are we charging?

C. James (Clerk of the House): Well, we haven't charged anybody.

Hon. M. de Jong: Oh no. I understand. So for....

C. James (Clerk of the House): The policy provides the ability to charge or to recover costs in the event that there is an application that's approved that involves significant costs on our part — and overtime costs are pretty horrendous — and catering and whatever amenity has been agreed to in supplying the applicant with the venue.

Hon. M. de Jong: Right. So I think the question that is emerging is: when is that likely to be triggered? The Speaker mentioned.... So if the Canadian Women Voters Congress came.... And I don't know if they charge their members to participate in a conference that they sponsor or not. My guess is they might. That might trigger....

Madame Speaker: All the groups have a travel pool. They all have a travel pool. So we would not consider that a.... I mean, basically, it's to cover their costs. They don't derive a profit from having the travel pool in place.

We have successfully handled all of these requests through the Speaker's office for the previous three years. I'm not convinced that we need to make any change.

Hon. M. de Jong: I think all we're trying to ascertain is that we are formalizing the ability to collect a fee for use of the facilities. I think we're just trying to grapple with: well, when do we think that would be triggered? If not any of these groups, then who?

E. Foster: Two things. We want to make sure that we don't start charging and competing with the hotels and the conference centres and so on.

I don't know. I mean, basically, we've said that according.... As I read the policy, or the proposed policy, these are the only people that we're going to have in here. We're not going to have the.... Who am I going to pick on today? Real Estate Board of B.C. is not going to get to use the chambers for their AGM. So we know we're not going to do that. But then we've got a bunch of not-for-profits that don't charge their people. We're going to allow them to use it and pick up the tab.

What are we changing? We have the ability to charge, but basically, what I see is we're not going to charge anybody that we're giving permission to use the building to. Or am I reading it wrong?

C. James (Clerk of the House): It gives us the ability to charge. As the Government House Leader has just asked: when is this triggered? Well, it's triggered in the initial meetings when we meet with the applicant to understand their request in terms of using the chamber and any facilities within the Legislative Assembly, including meals. It provides us with the formal opportunity to reclaim, or recoup, our expenses from them if they are in a position to do so. If they don't, then it's a decision by the Speaker or myself in terms of waiving those expenses.

[1205]

I suspect, by and large, most of the expenses would be waived, because up until now, most of the use of the chamber, and perhaps this room, has been limited in scope and term.

E. Foster: There's something you just said. In the past, if you've had any of these groups and they had sandwiches delivered, did we not charge for that in the past?

C. James (Clerk of the House): No.

E. Foster: We fed them.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Yes.

E. Foster: No wonder they all want to come here. This is a good deal. Okay.

Madame Speaker: But don't be deterred. We don't provide meals to the Youth Parliament. We have not provided meals. They're always responsible for their own meals.

E. Foster: My question was, though: any of these groups that have used the facilities in the past that we haven't charged...? Are there groups that have had meals provided that we didn't charge for?

C. James (Clerk of the House): I don't know. Kate, have we had?

Madame Speaker: Not to my knowledge.

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): I'd have to check, Eric, to confirm. I think there has been a somewhat inconsistent pattern. Because the nature of the groups has broadened considerably in recent years, I think the policy is intended to give us the tools that the Speaker might need to apply on a case-by-case basis, based on any other competing considerations.

Of course, paramount is parliamentary use of this setting — committee rooms and the chamber. Beyond that, I think from time to time, some discretion may need to be applied to an individual application — certainly ones that we haven't had on site before. The policy is intended

to give us some criteria by which we can assess and make recommendations to the Speaker.

S. Simpson: As we've seen before, we have not been clear on this. I think we've had a practice, but it hasn't been a clear practice. What I think this does is it says who we want to be able to use the facilities. That's pretty clear. And it provides us some discretion to be able to recoup costs.

Also, there may well be either academics or others who come who charge significant amounts of money for people to come and attend conferences and those kinds of things. We all see the fees for some of these conferences, which are significant. If they were looking to come here and if they broadly fit under the umbrella, well, we're going to want to recoup the costs if they're charging thousands of dollars for people to participate.

Part of the draw is that they get to come and sit in the assembly as part of this discussion. We shouldn't be out of pocket for that. I don't think anybody wants to commercialize things, but let's give some discretion to the Speaker and to the Clerk to be able to deal with that in a policy that is on paper.

J. Tegart: I would just like to say that I think it's important when somebody approaches that we actually have a policy to say: "This is the policy of this place." It is flexible, but it gives some guidelines when you're considering location and where you want to be. I think in this day and age and with taxpayers' dollars, we need to be very careful about that discretion.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Just for the information of members, policies that emanate within the assembly, various assembly branches, I've asked, especially if they're new or amended, be reviewed every year. Perhaps this is one such policy that a year from now could be reviewed by the finance and audit committee to see how it's working and if it's necessary.

Madame Speaker: As Chair, I'm in your hands. Do you wish to pass it today, or do you wish to send it back to the drawing board?

J. Tegart: I'll move.

S. Simpson: Second.

Hon. M. de Jong: I have one, just based on the conversation, which I thought was very helpful. I agree with what's been said.

I think, Shane, your point was a good one. What the policy has done is define who we think it is appropriate to use the facility. That's point 1. That's helpful.

Maybe the only thing we've been tripping over a little bit is under "cost recovery." Maybe we should change

that. Instead of “cost recovery should be required,” something a little more discretionary. “Cost recovery shall be permissible.”

It strikes me that we don’t have a hard and fast rule. It’s a discretionary thing, based on the.... The only other thing I’d say is that if we’re requiring a damage deposit from a group, maybe we don’t want them in the building.

E. Foster: This is a very good point.

C. James (Clerk of the House): We did actually consider that.

Madame Speaker: Point well taken.

Motion approved.

[1210]

E. Foster: Are we moving as sort of amended there?

Madame Speaker: I took that as a friendly amendment.

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): Yes, because I think that is certainly the intention. I’ll make sure that the minutes clarify the guidance provided. Thank you.

Madame Speaker: Craig, item 6.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Number 6, caucus funding formula. The caucus funding formula is not being recommended to be changed. It is being recommended to have it in writing. It has been more of an oral system in the past than not, and as a consequence, we’re recommending that we formally adopt the caucus funding formula policy. Hilary can speak more to that if she likes.

H. Woodward: Yes, certainly. Essentially, what it does is it documents all the previous LAMC decisions that focused on the caucus funding formula. As Mr. Clerk mentioned, there is no change in the formula itself. It is just putting it into policy in one place for ease of use and availability. It makes it easier if we have to update the policy for future decisions by this committee.

Madame Speaker: The motion reads that the finance and audit committee recommend the adoption of the caucus funding formula policy. I’m looking for a mover and seconder — moved by Jackie Tegart and seconded by Mr. Simpson.

Hon. M. de Jong: That is the formula that determines the budgets that party caucuses that are represented in the building get. I had circled.... When we get further up to the budget stuff, there is reference, in calculating caucus support services budgets, that there is an increase

being proposed. It says here: “The increase is also driven by an increase to general salaries based on the BCGEU master agreement, which also impacts the caucus funding formula. The funding formula itself is unchanged.” Is that part of the caucus funding formula that we are codifying now?

C. James (Clerk of the House): I believe so, yes.

H. Woodward: Yes, it is. Included in that formula.... You were making reference to the salary and benefits of a research officer, N21, step 5, so that gets incorporated into the formula. Then we tie any increase resulting from the BCGEU collective agreement to that position.

Hon. M. de Jong: Right, and that’s part of the overall calculation that also gets multiplied by the number of members that a caucus has.

H. Woodward: Correct, and there also is an allocation for an office and expenses as part of that formula.

Hon. M. de Jong: Right. And if others have seen this, is it actually all written out in codified form? Has everyone else seen it?

J. Tegart: Yes.

Hon. M. de Jong: Okay. Well, I don’t want to delay the thing, then.

Madame Speaker: It’s moved and seconded. All those in favour?

Motion approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Number 7, project approvals. We approached the finance and audit committee with a request to raise the spending thresholds for the various assembly branches to a maximum of \$25,000. I further recommended that should LAMC approve this change, it take effect in the new parliament.

M. Farnworth: So moved.

Madame Speaker: Speaking to it, Mr. de Jong.

Hon. M. de Jong: I just had one question. What does that mean — unbudgeted? Does that mean the costs for a project above and beyond the global budget or the cost of a project that was not contemplated when the budget was passed? We have all these envelopes of money within this thing, so give me an example of what we’re talking about.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Hilary, can you provide an example?

H. Woodward: One of the examples would be, in fact, the earlier motion that was passed regarding the Youth Parliament. The additional up to \$10,000 for that group wasn't contemplated or anticipated in the budget build of the current year.

[1215]

This provides the finance and audit committee with the ability to approve unanticipated operating projects up to \$25,000 without having to come to this committee.

Madame Speaker: But within budget. We have that ability today to do that for capital. I assumed we had that for operating as well. So this is a clarification to say: if decisions can be reached by finance and audit for under \$25,000 for capital, can the same extension be directed to operating?

Hon. M. de Jong: Right. Two things, I guess. It all gets reported out here. That's the first thing. Maybe there's a distinction, though, between unanticipated expenses up to \$25,000 and new programs up to \$25,000.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Well, "unanticipated" could be something along the lines of an emergency. But new initiatives — you're quite right — should be treated differently.

Hon. M. de Jong: Okay, but this refers to including in that authority new operating project requests. That probably should come here for approval.

Madame Speaker: Come back to LAMC?

Hon. M. de Jong: Yeah. I mean, I get the fact that unanticipated stuff happens, and give the committee some enhanced discretion. But if we're doing new programming, then I think this body is obliged to be...

M. Farnworth: It could be dealt with first at finance and audit.

Hon. M. de Jong: They could make a recommendation.

M. Farnworth: Finance and audit comes and makes a recommendation and brings it through to LAMC. That's fine.

C. James (Clerk of the House): In the new parliament.

S. Simpson: I have no problem with that. And if it's new projects, the lead time probably works fine. The challenge, of course, sometimes comes with relatively small expenditures and just the frequency of LAMC meetings — the ability to get here and allow the committee to make a determination around these things. That was part of the reason, because LAMC just doesn't meet as frequently as finance and audit.

So if it's unanticipated... We have some ability to deal with that now if this is the way we go. But just some advice maybe from staff that the project lead time on most projects is enough to say, "We're going to get in a LAMC meeting in time to be able to bring this to LAMC," if it's a new project, a new initiative. Satisfied with that?

C. James (Clerk of the House): We can work with it.

Madame Speaker: See if this meets with approval. "The Legislative Assembly Management Committee grants delegated authority to the finance and audit committee to approve any unbudgeted, unanticipated operating expenditure within the fiscal year up to a maximum of \$25,000." And delete "new operating project requests." It's been moved and seconded.

Motion approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Great. Now we're on to, in the report, information items — No. 1, the Auditor's report. The finance and audit committee received an overview of the 2015-16 financial audit of the Legislative Assembly and considered the Auditor General's final report to the finance and audit committee on the financial statement audit for the year ending March 31, 2016. We have auditors present this morning, if you wish to ask them any questions. If not, we can move on to No. 2.

Hon. M. de Jong: I don't know. They're here. Do they want to make a quick — it doesn't have to be expansive — report?

Madame Speaker: Gentlemen, please proceed.

B. Perry: It'll be a fair presentation, unqualified report, this year, in accordance with the public sector accounting standards. Progress on the management letters has been considerably made. So there are very few management letter items outstanding. As LAMC meets more, a lot of these policies that need to be adjusted are being passed, and that's going to remove a bunch of them. I think there are only a few things left, just looking at internal controls. That's basically on the IT disaster recovery. I think it's one of the last things left on it.

There has not been any really significant change to the financial statements from last year. There are no new notes. And the Auditor General has already looked at the audit final.

[1220]

It'll be dated whenever LAMC approves the financial statements. It was anticipated it would be today, but we'll just redate that Auditor's report whenever it is signed off and approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Okay, No. 2, Legislative Assembly Heritage Preservation and Restoration Fund. Did you want to speak to this?

Madame Speaker: Certainly — to say that the representatives appeared before the committee on November 17, and we certainly had some questions. We've got some ongoing work to do, and we will report back as soon as that work concludes.

Hon. M. de Jong: I take it we've got information from various quarters about what some of the structural issues might be. By the way, as I understand it, the objective here is to find a way for members of the public who may want to philanthropically channel money in to help preserve the buildings do so derive a tax benefit, a tax recognition, for that. I think that's all good. It's a question of trying to find a way to structure that.

I take it that work is ongoing. We have some information that perhaps the present form of the agreement doesn't satisfy all of the objectives and may need to be changed somewhat, and that work is ongoing.

Madame Speaker: It's only in draft, and the Victoria Foundation is examining their deliverables, as is Doug Foster, on behalf of the Ministry of Finance. They will both come back to us with recommendations.

Hon. M. de Jong: The report I read expressed some concern about surrendering jurisdiction or authority. Presumably, there is a way to build into an agreement confirmation that any decision relating to work at the assembly and on the assembly buildings and precinct buildings is the exclusive jurisdiction of the assembly itself. There must be a way to build that into....

C. James (Clerk of the House): We can look into that.

Madame Speaker: The lawyers are grappling with it as we speak.

Hon. M. de Jong: All right.

Madame Speaker: I will report back.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Number 8, budget estimates, which is coming up.

I'll move on to No. 9, constituency assistant severance. "The finance and audit committee gave further consideration to strategies to limit...."

Hon. M. de Jong: Sorry. I don't know if I'm looking at the same thing. I had a....

C. James (Clerk of the House): Oh, sorry. Yes. My apologies.

Number 3, constituency office financial management. "The finance and audit committee expressed general interest in the proposals to enhance financial controls in constituency offices and agreed to refer the issue of additional financial controls, including centralization of constituency office expenses, for consideration by the Legislative Assembly Management Committee."

E. Foster: I've got some questions on the centralization that I'm struggling with, and we've had lots of conversation prior to this. I'm going to direct this to financial services.

It's a couple. Are we going to need more people to do this, or can we do it with the people you have now, if we go to centralization?

H. Woodward: We anticipate up to one person, but we might not need any additional folks. It really depends on — if a decision is to move towards centralization — the amount of automation into a new system that we could put in, because it could change and streamline some of our current operations, for example, for redaction. Right now, with consistency offices, we redact the invoices as they come in every quarter. Under a centralized model, we would be able to redact as we go, so there would be some efficiencies there.

I can't definitively say if we would add or request the addition of one more person until we look a bit more into it. But it would be between zero and one.

E. Foster: Okay, thank you.

The other question, or concern. As an organization, both in government and Legislature, we don't have a great record in timely payment of bills — mostly government. Through many years that I submitted invoices to government through three different governments, it didn't change.

[1225]

I've been assured by financial services that this is not going to happen. My concern is instilling that information in the public. Folks, in the past, that have dealt with government build interest into their invoices before they send them because government doesn't pay interest, and they were looking at anywhere from 60 to 90 days to get paid — sometimes for some substantial bills. The belief is out there. They don't differentiate between the Legislative Assembly and the ministry of whatever. It's going to be a big challenge for us.

In our office, we pay our bills every week. Every Friday my CA pays the bills that were given out that week, and we get good deals because of it. They get paid before the invoices go out. Essentially, she pays it on the slips that she's given. That's a challenge, and it's a challenge.... I don't want somebody in the community saying: "Don't set up an account with Foster because it's 60 days before you get paid."

H. Woodward: We certainly take that concern very seriously. The systems that we've been exploring, what we are confident in.... That would be between seven and ten days upon receipt of the full documentation from a constituency office.

One of the other options that we also have would be for vendors, local vendors, to go on electronic funds transfer with us. There would be an automatic deposit into their account. That would reduce that seven-to-ten-day time frame to even less than that. It could be one day upon receipt of, again, the documentation by financial services.

The other piece that would be contemplated would be a petty cash account that would be in constituency offices — that amount, of course, to be determined by the committees as to what would be a sufficient amount. So that could be used, as well, if you needed more timely payment than a cheque.

Hon. M. de Jong: Here's what I think. By the way, I know the committee has been working at this and, I think, has turned their mind to it and has done some good work. We're at that point in the electoral cycle.... I think we've got to make a decision about this. We've at least got to signal the direction we're going. What you would ideally want to have is a system in place for a new parliament. Time is marching on. That's going to be here before we know it. I don't want us to futz around too much.

I think there are two approaches that the committee has discussed. I can't think of a third one. The two that, I think, the committee has discussed are an enhanced audit function.... I guess that means some auditors show up one day at a constituency office and say: "Show us the books." That's, presumably, what that looks like. The alternative is an approach where the dispersal of funds occurs in a more centralized way.

We kind of have a variety of that now, don't we, for salaries and rents and....

S. Simpson: It's about \$20,000 that we get to play with.

Hon. M. de Jong: Yeah. It's not a lot. We have that centralized thing right now.

I think there is a measure of hesitancy of the sort that Eric.... You're going to your local supplier. I mean, we don't deal with that many people. It's not like we have 50 suppliers. You're taking ads out in the newspaper and buying some paper. It's not a huge amount of discretionary spending.

Maybe this is what we should do. If we don't give some instructions here, it's going to be May and June, and we're going to be back where we started. Whatever we do, it would be nice for the new parliament to know what the rules of the game are going to be.

[1230]

I think what members would probably want to know is: how does this work practically? Do you send in a...? Even

I can think of a pretty efficient way to do this. It's kind of like a cheque requisition — the old work order system. I think members will want the comfort of knowing that if they send in the request centrally to issue a cheque or a transfer to such-and-such, it will happen.

I mean, members get reimbursed for travel expenses, I think, very efficiently now. That's not a bad standard. I think the turnaround on that now is good, and we should be able to replicate it. But I think what we need to be able to do, for both caucuses and for the independent members, is have the presentation to say: "This is how this will work, practically." But develop that on the assumption that.... I mean, I think that's the direction we're going in, quite frankly. I think that's where we're going.

Let's develop the system, but let's be able to say to members: "This is how it works. This is the turnaround time. If, for example, you need 200 bucks cash in your office, there's a mechanism for having that. It's just issued." I mean, there's nothing novel about that. Have answers to all those questions and have a system in place for June, when a new parliament and people are here. I don't know. That's kind of my take on it.

M. Farnworth: I'll just follow up on that. I think that is the direction that we should be moving in. I think it's critical that we brief the caucuses and, also, the constituency assistants once a more concrete position is been at.... I mean, the reality is that the changes that have taken place are requiring an increase in skill level that many constituency assistants don't have. That's not through any fault of their own. It has not been the nature of the job, and in fact, it really shouldn't be the nature of the job. Their primary skill level is assisting people getting through the maze of government and assisting us in doing that.

I know, just from my own CAs, that more and more time is being spent on the accounting side of things. This will significantly reduce that workload, and I think that's important.

The other point I'd make is that the other alternative, the increased auditing.... Let's be frank. The reality is that the moment you start saying, "Oh, the Auditor's coming in," even if it's routine and scheduled, people start freaking out. The media think it's all a great deal of fun to say, "Oh, auditors are in so-and-so's office," always looking for something. The reality is that if it's being handled centrally, within financial services, that disappears.

Hon. M. de Jong: And that would be audited.

M. Farnworth: Exactly. That gets audited. So I think we know which direction we want to do, and it doesn't need to be in place before the next election. It is after the next election, in the new parliament.

J. Tegart: I think the conversation is a good conversation around where we want to go for the next parliament.

We had discussion in regards to.... For lots of people, it's important that local vendors do not get cut out of the system as we centralize. There are some basic things that as we make presentations to caucus, we're going to hear and things that we don't want to let go up, like local vendors.

My suggestion is that we invite financial services to come in and talk to our caucuses about how they will see it working and make sure that people feel as comfortable as they can. I think that the added accountability is really important. So the direction is pretty clear here.

S. Simpson: Well, we've had lots of conversation about this. I know our caucus has had discussions. Generally, people are supportive. There's no question about moving to this, but there are questions.

What I would like to suggest is that we, in fact, approve in principle moving to the centralized system. Get financial services to meet with both of the caucuses over the next couple of months, and deal with those questions.

As I think we had said earlier, we're going to be back here in February for a month or so before we adjourn, heading into the election. We anticipate convening a meeting of LAMC, even if it's for one matter, and signing off on that after that.

[1235]

But it's that our caucuses know and that we're delivering the message. We're going to move to this kind of system of accountability, and this is where we want to go. The details? There's still work being done on that by financial services. The caucuses — we'll hear from them; they'll hear from us. They will refine those and bring it back, the detail, to us in February. We can sign off the final thing then. Then they're free to prepare for post-May.

I do think that there's some value in saying, pretty clearly, "This is where we know we need to go around controls; now let's start the ball rolling," and financial services can move forward, knowing the direction we want to take. Then the detailed work, which is most of what I hear at this table and in my caucus room, is people who have particular questions about their experience or their circumstance. Let's try to answer those in the detail but be pretty clear: "This is where we probably need to go."

E. Foster: Quickly on that. That was the direction I was looking at as well. Then finance and audit. If everybody could just bring our suggestions to the presentation, what the presentation will look like, financial services can have their package together for the caucuses, anticipating as many of the questions that we can anticipate ahead of time — so those answers will be there as part of the presentation — and get some input on what people think petty cash should look like and, as Mike said, how it's delivered and that sort of thing. I think that'll be a big part of it as well. If we can add to that conversation be-

tween now and February, it'll be a slam dunk when we come to have the final.

Madame Speaker: Craig, any comments?

C. James (Clerk of the House): Just one final comment. This is not an uncomplicated matter, we agree. We know that we can do it. It will be a challenge, as everybody fully understands. But we have not provided any money for this initiative in the current budget submission. We will quickly put together what we think is a reasonable amount in order to implement this over the course of the current fiscal year and probably early into the next fiscal year.

Madame Speaker: So to read the motion, Kate.

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): Yes. A possible motion for the consideration of the committee would be that the committee approve in principle the move to a centralized accounting system, with the intention to implement the centralization of constituency office expenses in the new 41st parliament.

Madame Speaker: Shane, did she capture your intent?

S. Simpson: Generally, yes.

Madame Speaker: Do you want to hear it again?

S. Simpson: Yes.

Madame Speaker: One more time.

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): The motion would be that the committee approve in principle the move to a centralized accounting system, with the intention to implement the centralization of constituency office expenses in the new 41st parliament.

S. Simpson: Yeah, I think that captures it.

Madame Speaker: Is anyone speaking to that?

Hon. M. de Jong: And request or direct the financial services branch to prepare presentations for, and consult with, the caucuses and independent members of the House.

S. Simpson: Yeah, and the independent members.

I guess just a note I would make. I think there is a cost issue here, but if we go to auditing 87 offices with even minor audits, we're talking about a cost issue there too.

Hon. M. de Jong: Well, I saw an estimate here somewhere. It's between.... One route it takes is about 400

grand, and the other is estimated at 600. That's the estimate I saw somewhere; I can't remember where.

C. James (Clerk of the House): We'll refine it.

Madame Speaker: One more time, Madam Clerk.

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): "That the committee approve in principle a move to a centralized accounting system, with the intention to implement the centralization of constituency office expenses in the new 41st parliament; and further, that financial services prepare information to share with, and to respond to, caucus information requests."

Madame Speaker: Moved by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Foster.

Motion approved.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Great. The final item here before....

Hon. M. de Jong: Just for the Clerks, I don't know if the amount is sufficient to warrant this. But one ancillary benefit might be.... It's all about cash management within government. If you can use the central deposit mechanism that the Finance Ministry and debt services have, if you've got all this cash in one place, you'd probably make....

[1240]

It might not be enough to warrant that, but that's kind of a secondary issue.

C. James (Clerk of the House): The next item is the budget estimates. I'll leave that, for the presentation to occur, momentarily.

The final information item: constituency assistants severance. The finance and audit committee gave further consideration to strategies to limit severance obligations for constituency assistants in the current parliament, including the establishment of a modest one-time severance liability account. The committee also gave consideration to strategies to limit severance obligations and ensure adequate funds are available following the dissolution of the 41st parliament.

Madame Speaker: So that as an information item — any questions pertaining? Otherwise, it brings us back to Hilary Woodward on 2017-18 Vote 1 budget estimates presentation.

H. Woodward: I will turn it over to Mr. Clerk.

Vote 1 Budget 2017-2018

C. James (Clerk of the House): Members, I'll be as concise as I possibly can. I have a short budget statement here to make.

I am pleased to present the proposed 2017-18 budget submission for the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Through prudent fiscal management, the Legislative Assembly has successfully maintained status quo operating budgets for the past three years, despite increasing compensation and inflationary pressures. This was achieved, in large part, through the identification of efficiencies and savings within the legislative support services budget.

This disciplined practice has enabled the Legislative Assembly, over the past five fiscal years, to return to the provincial treasury over \$33 million in surplus operating funds and nearly \$11 million in unspent capital spending allocations. Remember that capital money is borrowed money. Every dollar returned reduces the borrowing requirements of the government. But the time has arrived when certain capital improvements are being recommended, which are referenced later.

For 2017-18, the Legislative Assembly is requesting a budget increase to address the number of significant changes anticipated for the upcoming year. These include transition costs related to the upcoming provincial general election, the addition of two new members and related ancillary costs, proposed compensation increases and inflationary pressures, the budgetary impact of LAMC decisions related to security enhancement and constituency office allowances, and additional funding to support planned transformations in the delivery of service to members, caucuses and assembly staff.

Future year operating budgets are projected to decrease following the removal of the budgeted election transition expenses.

The 2017-18 Legislative Assembly proposed budget submission provides for total operating expenses of \$82.4 million, an 18.5 percent increase over the prior year. The increase includes \$4.6 million in annual operating expenses and an additional \$8.3 million — \$7.2 million in 2013-14 — in election-related costs. Excluding election-related costs, the budgets for member services, caucus support services and legislative support services have increased 8.1 percent, 5.7 percent and 4.8 percent respectively.

This submission also includes a proposed capital requirement for 2017-18 of \$3.8 million, which includes \$3.2 million for Legislative Assembly operations and \$584,000 in election-related expenditures.

Proposed 2017-18 capital projects include the upgrading of all primary HVAC systems within the main building, the upgrading of the electrical vault to enable the safe shutdown of power to the bunker and armouries building, conversion of IT data centre equipment to

support the assembly's IT disaster recovery plan, routine annual life-cycle replacement of IT, Hansard and parliamentary dining room major equipment, and other routine capital refresh requirements.

The \$584,000 in election-related costs primarily reflects the anticipated cost of the technology equipment refreshed for all members, following the provincial general election.

In addition to these planned capital projects, a \$900,000 capital project reserve has been included as a prudent planning measure. The reserve will cover risks from higher-than-expected costs and will be used to fund unanticipated capital projects such as structural or electrical failures.

[1245]

As well, the Legislative Assembly's multi-year capital plan includes, for the first time, a proposed legislative precinct property enhancement strategy. The first phase of this strategy includes the replacement or complete remediation of the armouries building, beginning in 2018-19, as well as the development of a stand-alone steam plant to service the entire legislative precinct.

This is a major renovation project that will enable the assembly to mitigate further deterioration of the armouries building, address space inventory challenges and provide alternative disaster recovery space should a localized disaster occur. The time frame to complete this project is estimated to be three years, beginning with a detailed planning and costing phase which would commence in 2017-18.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight some of our successes over the past year as well as a number of new initiatives planned for the coming year.

The Legislative Assembly's procedure guide, *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia*, provides support to the Speaker, all members and assembly staff for the management of parliamentary proceedings. The guide was last updated in 2008. The Deputy Clerk and I will lead a project team to create an updated and renewed companion to the standing orders by the end of 2018. This will involve researching and compiling rulings and precedents since 2008 and enhancing accessibility and content to supplement the current text and be published on line.

We are in the process of developing an annual sustainability report, which will showcase the actions we are taking to reduce our carbon footprint and the ways in which the assembly can actively promote environmental sustainability in all facets of its work.

As noted in the Legislative Assembly's *Accountability Report, 2015-16*, the Legislative Assembly has produced its third set of stand-alone financial statements and fully anticipates receiving another unqualified, or clean, opinion from the Auditor General of British Columbia.

Modernization of the assembly's financial reporting systems continues with the recent addition of improved reporting and monitoring tools and a planned

move towards the electronic document management of Legislative Assembly branch financial records, beginning in 2017-18.

A major transformation is also underway in the area of human resources, with the introduction of a more streamlined payroll system and the development of an on-line pay advice. Other HR initiatives planned for the upcoming fiscal year include the implementation of on-line timesheets and leave management for Legislative Assembly staff, the launch of an organization-wide training and development strategy, and a five-year staffing plan to better position the assembly to analyze and quickly respond to staffing needs.

Following the successful launch of the assembly's renewed website, the focus has now shifted to enhancing key components of the website, including the development and launch of a new on-line consultation portal to provide on-line registration for committee public hearings and witnesses and a web portal to receive, compile and disseminate written submissions in digital format. The portal will also support enhanced access by committee members to submission summaries and committee research resources and automate the publication and release of committee documents.

The revitalization of the assembly's intranet site is also underway. In addition to the enhanced branch webpages, the intranet site will also include a new constituency office resource and education portal, accessible by members and their constituency staff. This new portal is expected to be launched in the new calendar year as a complement to the "Members' guide to policy and resources" website, which now includes the 2017 election transition guide.

We continue to develop and refine our business continuity and disaster recovery planning program, and we are in the process of implementing a series of recommendations related to our IT disaster recovery plan. We are currently focused on the conversion of the Legislative Assembly's data centre to accommodate secure off-site storage of data. Another major component of the plan is the development of an alternative website, consisting of premade but hidden sets of webpages, to be used to support emergency management and communication in the event of a business interruption or emergency situation.

In addition, the Legislative Assembly has initiated the development of a legislative precinct-wide earthquake readiness, occupant action and early warning plan, the primary purpose of which is to provide safe egress and early warning options for occupants of the Parliament Buildings, armouries and the bunker during an earthquake event. This plan will complement the work already undertaken by the Legislative Assembly to install early warning sensor equipment on the grounds of the legislative precinct.

The parliamentary education office recently launched a pilot program with the Royal British Columbia Museum,

entitled “governance and beyond,” in which students learn about aboriginal governance as well as local, provincial and federal governments during a specialized tour and guide-led activities.

[1250]

The office has also developed a new educational resource for students and the public and contributed to the new exhibit featuring the 100th anniversary of women and the vote.

We remain committed to continuous improvement in the areas of accessibility and security for members, staff and the public. We have implemented a series of barrier-free improvements throughout the buildings and continually seek out opportunities to ensure the Parliament Buildings remain accessible to all British Columbians.

With respect to security, the Legislative Assembly continues to foster and strengthen its strategic partnerships with its various local, provincial, national and international security partners and has completed the seven-point security plan adopted by this committee in November of 2014.

Notable activities this year include the main entry points of the buildings — increased security; support for security at members’ constituency offices; the development of an enhanced training strategy, prepared in collaboration with the Justice Institute of British Columbia and police services branch; and the provision of security-related equipment to those Sergeant-at-Arms members who hold the designation of provincial constable.

Some interesting statistics about screening. Since the beginning of February of this year till yesterday there have been a total of 228,946 people screened with our equipment. If anybody is interested in some of the items that we have actually removed from the public’s bags and other carry-on, we have those photographs that we can share. This is a Taser that was pulled out of a woman’s handbag not long ago.

As an additional measure that the Sergeant-at-Arms has instituted, this is naloxone. We have a number of these packages that the Sergeant-at-Arms has purchased. They have been trained. We have concerns about overdoses on the parliamentary precinct. Any questions about this new initiative should be directed to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

This year Hansard has undertaken improvements to our webstreaming service, which had remained largely unchanged since it was initially introduced in 2003. The first phase of this project, launched in February 2016, featured a higher-resolution live webstream and is viewed in a more modern media player window. This new service also incorporates adaptive design features that automatically optimizes the video stream for portable devices such as tablets and smartphones.

The second phase of this Hansard project, to be launched at the start of the 41st parliament, will see improvements to the Hansard video archive. The new features will in-

clude a video search portal, tools to enable users to share video by way of social media, and the creation of direct linkages between the video and on-line transcripts.

The Legislative Library continues to make progress on its extensive digitization program. In addition to digitizing several thousand early B.C. government publications, the library partnered with the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria to digitize early historical assets, including B.C. sessional papers and early provincial newspapers. The library is also working towards implementing a preservation plan for the care of our rare, valuable collection.

Along with the departments of the Legislative Assembly, the library is preparing for the 2017 orientation of new members and development of new digital asset strategies.

Madame Speaker: Thank you.

There are 35 minutes remaining. We’re going to move to Hilary for consideration of this submission. If things move smoothly, we should be able to conclude this session with the motions to seek adoption.

Hon. M. de Jong: The government Whip wants his Taser back. [Laughter.]

E. Foster: It’s a lot more convenient to carry than a whip.

S. Simpson: And the library’s looking to archive the Government House Leader’s first tweet, whenever that should occur.

Madame Speaker: We now have better, enhanced digital communication to do so.

H. Woodward: The budget submission — the format and structure of the submission itself — is very similar to prior years’ submissions. It includes, essentially, three sections.

The first section is an overview. Mr. Clerk has gone over some of the highlights from that overview. Essentially, there are high-level details of the 2017-18 operating and capital budgets as well as high-level estimates for the outer plan years.

As 2017-18 is an election year, the submission also includes a breakdown between election-related and non-election-related costs. That’s on pages 4 through 7.

Pages 8 through 19 of the submission — that’s the main section. It includes a more detailed breakdown of the operating and capital budgets by major category of expense. Those major categories are defined in the operating budget as being member services, caucus support services and legislative support services.

[1255]

Within each of those categories, further details are provided as a year-over-year change — and any support for

proposed increases. The section also includes operating budget assumptions used in building the 2017-18 budget as well as any key operating budget risks.

The next section within that main area is the capital budget. Again, it provides a summary of the overall requests for 2017-18 provided by a more detailed explanation of the requests for the upcoming year. Similar to the operating budget, it includes capital budget assumptions that we used in building it, the capital budget, as well as the key capital budget risks.

The final section of the submission are tables. There are six tables included.

The first four tables include budget-to-actual comparisons for prior years; forecast information for the current year; the 2017-18 budget request, including a separation of the election-related costs; as well as three years of planned budgets.

Tables 1 and 2 focus on the operating budget. Table 1 provides the information by program area or services, while table 2 provides the same information — a different slice or view — by expense category or STOB.

Tables 3 and 4 provide similar information but for the capital budget.

Table 5 includes a summary list of capital projects planned for the 2017-18 fiscal year as well as the outer years.

Table 6 provides a mockup of how Vote 1 will look in the 2017-18 provincial estimates.

I'd be pleased to answer any questions on this submission.

Madame Speaker: When you ask questions, please direct the page number.

Hon. M. de Jong: Okay, a couple I've made a note of. I'll deal, firstly, on the operating side. I only have one question, I think, on the capital side.

On the surface, people will look at this and say: "Well, 18½ percent is pretty sizeable." I don't know if there are many departments anywhere getting 18½ percent. I take it the point you would emphasize, though, Hilary, is that a big chunk of that relates to election-related transitional costs, and — you can indicate and confirm for the committee — that's an estimate based on your historic mortality levels, if that's the term I can use.

We know how many people aren't returning by choice, and then you do an estimate based on historic averages for how many other new members there might be. That kind of drives the \$8.3 million figure — correct?

H. Woodward: That is correct, yes.

Hon. M. de Jong: All right. And it may be 8.3. It may be 7.3. It could be 9.3.

Interjection.

Hon. M. de Jong: It's that cost of democracy.

So really, on the operating side, the part of the budget that we can zero in on is the 4.6.

H. Woodward: That's correct, yes.

Hon. M. de Jong: Within that, you've made the point, in the material, that a chunk of that flows from the addition of two new members. There are going to be two more members covered by the budget. That's a relatively easy calculation. So you can deduct that amount from 4.6 as, again, being the cost of democracy. Is that all an accurate assessment on my part, as we whittle down what we really are in a position to talk about here?

H. Woodward: Yes, I think that's correct.

Hon. M. de Jong: Then on the member services budget, just a couple of questions. I'm on page 9 of 19 of the budget submission, which sort of goes through that. There's a \$448,000 amount, which is, I take it, the global estimate for global increases to members' compensation. It says it's based on a 3 percent increase.

I don't know that inflation or CPI.... Has it gone up as high as 3 percent?

M. Farnworth: Yesterday it was saying 3½ on the news.

Hon. M. de Jong: Oh, all right. I guess I should listen to the news.

Madame Speaker: On your BlackBerry.

[1300]

Hon. M. de Jong: So you're comfortable with that estimate?

H. Woodward: Yes, recognizing that it is an estimate and any increase to members' compensation is based on the results as at December 2016. We won't know those results until into January, but it will reflect what the actual result is. Based on the trending that we're seeing, we've estimated it to be 3 percent.

Hon. M. de Jong: All right.

Then a couple of bullets down, we've got an estimated — again, these are estimates — increase to the budget for constituency office leases. Can you tell us anything about how you calculate that, in terms of what the market is doing and how you came to that figure?

H. Woodward: Yes. We did consult with Shared Services B.C. regarding increases for upcoming leases, as it's been a four-year span. Based on the information provided, particularly increases for the Lower Mainland, they anticipate significant increases — 12 to 14 percent

in the Lower Mainland. So we've been conservative and used that costing to apply to the increases in the leases for this budget.

Hon. M. de Jong: Okay. Thank you.

I should also point out that in areas — Office of the Clerk, Office of the Speaker — there's pretty good.... In the case of the Clerk, some significant reductions from '13-14, so well done.

On page 12 of 19, two questions. Down towards the bottom, this is under the "legislative operations." Again, the first bullet is an estimate based on new members being elected.

The second bullet relates to consulting fees to develop plans for major capital projects. Is that \$483,000 all proposed to be contained within the next fiscal year?

C. James (Clerk of the House): Yes.

Hon. M. de Jong: The only thing I'd say about that is.... We can bring in the consultants, but we have to tell them what we want.

Here's what we know. The red brick building is old, deteriorating and falling down, but I still don't think, at this level, we've decided conclusively what we want to do.

C. James (Clerk of the House): That's right, yeah.

Hon. M. de Jong: So it's awfully hard for us to go to a consultant and say, "Give us a plan," if we can't even provide rudimentary instructions on — well, what? I read something about how we're going to maintain the facade and build a new building in behind it. I mean, maybe that's what we want to do, but I don't think we've ever really settled that.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Well, the whole idea behind this amount of money and the use of consultants is to provide the executive, finance and audit committee and this committee with a plan. What we would be looking for is a plan to either fix it, keep it the way it is or build something new — and costs attached to each of those over the lifespan of the facility.

We have plenty of reports on the Parliament Buildings, the armouries and the bunker as to their shape. There is some minor concern as to the heritage status of the armouries, so that's an obstacle that needs to be overcome. But if the committee feels confident in making a decision as to what they want to do about it now, we can work toward that.

J. Tegart: Just a comment. In our discussions around an aggressive capital plan, we talked about complementing staff with.... Do we need an engineer? Do we need...? If we're going to spend lots of money on consulting, do we have an opportunity to enhance our team with

expertise around capital planning — maybe more than what we have right now? We had that conversation also, because we have a pretty comprehensive ten-year plan.

[1305]

C. James (Clerk of the House): The plan that we have in mind and that we are promoting is to figure out several options with the armouries but, in the final analysis, to turn it into a workable, usable facility and then get rid of the bunker. We're not spending any money on the bunker anymore, and it is predicated on the fact that the armouries, in its current or altered shape, or a new facility would be able to allow for plenty of office space for those who also work on the parliamentary precinct.

In terms of oversight, we certainly would need a project manager. I'm also proposing a project comptroller. I have had discussions with Arnvan Iersel about the prospect of him being in that position. He hasn't committed himself yet, but there are others. We take this very seriously. Something has to be done, and I agree.

E. Foster: Further to that, we've had this conservation. I've been here now for 7½ years, and the conversation, really.... I mean, we're a little father ahead in the conversation, but not much.

To Mike's comment — and I know the Opposition House Leader has made this too — let's make a decision on where we want to go, and let's put this thing in gear, because we have spent a lot of money talking about it.

We're not going to spend any money on the bunker. There's nothing to spend on it other than an excavator. So let's move forward. Let's make a decision on what we want to do. We've got options. I would suggest that before the end of this parliament, we should have made a decision on how we want to go and who we need to hire. Let's move.

Hon. M. de Jong: Right. I think that's all valid. The direction we're going ultimately leads to the expenditure of some \$40-plus million, if I recall, from the capital budget.

There's an interesting relationship — right? — between LAMC, as the cooperative agency around the management of the Legislative Assembly and the precincts, and the government of the day, which ultimately has to decide appropriations. If they don't move together, if they get out of step with one another, nothing happens. If LAMC isn't in agreement, then the government is off doing its own thing, and that's a problem. If LAMC gets out ahead of the government, nothing happens.

I wonder if the sequencing on this, candidly, before we get a project director.... We could get all that, and if the government of the day, whether it's this government or the government after me, says, "Well, we're not making the appropriation," there ain't no project.

So I wonder if we should focus our energy on trying to secure agreement at LAMC on the concept of what

we want to do, of what the precinct looks like — the armoury, the bunker. I was kind of hoping that conceptually wouldn't necessarily involve half a million dollars, that if there was one spot in the budget where for the coming fiscal year we could ratchet back a little bit and get that....

I mean, that's sort of a conceptual conversation amongst the members of LAMC to say: "Okay. We're conceptually in agreement that here's what we want to do." I don't know if this is even possible. Someone might say: "Well, we don't even want to preserve the armoury." I mean, it does have.... I don't think that's going to happen, but someone could say that and want to do something else with that space.

[1310]

I don't think that's going to happen, I'll repeat. But we could at least decide on that basis, and then we'd know what we're getting costed. I might ratchet back there a little bit in this fiscal year.

I only had, I think, two other questions on the operating side.

Madame Speaker: Perhaps just on that note, we should probably be speaking to a concept plan, an architectural concept plan.

Hon. M. de Jong: Before we get an architectural concept plan....

Madame Speaker: All I'm saying is that it's far less in cost. You can do one for a 20-storey hospital for \$1 million, so you can probably do one for this for about \$100,000.

Hon. M. de Jong: You can if we give them instructions as to what we want. If we say to architects, "Conceive," they will.

I don't mind putting more meat on the bone, but I think the sequencing.... Let's try to come to agreement here on some parameters for that work. That, I think, would reduce, a little bit, the cost of that.

That's my suggestion on that point.

S. Simpson: Just on that.... I don't disagree with that approach. The thought is: how do we get there and not end up getting to March without doing that? Or else it's going to be a new parliament next September, and you're going to have, maybe, the same or different people at this table, starting all over again.

That's not helpful, because then we're a year and a half out before we're back to this conversation, versus getting something more definitive in terms of, at least, the question: what do we want? Then let the people who have expertise go off with some guidance and direction to figure out what that looks like in more substantive or concrete terms.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Bear in mind, Members, that we're not requesting any capital funds for next fiscal year. That's the second fiscal year out, and the third. The whole project would take three years. We're talking about the planning, what to do, and what kind of options members would prefer to consider. But if you want to have a different discussion about how to proceed in the next fiscal year, by taking some of that money out and using less money in a more targeted way, we can certainly do that.

Madame Speaker: So you're making a suggestion in terms of 250, or a different sum?

Hon. M. de Jong: I'd ratchet down to 250.

Madame Speaker: Then we found the dollars for Eric's suggestion of the cost to explore the centralization suggestion.

Any other comments?

Hon. M. de Jong: Just two more questions. On page 13, there is the bullet, the first bullet, of an \$82,000 increase to address externally driven cost pressures, and then a couple of paragraphs down: "The assembly has an internal contingency reserve, which is used to address unforeseen expenses."

The comment I wrote when I read this was that we've sort of got two parallel contingency funds here.

H. Woodward: Are you referring to the first bullet on page 13?

Hon. M. de Jong: The first bullet refers to an \$82,000 amount to address externally driven cost pressures, I presume unanticipated cost pressures, and then, two paragraphs down, a reference to an internal contingency reserve to address unforeseen expenses.

H. Woodward: Thank you for the clarification. The \$82,000, for example, is the cost increases that we are aware of in relation to, say, B.C. Hydro increases. So we've factored those known increases that are for the upcoming year into the budget, and the \$175,000 you're referring to is for our unanticipated pressures.

M. Farnworth: The unknown unknowns?

H. Woodward: The unknown, unknown knowns, yes.

Hon. M. de Jong: Thank you, Donald — Rumsfeld, not the other one.

Okay, that's the answer to that question. Thank you.

I think, on the operating side, those were my questions.

Madame Speaker: Any other questions on the operating side from any other members?

Hilary, proceeding. Do you want us to walk through capital? Do you want us to do that?

H. Woodward: Yes, please. I'm happy to take questions on capital.

[1315]

Looking on page 15 of the submission, and then there are the tables in the back as well.

Hon. M. de Jong: I think the only question I had — a question and a suggestion that I'm interested in the committee's thoughts on.

The data centre renewal is forecast to cost almost half a million dollars. What is that?

H. Woodward: So that project is in reference to the information technology recovery strategy that the clerk had mentioned previously. What we're looking at is a change in our data centre.

Currently, in terms of when we back up our information, we actually back it up to tapes, and we run them up to Keating Cross Road. According to an earlier report by Risk Masters on our business continuity planning and disaster recovery, the recommendation was to move to off-site backups. What this envisions is a new technology that would provide two servers operating — one here, on the parliamentary precinct, and another located possibly in Kamloops. Those two servers, in essence, would speak to each other.

It does appear to be a significant cost increase for information technology. But essentially, rather than, let's say, \$100,000 — which we typically spend on servers each year, over a five year period — it is actually moving that cost up all into one year. Then the next five years, if you refresh that equipment, would be that same cost again. So while it appears to be a significant increase, it's a change in approach for our server purchases to deal with IT recovery.

C. James (Clerk of the House): This process is us aligning ourselves to what the emergency management B.C. is doing, by way of facilities in Kamloops. So what Hilary has just described is us aligning our practices and processes with what emergency management B.C. and government ministries are undertaking by way of, say, Kamloops and backups.

Hon. M. de Jong: Forgive me, this is not.... In terms of what we're backing up, it's all our financial...? Are we backing up all of Hansard? I mean, what do we back up?

C. James (Clerk of the House): Virtually everything — members' emails, documents. Everything that's handled by a computer here would be backed up, say, in Kamloops. If our system goes down here, that system is up and running immediately, and you wouldn't notice the

difference. But it would be up and running immediately. Without it, we would have a problem.

Hon. M. de Jong: Okay. Then, two. First of all, I was thrilled to see that we've made allowance for the replacement of the deep fryer. God forbid we should be without a deep fryer around here, downstairs.

My question. This is just in terms of the capital plan and the improvements that we've made to the building. This has kind of been bugging me for a number of years now. If people think this is crazy, this is the place to tell me. That driveway looks awful.

A Voice: The one out front?

Hon. M. de Jong: Yeah.

Madame Speaker: It absolutely is due for....

C. James (Clerk of the House): Oh yeah. It's in our ten-year capital plan to replace it, but it's not within the next several years.

Hon. M. de Jong: How much is that? I mean, I think of all the things that leave an impression on people about our building. We're far more accessible, and I don't want to pretend that there's.... But if you're coming up that driveway in a wheelchair, it's not without issues.

C. James (Clerk of the House): It's bumpy.

Hon. M. de Jong: Do we know how much it would cost? It looks terrible.

C. James (Clerk of the House): I know. Yeah.

G. Lenz: On the driveway, your sentiment is correct. We've had people trip on it, especially the older people, because it's unlevel, and it's unstable in how it has so many different layers of concrete and asphalt.

[1320]

Hon. M. de Jong: It's been like that for the 23 years I've been.... I mean, it's historic.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Oh yeah. Forever.

K. Ryan-Lloyd (Deputy Clerk): It contains the foundation stones.

Hon. M. de Jong: It's a historic driveway.

C. James (Clerk of the House): It may have heritage status.

Madame Speaker: Gary, do you recall the costs to replace?

G. Lenz: It's more than just the driveway. When you look at the top of the driveway, there's also the drainage that is antiquated, and we're having issues. Electrical. It all becomes one package.

I think we're.... Half a million dollars. But that would include drainage, curbs, upgrading — what we need to do. If you lift up all the concrete, you may as well fix all the sub.

Madame Speaker: So we should bring it forward for half a million dollars.

G. Lenz: About a half a million. But it would make a major change in appearance. Not only in appearance, but also the infrastructure and services to the whole grounds would also be upgraded at the same time for that price.

Hon. M. de Jong: I haven't talked to anyone about this, but every time I walk up that driveway, I think of how shoddy it looks.

G. Lenz: We've actually put the holds down, looked at the sub. We've done some preliminary work on it. When we first looked at it, we put in a budget. Then we had some people look at it again. They said there's a lot more to it than just the surface. But it is one of the things that would be a real benefit to the whole.... But it's a half a million.

E. Foster: Just for clarification here. You're saying a half a million. That looks after all the other infrastructure as well — the whole package?

G. Lenz: Yup. That would be your drainage; fixing up the electrical lines. A lot of the things, you have to wait. I'm just saying, there are electrical aspects we'd like to do in the front, but we can't get there until we fix the driveway. It's all in those pieces. But then, you look at the whole grounds. I agree. It's a health and safety issue. But it's costly.

E. Foster: The whole thing can be done for half a million dollars.

G. Lenz: Half a million.

Hon. M. de Jong: What do you think, Shane? We're not going to hold you to it. If it's something we decide we're interested in, then we'll have to get a more detailed thing. But what do you think?

S. Simpson: Well, maybe at this point.... I don't have a problem with fixing it. I'd like to know about the number.

It's a significant piece of work, and half a million dollars doesn't sound like a lot of money for doing that, particularly if you're having to replace infrastructure underneath it and everything that comes with that. If you were just paving over and putting new curbs in, that's one thing. But you start replacing drainage and infrastructure, and it becomes much more expensive.

I'd like to know how that quote comes about and how firm it is. Maybe there's something we could do in contingency here around capital with that in line and, if it makes sense, proceed. If it's a million bucks, maybe we want to think about it twice.

Hon. M. de Jong: Just to be clear. We have a capital budget presented. I would be talking about moving this up the priority list, which means moving something else down the priority list. I'm not talking about an additive here. I agree, before we can make an informed decision, we'd better find out for sure what it costs. But that's what I would like to know — if the committee is interested in moving that project up the priority list.

S. Simpson: I guess the only conversation I'd have then, of course, is that the devil is in the details. What are we moving down? I don't know if we'd have that conversation today, but I think it's a fair conversation. But if you move something up, and if you're saying we don't want to change the overall dollar figure, and something is moving up and presumably something else is likely falling off, then I just want to know what we are talking about falling off.

G. Lenz: I appreciate the direction that is being put forward today. It is always a gauge when we do the plan on the capital part. What do you gauge over the different parts and where it goes?

The conversation today, of the roadway, has been very much on our minds, too, because Canada 150 is coming up. It's one of those moments in time where you say: is that something that's significant towards those parts? If that is of interest from this committee, that you would like to have that put forward into the next fiscal year or whatever, maybe we can pull something together and bring that back as an addendum to the budget.

[1325]

But I just put that out. If this is an issue, we can pull it together as an addendum to that part. I leave that as a consideration.

Madame Speaker: Perhaps a suggestion. We've just found \$200,000 from the consulting budget. If we were to increase the contingency by \$300,000, it allows us to make that determination once we pass this, hopefully, today and not skew anyone else's timings. I think this is the day. Two are available for this discussion.

Hon. M. de Jong: I wouldn't start moving that money around between operating and capital at this point. People are looking for a decision. If we were setting an envelope and if the committee is in agreement that we would examine this, I think it's a fair question: if something is moving up, what is moving down? Is that a trade-off that people are comfortable with? If we can agree, based on... I mean, I've sprung this on everyone, so they need time to give us some good information. If we can come back and have that conversation, then I'm content.

Deep fryer is safe, though, right? Good.

Madame Speaker: Any other questions for Hilary?

S. Simpson: Just on this matter. Maybe we come back and it's a bit of a discussion around specifics. But at this point, if what the minister is saying — and I don't disagree with this — is, "Here's the size of the envelope," and we're going to, say, approve this envelope and come back and talk about the content of the envelope a little more, then maybe that's what we do today.

We know that here's the capital envelope of X dollars, but we'd like to talk a little bit more about whether the list of priorities in the envelope is the one we want. Then we can always talk about contingency at some point if there are dollars to talk about it with. I'd be happy to talk about that if what I'm hearing is: "We're not talking about adding dollars to it; we're talking about what we do inside the envelope."

Hon. M. de Jong: Then the only last thing I'd just want to verify... We've been talking about, in the context of this conversation, really, the coming fiscal year. There are some big numbers attached for out-years on the capital plan. Those I will describe as aspirational. Those will be requests that LAMC makes of the government of the day, whoever it is at the time. I think, for the purpose of this, it is fine to include, on an aspirational basis, what LAMC believes that estimates for that work may require.

C. James (Clerk of the House): Yes. That's our view too. But it's a plan. Last year was our first ten-year capital plan. This is the second year.

Madame Speaker: Members, with your indulgence: "The committee approves the estimates of expenditure, fiscal year 2017-18 for the Legislative Assembly for Vote 1, as amended."

Looking for a mover — Jackie Tegart — and a second-er — Shane Simpson.

Motion approved.

Madame Speaker: Motion No. 2. "The Speaker transmits the estimates for expenditure for fiscal year 2017-18 for the Legislative Assembly for Vote 1 to the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the committee."

Looking for a mover — Jackie Tegart, Shane Simpson.

Motion approved.

Madame Speaker: Excellent discussion. It brings us to the Clerk's update.

C. James (Clerk of the House): I have nothing further to add, Madame Speaker.

Madame Speaker: Excellent. A motion for adjournment?

Motion approved.

Madame Speaker: Thank you all for your deliberations, and thank you, guests, for joining us. It's most appreciated.

The committee adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

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