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HANSARD

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2019 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

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Yukon Liberal Party

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OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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| Stacey Hassard | Leader of the Official Opposition Pelly-Nisutlin | Scott Kent | Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South |
| Brad Cathers | Lake Laberge | Patti McLeod | Watson Lake |
| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 3, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I ask all of my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly to welcome some guests who we have here with us today.

We have Barbara Frain Gower, Madam Justice Edith Campbell, Chief Judge Peter Chisholm, Judge Michael Cozens, Marie Gagnon, Liz Gorczyca, Tom Ulyett, Suat Tuzlak and Shayne Fairman. Thank you all for being here today.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: I know the Minister of Justice introduced Tom Ulyett, but I wanted to recognize him as a constituent. Tom and I always have passionate discussions around trail connectivity, or he is helping me size up sporting equipment for one of my children for cross-country skiing. Welcome to the gallery today, Tom.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Justice Leigh Francis Gower

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government, the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to the late Justice Leigh Francis Gower.

Leigh left this life surrounded by loving family and friends on October 29, 2018, in an Edmonton hospital from complications from a stroke. Leigh was born in Durban, South Africa in July 1956. He came to Canada with his mother when he was three. His family life in Alberta fuelled his love of learning, acting and outdoor activities. He was the valedictorian of the class of 1974, when he earned a bachelor of science from the University of Alberta, and he later earned a bachelor of laws from the University of Saskatchewan.

Leigh was drawn to the north early in his legal career. He articulated in Yellowknife, where he met and married his wife in a memorable ceremony on the shores of Great Slave Lake in 1988. They would soon have two amazing children — Gwendolen and Dylan, and their family moved to Whitehorse in 1991. Then, over the last few years, they became grandparents to four beautiful grandchildren.

Leigh was an avid outdoorsman who deeply loved the north and its opportunities for hiking, backpacking, camping, kayaking, canoeing and skiing. Leigh and Barb also both loved to travel. He was dedicated to keeping fit and healthy. He earned a second degree black belt in karate — always a good idea for a judge. He went for a five-kilometre run every lunch hour, rain or shine, and he worked out with weights every day.

Leigh fully adopted his northern home. He had a passion for the unique justice issues of the north. He was a gifted writer and a skilled criminal law technician.

During his practice, he frequently travelled by small plane to remote northern communities to appear in circuit courts, which he truly loved. In 2003, Leigh became a Yukon Supreme Court Justice. Leigh called this appointment “the miracle of the judgeship”, and his abiding respect for the rule of law is evident in the accolades that have poured in from the legal community after his death. Although quiet and reflective by nature, his exuberant love of life came through in his memorable exploits on the dance floor and in his recitations around campfires and in theatres.

Leigh’s contribution to the Yukon legal community was immense. Leigh believed in giving back to his community. At the Canadian Bar Association Yukon branch, he was the section chair, an executive member, the Yukon law branch president and our representative on the CBA national board of directors. Once he had done virtually all that he could do for us through our professional association, he turned his focus to modernizing our law society and regulator.

He was a member of the executive of the law society, president of the Yukon law society and ultimately represented us at the Federation of Law Societies of Canada.

CBA Yukon has instituted an award in his name that recognizes a member of the Yukon bar who has made a significant contribution to both our legal and larger community. The inaugural recipient of this award in February was Debra Fendrick.

Leigh was a true mentor. He led by example. None of the things he taught me over the more than 26 years of our friendship and working together were overt, specific or even intentional on his part, but he taught anyway through his actions, his work ethic and his quiet vigilance. His legacy lives on every day when we embrace and pay forward what he taught us all.

When Leigh became a Supreme Court Judge, he promised at his swearing-in that he would do a number of things. He promised the following: He promised to be open-minded. Leigh was an intent listener. His silence and expressionless face could be unnerving in any room — especially a court room. You simply could not know what he was thinking about what you were saying. His attention illustrated true interest and respect and urged us all to develop such skills. His poker face was unrivaled, and playing poker with him was never a good idea.

He promised to work toward the greater good. Leigh was a generous spirit. He was a leader, a strategic thinker, a professional and an extremely competent lawyer. His

excellence raised the bar and required a standard of civility that we are all proud of. His work was always focused, dedicated, meticulous and thorough, and he made us all better.

He promised to strive for excellence. When I speak to new graduates — an honour that I have had for the past several years — I tell them, “Always do more than what is expected, no matter the task.” Leigh exemplified that notion. Leigh never did anything halfway, whether it was writing a judgment, training for a race, sharing time with family and friends or dancing.

At his swearing-in as a judge in our Yukon Supreme Court just over 15 years ago, Leigh ended his remarks by quoting Oliver Wendell Holmes, who aptly said, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” I know he believed that. He lived it; he showed us how to live it. The lesson is ours to learn in his honour. Thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling a letter from the executive director of Raven Recycling respecting the proposed framework for the Yukon government carbon price rebate.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 7 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 7 of the Second Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on April 2, 2019.

The petition presented by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 7 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order No. 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been deemed read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation.

Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 7 shall be provided on or before April 16, 2019.

Are there any further petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Hutton: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue to work with Yukon First Nations on the partnership with respect to education in schools, including work through the Yukon Forum, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the joint education action plan, individual education agreements with First Nation governments and initiatives with the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Mr. Istchenko: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use its 2019-20 budget to improve highway safety near the entrance to the Mendenhall subdivision by adding a turning lane and a slip lane at the entrances to the subdivision.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Environment to ensure that all positions on the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board are filled as soon as they become vacant to ensure that the board can complete the work it is mandated to do.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use its 2019-20 budget to improve highway safety near the entrance to the Takhini River subdivision by:

- (1) fixing the extreme bump at the entrance immediately; and
- (2) adding a turning lane and a slip lane to the entrances to the subdivision.

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use its 2019-20 capital budget to improve safety on the Alaska Highway in front of Porter Creek Super A by adding a turning lane and a slip lane.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Energy supply and demand

Mr. Hassard: I have some questions today regarding energy storage. The Southern Lakes enhanced storage concept is a proposal for Yukon Energy to change their water licence to allow them to adjust the water levels of the Southern Lakes, including Marsh Lake.

According to testimony provided by the Yukon Energy Corporation during their general rate application last summer, they do have conditional support from the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to proceed to YESAB.

Last fall, we asked the minister about this project, and he did recognize that there is some opposition to the project from

residents of Marsh Lake, but he also referenced that the Energy Corporation was going back to do more work on the project and then will bring back more information to the Yukon Utilities Board on the project.

Can the minister give us an update on the Southern Lakes enhancement projects?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, the enhancement projects such as the Southern Lakes enhanced storage concept as well as the Mayo Lake enhanced storage project are a cost-effective way of course of reducing Yukon's need for thermal generation during the winter when demand of energy is the highest.

While all energy projects have some impacts, this government wants to ensure that any projects address as best as possible Yukoners' values of environmental protection, cost, reliability and social responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, this is a discussion that has come up when the Yukon Energy Corporation has entered the Assembly as witnesses. There has been considerable resistance to the project. Earlier on, the Energy Corporation brought this to rate, and at that particular time, they were told to go back and to do more work.

Some of that work has been done. A final consultation is being looked at. At that point in time, depending on what we will hear from residents — we have a strong feeling of what we heard already — then we feel that this could finally be put to rate at that particular time. Or residents may, based on what is happening with snow load and other situations within the Yukon, have a different perspective.

I won't judge the outcome yet, but that's the final work that needs to be done.

Mr. Hassard: If the Energy Corporation has received conditional support from Carcross/Tagish First Nation to proceed to YESAB for the Southern Lakes enhancement project, it seems like you would assume that the corporation is strongly considering it.

Since last July's general rate application hearing, the minister also told this House in November that Yukon Energy Corporation was going to do a bit more work and research into the project and talk to residents of the Southern Lakes about what this project would mean for lake levels around their homes.

Would the minister be able to provide an update on the work, research and discussions that Yukon Energy Corporation is having with residents along those southern lakes?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for this question. I think it's important to first identify that I believe that yes, the Yukon Energy Corporation did signal that there was support. I believe the letter of support that they received from Carcross is from the Carcross/Tagish Management Corporation, which is their development corporation, versus their lands committee, which plays a very strong role.

The president of the development corporation had met with the previous chief as well as an elder from the nation and the CEO from the management corporation. I know that the

dialogue is continuing. Of course there are many other people who are affected beyond Carcross/Tagish First Nation with this project.

Absolutely — we are looking to have that discussion which I spoke about last fall — to inform the House that the original numbers that came in for consultation — the breadth of it was robust. We had asked the Yukon Energy Corporation to go back and take a look at the most effective way to do that consultation, but maybe to sharpen the pencil on the numbers. They have undertaken that work and I appreciate their leadership on it. We're looking to have those discussions in 2019.

Mr. Hassard: So another energy storage project that Yukon Energy Corporation has been considering — and the minister mentioned this in his first response — is the increasing of the storage at Mayo Lake. That project includes Yukon Energy Corporation asking their current licensed minimum supply level to be lowered by up to one metre. They would then start with a half-metre increase to the storage range and monitor the effects. Then depending on the results, they would look to increase by up to another half metre.

Yukon Energy Corporation estimates that this scenario would provide enough additional water during the winter to displace up to a half-million dollars per year in thermal fuel costs.

Would the minister be able to provide an update on the Mayo Lake enhancement project as well?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Correct — this is a project of course that — Yukon Energy Corporation is planning to proceed with detailed design and planning in 2019. The member opposite is correct — the approach of proceeding was for about a half-metre increase in the storage. But I have to make the House aware that we are just going over our draft numbers on our snowpack. It's going to be very important for the Legislative Assembly — the opposition will have a great opportunity to speak to Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation, when they appear as witnesses this spring, to really mull over what that means. There is a lot of concern for us about what we have in the freshet that will lead to increased power. Of course it also affects my colleagues. This was discussed yesterday in the Assembly — what it means for fire threat.

I think we will have to contemplate what is happening out there before we look at advancing, but I will leave it to Yukon Energy Corporation to provide more information on exactly where they're at on the planning of this project when they visit the Assembly.

Question re: Energy supply and demand

Mr. Istchenko: This government has signalled their intent to develop transmission line infrastructure to connect to Yukon and BC grid and specifically the site C dam. In November, I asked the minister for an update on this project. In response, he had said that early analysis suggested that the project would cost about \$1.7 billion, and I think that is actually based off — I believe — a 2016 study. He also said that the government did some early work and has put together

a proposal that they were intending to submit to the federal government. In his words — he said, “We are just sort of working on dotting our i’s and crossing our t’s on that.”

I am wondering today if the minister could update us on this proposal to the federal government. Has it now been submitted? How much money are they actually requesting from Canada?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are fortunate that Yukon residents and businesses currently have access to reliable, safe, renewable and affordable electricity, but we need to ensure that we are able to meet future needs as well. Of course, as I have spoken about today, the British Columbia site C dam has the potential to help Yukon reduce fossil fuel consumption related to electricity generation by providing plentiful clean energy to help drive economic growth.

We did some early work with Midgard, which was the update of the numbers. Part of that work is not only about connecting to the grid, but also understanding what the costs are to upgrade lines inside our domestic grid and maybe extending our grid — understanding how much it would cost to have an upgraded line to places such as Watson Lake. That is important work.

As the member opposite would know, I think that, during the end of the previous government’s mandate, there was a large conversation about electrification throughout the country. I believe the Yukon was the only jurisdiction that did not submit a plan to do that work, so we were a little bit behind compared to everybody else, and that’s why you have seen some announcements in other areas where there is funding coming into play.

At this particular time in our discussions with BC government, there is not an interest for large investment. We still think that some of that work that we have done could be helpful to look at what we can do domestically, but at this time, we continue to look at other renewable energy sources.

Mr. Istchenko: If the project is estimated to be about \$1.7 billion, obviously that is bigger than the entire Yukon budget currently. The minister did talk about updated numbers, and I would appreciate, at some point in time, if he could give them to the Legislature.

Usually Canada is asked to pay 75 percent of the project costs, so in this case, that would mean Canada’s share would be approximately \$1.3 billion. It would be interesting getting more details on that application, and I hope the minister could maybe table it in the House along with those updated numbers. The \$1.7 billion figure is from a 2016 study, so if the minister has updated estimates on the cost of the project, we would be interested in that as well.

Can the minister provide a bit more detail around that expense? Was that for a feasibility study on the project? What I am talking about is \$150,000 that they have spent to date. Would he be willing to provide that to the House?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think I would add to this — just for clarity again — our discussions with BC Hydro on this potential partnership really have led to — the early talks led us to believe that there was not an interest. The reason there was not an interest, I think, is the fact that, shortly after those

discussions, BC Hydro talked about the fact that they had a deficit of about \$6 billion. I think the current government in British Columbia has offset some of that — so not looking to make big drastic — I think they have their own integrated resource plan.

We have also had the business community in the Yukon signal to us that they want us to look at domestic opportunities to increase and diversify our economy, and we think that’s some good advice and direction.

I will say we have not submitted an application. What we made a decision on was, instead of submitting an application to do further work after our discussions with BC Hydro, we have submitted an application for a large battery. We have submitted to NSERC, and it is a battery that’s part of our integrated resource plan. I believe that our request is for about \$11 million, so instead of having two competing proposals, we thought that storage — which can help us in complementing infrastructure that comes on line from our independent power production — was the best route, and that’s what Yukoners wanted.

Mr. Istchenko: It sounds like the BC grid option has been kind of taken off the plate there and the minister was speaking about some new initiatives. There would need to be quite a lot of consultation and discussion with various groups throughout the territory. Can the minister let us know, in his new discussions or consultations — have they already started? Has the minister had these discussions with the affected First Nations or the local chambers of commerce on these projects? What has early indication been in terms of support for doing this sort of thing?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: A good point, Mr. Speaker. I’m not quite clear what that question was about. I know it was about if I consulted, but I’m not sure what I was consulting on — what the question was.

What I said was that we had put a proposal in for a battery versus — I guess it’s for new infrastructure. Once again, there will be a great opportunity to have discussions here in the House when Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation appear, but what I would say is that there has been a bit of information out there. We had gone out for a request for information, potentially looking at thermal. People are aware of that. I think the story will become very clear about the fact that we have some real pressure on us concerning snowpack.

We are still very committed to a renewable energy future. That is based on — that’s why we put together our independent power regulations, so we have that opportunity to make that happen. We’re excited about projects such as the Haeckel Hill project with Chu N’ikwän. We’re excited about what’s happening in Old Crow and in other areas. We are still looking at a series of other projects that could look at larger energy production. That has to focus of course not just on solar and wind but, if you want the reliability, on hydro.

Question re: Greenhouse gas emissions

Ms. White: A report from the Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada projected dire

consequences for Canada and the north if action is not swiftly taken to curb our collective greenhouse gas emissions. The report found that Canada's climate is warming at twice the global average, while Canada's north is warming at three times the global average.

We recognize that this government has taken some steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but those steps do not reflect the urgency with which this issue needs to be dealt with. The report found that scenarios with limited warming will only occur if Canada and the rest of the world reduce carbon emissions to near zero early in the second half of the century.

Mr. Speaker, will this government commit to working with Yukoners to set a net zero emissions target in Yukon by 2050?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'll start the response, Mr. Speaker, and then I'll leave it to my colleagues the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to follow up.

Overall, the work that we have been doing is out there right now, engaging with Yukoners on a combined strategy around climate change and energy. The reason is that we see those two things as completely intertwined. We have said that we would continue to work on one of the most critical sectors around greenhouse gas emissions, which is our building sector — to retrofit. We are increasing that investment every year. We are moving up to \$30 million per year.

As well, we are working across each of our departments to identify both how to adapt to climate change and to mitigate climate change. I think that each of us as ministers could stand up and talk about the pieces, but I will leave it to my colleagues the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to speak further on that initiative around climate and energy combined.

Ms. White: Although I appreciate the pieces, there are specific questions. So that was a target for net zero emissions. Just to reiterate — we appreciate that those projects that the minister mentioned are underway, but we simply believe that Yukon has the ability to do more. For example, transportation makes up just over 60 percent of Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions, yet little has been done in the territory to address that. Recently, the Government of Canada built 23 electric vehicle fast-chargers in British Columbia for just over \$1 million. A similar investment in Whitehorse and the Whitehorse periphery area could make buying an electric vehicle not only feasible, but attractive to well over three-quarters of Yukon's population.

Mr. Speaker, does this government recognize that it is feasible to create electric vehicle infrastructure in the Yukon at a reasonable cost while at the same time reducing our dependence on fossil fuel?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that, with the work happening by both the Yukon Development Corporation and the Energy Solutions Centre, we are aligned in the fact that we do understand that increased investment in charging stations is important. Dialogue — even this week — with other individuals from the business community asking what our

plans are — there has been significant investment in Whitehorse. I think we will probably, in the short term, see some information about more — an increase in that type of infrastructure. Then of course we are looking to see what the opportunities are through our Arctic energy fund and through our IREI — to use those dollars to then increase opportunities along some of our main arteries in and out of Yukon.

I agree that this is a very important option. As we see the increase in British Columbia, we know that there are more people who will be purchasing these vehicles. In turn, not only is it the right thing to do, but it also becomes a hook for increased tourism when you have this infrastructure in place. Those are things that I'm talking with my colleague about, and those are the things that we are looking to invest in.

Ms. White: Again, we appreciate that this government has a number of initiatives underway, but they don't reflect the fact that if we don't collectively take action on this issue, we will face irreversible, catastrophic climate change in the north.

This government has earmarked \$110 million to build roads to mines that have yet to be approved. If they showed this kind of enthusiasm for investments in renewable energy, we would be well on our way toward a fossil fuel-free future.

Recently, the Yukon Utilities Board blocked the Yukon Energy Corporation from pursuing any further demand-side management programs in Yukon. As the utility, the Yukon Energy Corporation was exceptionally well-placed to implement emissions-reducing DSM projects. It is high time that we amend the *Public Utilities Act* to ensure that they consider the environmental and social responsibility of energy generation.

Mr. Speaker, will this government commit to reviewing the *Public Utilities Act* to ensure that we can give our utilities the best tools to reduce emissions and fight climate change?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There were a number of themes in the question. First, I would say that having the extraction of commodities such as copper in the Yukon is something that we believe is appropriate when you look at the overall global demand in our future for copper — when you look at electrification and a clean tech future.

The member well knows that having it appropriately extracted in the Yukon, providing opportunities and jobs — not only for Yukoners but for our First Nation governments and all Canadians — is something that we should look at, so we will continue to do that work.

Secondly, I would say that there is a good point about the decision that was made — our Energy Corporation concerning demand-side management — has gone back in the process. We have not seen the final outcome of that process yet. They certainly felt that they had a different opinion compared to what was rendered. We do see demand-side management as a great option. Actually, on electric and demand-side management, I think that we will have some news. I don't want to pre-empt too much, but we will be talking about that in the near future.

Thirdly, we have to have a realistic conversation, and we have had these conversations before. Putting \$20-, \$30-, \$40-,

or \$50 million into wind — when the opposition brings a flyer in from northern BC — it does not provide us with reliable energy. So I look forward to a real conversation, not just dreams, about how we actually make sure that our heat is on, our lights are on and people are safe.

Question re: Wildfire risk reduction

Mr. Cathers: The Yukon government needs to do more to reduce the risk of wildfires, including looking through the lens of fire risk reduction to do targeted harvesting in and near communities. This is a problem, but it is also an opportunity to grow the private sector, provide job opportunities and reduce reliance on fossil fuels by moving toward more homes, commercial buildings and government buildings with a renewable resource.

The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan process is underway, with representatives from the government and three First Nations on the planning committee.

Can the minister confirm if wildfire risk mitigation is being considered as part of this planning exercise, and if so, is targeted harvesting to reduce wildfire risk being looked at as a matter of high priority?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Forest resources management plans provide certainty for Yukoners' land base. They identify sustainable forest management practices and foster economic opportunities for Yukoners. I am pleased with our positive relationships with First Nations in forest management planning. We have collaborated on plans for the Haines Junction, Dawson and Teslin regions.

Forest management planning for Whitehorse and the Southern Lakes area continues in partnership with the Government of Yukon, Ta'an Kwäch'an First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Carcross/Tagish First Nation. The committee anticipates recommending a plan to government this spring.

We have a long history of working with the Kaska, as well, toward a forest management plan for southeast Yukon. I have to say that our talks, not just around the Whitehorse area, but with the Kaska Nation have very much centred on adaptation for climate change and ensuring that we take into consideration the forest fire threat, especially after last season. I appreciate the support of Community Services and my colleague as we integrate not only our plan for this summer, but how appropriate cutting will play a very important role with that.

Mr. Cathers: The forest resources management plan website outlines six stages for the planning process.

We recognize that planning takes time, but the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan does seem to be moving slowly. Fires in Telegraph Creek, Lower Post, Fort McMurray and other recent wildfires have got people's attention, and there is a growing recognition that targeted harvesting to reduce the risk of wildfires needs to be done as soon as possible.

Can the minister tell us where in the process this forest management plan is at? When does he expect a draft plan to be made public?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I believe that, in my answer to the first question, I talked about the Southern Lakes plan and the fact that we would be looking to bring something to government this spring.

Mr. Cathers: The minister did say when the plan would be in the government's hands, but not when it would be public.

We all love the natural beauty of our boreal forest, but from a fire risk perspective, we need to do more targeted harvesting of spruce and pine trees in and near our communities. The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan is an important process, but government needs to ensure that a broad look at forest resources in this large area doesn't get in the way of taking action now to reduce the risk of wildfire. We need a wildfire risk reduction plan that includes short-term actions for the next few years as well as a long-term vision.

Whether as part of an overall forest management plan or separate from it, the Yukon needs a wildfire risk reduction plan that places priority on targeted harvesting and considers whether more controlled burns are necessary. Efforts of the Whitehorse FireSmart group and the Yukon Wood Products Association are helping to build public support for taking action now.

Can the minister please tell us if the government is committed to moving quickly to developing a wildfire risk reduction plan, and if so, how long does he expect it to take?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I think this a similar question to the one yesterday. I am happy to rise again and say again that yes, we agree with the member opposite that we need to be doing more around wildfire. I just will note that I don't think, with respect to prescribed burns, that we use those for forests unless we are really hard up against it. Those are usually for low-growing grasses early in the spring.

Typically, for forests, we will deal with it by doing what is called "landscape management", where we slowly but surely change over from a coniferous forest to more deciduous growth. The development of that plan is underway now. It is working in concert with the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan. It is not being held up by that. We are working closely together.

As I said yesterday, we have met with the Yukon Wood Products Association to talk about the opportunities for biomass; we have talked with the Minister of Highways and Public Works about making sure that there are opportunities for that biomass to displace other fossil fuel forms of heating. We are working with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on this front and yes, there is a concerted effort. We are working on it right now.

I said yesterday in the House that our hope was to pull together a project for sometime this year.

Question re: Plastic waste management

Ms. Van Bibber: Yesterday, the Minister of Community Services mentioned that the government is proposing to not only bring in a fee for plastic bags but also paper bags. Looking at the February 25 news release that the government issued to launch the survey, the Minister of Environment is quoted as saying: “Share your thoughts on a surcharge for single-use shopping bags and help keep plastic waste out of our environment and landfills.”

This leaves one with the impression that the government is looking at only adding a fee to plastic bags. As a result of this inaccurate statement and news release from the Minister of Environment, many Yukoners now believe that the government is only looking at plastic bags.

Can the minister tell us if they will be working with the business community, including the chambers of commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, to collect data on the impacts of this policy in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yesterday, I rose on a ministerial statement to talk about this. Let me reaffirm for members opposite, members of this House and the public: The proposal is for single-use bags. When the Minister of Environment spoke about working to reduce single-use plastics — that was to acknowledge that we had that as a motion here in this House that we were to work toward trying to find ways to reduce all single-use plastics — straws, utensils, et cetera.

That’s the reference. If there has been some concern out there with the public, we will do our best to try to make sure that everyone hears. I will reach out to the chambers of commerce later today to make sure that they’re very clear that it is single-use bags that we are working on here.

I will look back as well to make sure that I haven’t made a mistake in how we have been informing the public about it. We are trying to be very clear: It’s about single-use bags. We were motivated by this House putting forward a unanimous motion that we should work to reduce single-use plastics.

Ms. Van Bibber: As we have highlighted, the Minister of Environment has made some inaccurate statements on the policy the government is pursuing here.

On March 26 during debate, my colleague the MLA for Klwane asked the Minister of Environment — and I quote: “Does this surcharge include paper bags?”

In response, the Minister of Environment said — and I quote: “Not to my knowledge. I will have to get back to the member, but the discussion right now that we are having is on single-use plastics.”

In response to this, the Minister of Community Services’ office did send us an e-mail contradicting the Minister of Environment, indicating that the tax would also apply to paper bags. We thank him for that. But we do wonder why the Minister of Environment brought incorrect information to the floor of the Assembly.

With respect to adding a tax to paper bags, will the minister commit to doing so through an economic analysis and making it public before implementation?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There are times, I am sure, when each of us in this Legislature has a small fact that is incorrect

— or maybe even larger ones — and I hope we do our due diligence to try to correct them. That’s what we did.

Will we work with the chambers of commerce? Of course we will work with the chambers of commerce. Are we going to do a full economic impact analysis? This is now the third time I am hearing the suggestion. I heard it around minimum wage; I heard it around this one twice, I guess.

What I want to say is let’s do the engagement with the public which is open right now. Let’s see what the results of that are.

I also noted for this House yesterday — I think in the ministerial statement — that we have the example of the Northwest Territories and how that has played out. We have a nearby example from a sister territory about this initiative.

My understanding is that it was quite well-received. I am happy to look at it from a range of perspectives, and I am really happy to hear from the chambers of commerce about their issues or individual businesses as to what they think about this initiative. That’s the whole point of a public engagement — that we get a chance to hear from all members of the Yukon.

Ms. Van Bibber: As we said yesterday in this House, the Yukon Party does support the government’s goal to reduce waste and single-use plastics as we have demonstrated in our support of last year’s motion, but we do want to make sure that whatever actions the government is doing take into consideration and is up front with small businesses.

As we mentioned, the CPP premiums increasing, small business tax increases from Ottawa, the carbon tax — small businesses do feel like a lot of new expenses and processes are being thrown on them. Yesterday during debate, we learned that a number of businesses in town won’t even be eligible for carbon tax rebates, so these things do add up, and we’re just raising concerns on behalf of small businesses.

Can the minister provide us with a timeline for when he will implement these changes?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It’s an appropriate time as we really talk about business conditions. It was brought up on a couple of occasions today by the member opposite about the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I think it’s just important to share with the House today that, earlier today, the *Financial Post* put a national report out naming Whitehorse as the number-one entrepreneurial city in Canada out of 125 cities. There were 13 metrics that were used within that work. The metrics had to do with self-employment demographics, small business sentiment and local tax and regulatory policy, and within that, Whitehorse finished first.

I want to thank the business community for the work they do, continuing to see us as a leader in the country when it comes to small business and business growth.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 415

Clerk: Motion No. 415, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with First Nation partners and community stakeholders to determine whether there is interest or capacity in other organizations to take on delivery of some or all of the programs and services currently being delivered in the Whitehorse emergency shelter.

Mr. Adel: I am pleased to rise today to speak to this motion. I speak to a lot of people in the community within my riding and others who are interested in knowing the future of the Whitehorse emergency shelter and what it will look like going forward. For that reason, I have put this motion forward that we are debating on the floor of the Assembly today.

As a government, we care deeply about the services being provided at the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We believe in the wellness of all our citizens and are committed to ensuring that our policies and services are working to make Yukoners' lives better.

The needs of Yukon's vulnerable citizens are complex. The challenges we face in addressing those complex needs are often rooted in historic and culturally related trauma. As a government, we have a responsibility to meet our clients where they are and serve the needs of many, not the few.

Mr. Speaker, a question I have heard posed many times is simple: Who thought it was a good idea to build a giant new building, vastly expand the services and then cross our fingers to see if it would work?

Simply put, the construction of the Centre of Hope building was perhaps an ill-conceived project by the previous government from the start. Instead of making a thoughtful investment in sustainable solutions, the previous government built a multi-million dollar building for the Salvation Army with service delivery expectations that were well outside the Salvation Army's capacity or scope of practice.

Our government was one that recognized that the Salvation Army was not meeting the needs of the community. The Salvation Army themselves recognized that. Our government was the one that took action. In December of 2018, the Government of Yukon and the Salvation Army reached an agreement in principle to transfer the ownership and operations of the Centre of Hope to the Government of Yukon.

The agreement in principle was reached through a collaborative process undertaken between the two parties. Both organizations have a keen interest in ensuring that vulnerable and at-risk Yukoners receive the services and

supports they need. That interest has been a driving force in this process.

At the time, our minister said — and I quote: “Our government has been working in partnership with the Salvation Army to support operations at the Centre of Hope since it opened. Together we recognize that the services provided at the Centre are not meeting the unique needs of our community. As a result, we have come to a mutual agreement to transfer the building and program operations to the Government of Yukon. The transfer of services will allow The Salvation Army to focus on other roles within the community. We look forward to continuing to work with them to support those in need in our community.”

The Minister of Health and Social Services successfully negotiated an agreement with the Salvation Army to transfer a \$13.4-million asset back into the hands of the government. This is working toward a sustainable delivery model that works. The Government of Yukon provided the Salvation Army \$1.2 million per year for operation and maintenance of the Centre of Hope. That funding, plus more, is now being used by the Department of Health and Social Services to run the programming at the shelter.

Did we want to assume control of the facility? No. Did we feel we had to step in? Certainly. Do we want to run the shelter permanently? No. Do we want to find community partners to take over the operations? Certainly.

Today, I know that all Yukoners are very interested to hear from the Official Opposition caucus on this topic, as it was their government who spearheaded the expansion of this in the first place. I am really interested in hearing what the long-term plans were. I know that, in 2015, the former Premier said that the centre would eventually be able to provide more services than the old facility. There were also statements in the media indicating that the new facility would offer addiction counselling and skills training. Of course, these things all sound great when we plan them, but I guess what I am wondering is how the former government foresaw the delivery of these services being executed.

Traditionally, the Salvation Army has helped to provide hunger relief, shelter and some basic life skill classes, but they are also a religious organization, and therefore there is certainly a religious aspect to the delivery of their many services. Chief Doris Bill of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation came forward to the media, and a CBC article posted online on January 21 of this year said: “The First Nation ‘pleaded with the previous...’” Yukon Party “‘... government’ not to grant control of services to the Salvation Army...” She and others had expressed concerns around the fact that many vulnerable members of the community are still dealing with severe trauma from the residential school system which had a large focus on religion, thus making a Christian-based organization, such as the Salvation Army, a very inappropriate choice.

Many individuals have expressed that the Christian aspects of the programming at the facility were triggering for them and left —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reading the body of Motion No. 415, I don't believe right now that the comments being made are actually part of what the motion refers to, so I'm calling a point of order on Standing Order 19(b)(i) — the question under discussion.

Speaker: The Member for Copperbelt North, on the point of order.

Mr. Adel: We have to look back and look at what has gone before, before we can look forward. Part of this, I feel, is in the context of how the services were delivered and what the reasons were for the concerns within the community, both First Nations and others, on what this will be going forward.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Part of the motion urges the Government of Yukon to work with First Nation partners and community stakeholders, but obviously in "work with First Nation partners", some discussion about First Nation involvement is topical, in my view. The Member for Copperbelt North can continue.

Mr. Adel: Kwanlin Dün leadership asked the Salvation Army to remove the faith-based aspects of this programming; however, those attempts were not successful.

At the time this project was being planned by the former government, the Salvation Army had a policy in place which demanded people to be sober to be granted shelter. This was changed in 2015, at which time the organization underwent a national shift and relaxed that policy. However, despite the policy shift, we were still hearing from a lot of folks that the Salvation Army in Whitehorse remained too strict. We continued to see people locked out of the building or turned away.

We also know the First Nations tried to work with the shelter to ensure there were culturally meaningful aspects to their programming. It was clear to many that the Salvation Army was not able to deliver that.

Having said all of that, there certainly is a value in the services that the Salvation Army provided and continues to provide for our community. It is a valuable resource in many aspects. The scope of this project was just frankly well beyond their capacity and the situation was not sustainable.

A recent survey on homelessness indicated that there were approximately 200 individuals within the city who were homeless or conditionally housed. Of that study, it found 82 percent of the homeless population were indigenous. We know that a large percentage of our homeless population deal with substance abuse issues. Knowing this information, it doesn't seem to make much sense that an organization who is responsible for emergency shelter continues to turn away individuals who they think are intoxicated.

As I stated earlier, we have a responsibility to meet our clients where they are and serve the needs of many, not a few. We don't get to cherry-pick who deserves to be helped or who

fits the mold. We simply must do our best to ensure the needs of the community are being met with unbiased and consistent services.

I am very proud of the work that has been done by my colleague the Minister of Health and Social Services along with her department in working with the Salvation Army to transition responsibility for the facility and programming over to the government. I have a lot of confidence in the minister, and I am looking forward to seeing how the future of the shelter unfolds.

I would like to thank the New Democrats, who have publicly supported the government's decision to intervene in the situation. They confirmed their support just the other day in the debate on the Health and Social Services department. I am interested to hear their perspective on how to proceed as we look for community partners.

Again, I am keen to hear from the Official Opposition on their solutions as we continue debate on this topic. How do they see the future of the shelter unfolding?

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree on the need for services currently being delivered through the Centre of Hope, and I hope we can, together this afternoon, come up with ways to ensure that this much-needed service continues to serve the people of the territory who rely on it.

Ms. McLeod: I rise to speak to Motion No. 415, as brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt North, which reads: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with First Nation partners and community stakeholders to determine whether there is interest or capacity in other organizations to take on delivery of some or all of the programs and services currently being delivered in the Whitehorse emergency shelter."

Well, that is a good statement, and it would be difficult for anyone to not be behind that. When I read this motion, I am left to wonder: What it is that the government is trying to do here? It is a very important topic. I think it is a topic that everyone in this House has wondered about and has asked questions about. I do thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing it forward.

But I am going to be asking a number of questions of the government today — and I don't want them to take this as an offence or a criticism, but everything that I am asking is genuinely to seek more information and glean a bit more out of the government as to what their plans are with respect to this motion and this facility. I am going to just jump right to it.

It is no secret of course that government uses private members' motion days to move forward their agenda as a platform to highlight plans in the works or those soon to be.

In the case of some motions — for instance, the collaborative framework for mining — sometimes they use motion days to say that they will do things that they never actually take action on. With respect to today's motion, as I have said, I have some questions for the government. My question is: What is the full and entire scope of the plans that the Minister of Health and Social Services is contemplating?

In Committee of the Whole, the minister and the Premier hinted that the government is currently contemplating a number of options with respect to this facility. They even included assumptions for those contemplated options in their budget documents. However, when we asked for details on those assumptions, they didn't know — or maybe they just didn't want to share them.

So what is the Minister of Health and Social Services not sharing with the public at the moment? I think it is clear that there is a path forward or we wouldn't be debating this motion here today.

As I have said, both the Minister of Health and Social Services and the government have been tight-lipped on any financial or program-related information on the Whitehorse emergency shelter since it was taken over from the Salvation Army. We have not seen a financial breakdown of current or planned expenditures, and I think it's reasonable to ask for that and to expect the government to share that.

I hope throughout the course of debate this afternoon that the government is forthcoming with all of that information. Without that information, we're left wondering what the plan is. I know that many people in the Yukon public are starting to talk about this government's inability to make a decision or set a plan, so maybe — and I hope not, but maybe — this is another case of that.

The minister can respond to the government's inability to make decisions some other time. On this side of the House, we would like the details of today's motion. We do not have the details to consider regarding how the government would plan to move programming and services to other organizations or the costs of doing so — and it leaves a lot of questions.

Would NGOs continue to offer programming and other services out of the Whitehorse emergency shelter, or would they have to use their own offices or facilities? Of course, that brings us back to what the costs and programming costs are right now. NGOs want to know that and NGOs need to know that.

How are organizations expected to take on the financial obligations required with their current levels of funding if the government won't provide that information to the public?

The Member for Copperbelt North alluded to earlier — actually, he came right out and said it: It was \$1.2 million of funding that was being appropriated to the operation, plus more. How much more?

Another question that comes to mind is: What process would the government use to determine interest or capacity for the organizations or governments identified in the motion? Have they thought that through already? Is this work already ongoing? We don't know; the public doesn't know.

There are a number of non-governmental organizations that would be wonderful service providers for the types of services and programs delivered. But say, for instance, that NGOs take on program and service delivery — is the minister hoping to make this one of her efficiency-finding missions, passing the buck to other organizations?

We should also mention now that this is the same minister who froze all NGO funding at the 2017-18 levels and

refused to budge on that topic until the media and the opposition parties raised the issue publicly. With the minister's track record in funding NGOs, they would be unlikely to see additional dollars come with any of these additional duties. Of course, we don't know that. The minister has not been forthcoming with information — but maybe the minister will comment on that today when she — I presume — rises to speak to this motion.

We also have questions about why NGOs are excluded from the carbon tax rebate scheme, which will add cost to NGOs, making it more difficult for them to be able to afford to take on initiatives like running the Whitehorse emergency shelter.

What about staffing? We assume that staffing is already in place within government for the delivery of programming and services at the Whitehorse emergency shelter. I guess our information to date is that these are temporary positions, but in conversation with the minister the other day, it is still unclear as to what the complement of staff is. I think we settled on 37 — 10 of those being employees who were taken over from the Salvation Army and five who currently hold positions within government.

My question is: What is their fate? Will they transfer to the new organization? Or is it even possible for an NGO to take them on? Few NGOs can compete with government wages, which I presume that all of the employees are receiving today.

I asked the minister some questions around the current wait-list for alcohol and drug services at the Sarah Steele building, to which she responded that, because of the excellent programming and services available at the Whitehorse emergency shelter, there is no wait-list. In fact, the minister stated that intake is down as people are diverted to the Whitehorse shelter services that are offered. I actually thought it was a pretty good idea to see the effects that the increase of services in another area can have.

Once again: What is the plan? There has to be some reason the minister would consider a change in service providers.

Amendment proposed

Ms. McLeod: These questions are posed to government, and with that, I would like to propose:

THAT Motion No. 415 be amended by, following the phrase, "Whitehorse emergency shelter", adding the words "and provide the Legislative Assembly with:

(1) a detailed financial breakdown of the current and planned expenditures at the Whitehorse emergency shelter; and

(2) details on the options that the government is currently considering with respect to management of the facility."

Speaker: The Member for Watson Lake has the requisite copies for distribution. If they could be distributed by one of the pages, I will have an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk for the purposes of determining whether it is procedurally in order.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and can advise that it is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT Motion No. 415 be amended by, following the phrase “Whitehorse emergency shelter”, adding the words “and provide the Legislative Assembly with:

(1) a detailed financial breakdown of the current and planned expenditures at the Whitehorse emergency shelter; and

(2) details on the options that the government is currently considering with respect to management of the facility.”

The proposed amended motion will then read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with First Nation partners and community stakeholders to determine whether there is interest or capacity in other organizations to take on delivery of some or all of the programs and services currently being delivered in the Whitehorse emergency shelter and provide the Legislative Assembly with:

(1) a detailed financial breakdown of the current and planned expenditures at the Whitehorse emergency shelter; and

(2) details on the options that the government is currently considering with respect to management of the facility.

Ms. McLeod: I think that this amendment really speaks to the unknowns, and we as the Official Opposition Members of the Legislature would like to see some details. We would like to see the numbers regarding the financial expenses that are currently happening and that are planned at the facility. I think that this is a reasonable thing to ask of the government.

We also took note that the Premier said that all staff at the facility were temporary and that the government had budgeted for them as such. When we asked him what options they were considering for them to be temporary, he refused to share that information. We do think that it is reasonable to ask the government what options they are considering, especially since the budget before this House right now is asking MLAs to vote in favour of plans to only have these staff temporarily.

As MLAs, we have the right to know exactly what that plan is that we are voting on. Again, I put it to the House that I think this is a reasonable request. I know that the members on the government side agree with me that this is a very reasonable request.

With that, I look forward to hearing everyone else’s thoughts this afternoon, and I look forward to unanimous support of my amendment.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the amended motion, some of the points that were raised by the Member for Watson Lake really talk about the scope of program service delivery and what the model is — that is the objective. The objective of the motion is for us to work with our partners to determine their interest and to look at the capacity required.

We are also looking at working with our partners. Once we determine that relationship and we look at the scope of the

model and program requirements for the Whitehorse emergency shelter, we will then look at the various elements of how this will roll out. It would be premature of us to try to prescribe that right now, so I would be happy to provide more details as they become available.

With respect to the notes earlier — I can speak to that later on, but right now I just want to speak to this amended motion. I don’t agree with it for the reason that we have to allow the analysis to roll out and look at a model that fits the Whitehorse emergency shelter. What we had historically was not appropriate and not acceptable. We really need to define our relationship with our partners and look at considering our options as we move forward. That really, I think, encompasses good partnerships, transparent relationships and reconciliation.

Mr. Cathers: I rise in support of this well-worded amendment brought forward by my colleague the Member for Watson Lake. It’s disappointing — it’s hardly surprising, but it’s disappointing — to see the Minister of Health and Social Services refusing to agree with the wording of the amendment to the motion. I just want to briefly recap the fact that the two items that are being proposed by my colleague the Member for Watson Lake as additions to the motion are asking for two very simple things that government should have no problem providing the public: (1) a detailed financial breakdown of the current and planned expenditures at the Whitehorse emergency shelter; and (2) details on the options the government is currently considering with respect to management of the facility.

Those are very reasonable questions for the member to ask and indeed for any Yukoner to expect from a government that was elected claiming it was going to be more open and transparent and has in fact been more secretive than previous governments in areas like this.

We saw this on March 21 — I debated this at length with the Premier during debate on the budget — where the Premier absolutely refused time and time again to tell this House what options the government was considering for the Salvation Army. I also brought attention to that fact, and I asked the Premier a question — which he dodged and evaded — on why the government bypassed the Management Board process and operated outside of Management Board scrutiny in making the major decision to take over the former Centre of Hope from the Salvation Army. Why did they not allow officials from Management Board Secretariat to scrutinize the plan and scrutinize the deal and then present it to Cabinet for decision before the Minister of Health and Social Services issued a press release about her takeover of an NGO?

Again, the reason the Management Board process exists — and I know that not all Yukoners are familiar with it — but it is the normal course for ensuring that officials from the Department of Finance give full scrutiny to the proposals of the department, identify potential problems and provide advice to Cabinet on the proposals by any department. The reason why that process exists is because it is an important part of ensuring financial responsibility. It’s highly unusual

for a government to announce a project of this magnitude outside the Management Board process. Again, we see an approach that appears to be a “ready, fire, aim” approach on the part of the minister and this Liberal government.

We know that this Liberal government — and especially this minister — has difficulty working with NGOs. They have an increasingly troubled relationship. After freezing funding for NGOs, we’ve seen that they’re finally starting to relent under pressure from the Official Opposition and NGOs who were under such a tight financial situation that they felt themselves compelled to speak publicly because their pleas were falling on deaf ears when they were meeting directly with government.

In this particular case, the government had other options that could have been considered rather than to take over the NGO and hiring staff. They could have chosen to work with them, to support their operations either on a temporary or a permanent basis while work was ongoing.

Instead, their relationship with NGOs is illustrated by the fact that they would quite literally rather hire 40 new government staff than find a way to work with the NGO who is operating the facility.

I have also seen here and been concerned about the comments made by the Member for Copperbelt North and the Minister of Health and Social Services, who have a disrespectful view of the Salvation Army, considering that group’s long track record of serving the community and the fact that they have operated a shelter in Whitehorse for decades, in fact — funded by governments of every stripe in the territory to provide the shelter service.

I want to emphasize the fact that I agree that changes were necessary to how that facility was being managed, but the government did have a choice and have options in this.

This amendment brought forward by my colleague the Member for Watson Lake would strengthen the motion. It would bring more transparency to bear, and the public does have a right to know how government is spending their money. If the Liberal government votes against this constructive amendment, they are effectively saying to taxpayers that the public does not have a right to know what government is doing with their money or the options they’re considering for this facility.

Mr. Speaker, in this instance here, we have seen that the comments the Premier provided during debate with me suggested that the government might already know what option they wish to proceed with in terms of running this facility. He made some reference to how — I’m just going to find his exact words here, Mr. Speaker. The Premier did make a comment that strongly suggested that the government might already have a plan in mind.

Whether the government has a plan in mind or not, the situation we’re in with regard to the options government is considering for the future of the former Centre of Hope is that they either have no plan or they have a plan they don’t feel the public has a right to know about.

I will not speak much longer on the amendment here. I would just like to thank all the non-governmental

organizations in the Yukon, including the Salvation Army, for the work they do in trying to make the Yukon and their communities a better place. I especially thank all the volunteers and donors to those NGOs for the work they do and the staff of all these organizations for the services they provide. We will continue — where we see the government freezing funding for NGOs and failing to recognize the value of the services they provide — to press them to work with the NGOs to provide services to Yukoners.

We recognize that NGOs provide a cost-effective service in a much cheaper manner than government does, and we appreciate the work they’re doing, even though it certainly seems the current Liberal government does not.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just add a few comments to the debate on the proposed amendment. Let me start by echoing the comments of the Member for Lake Laberge and say that I would also like to thank the NGOs. I think they do a great job. I would like to thank the Salvation Army.

By the way, it was the Salvation Army that approached us as a government and said to us that they weren’t able to manage the capacity and the scope of what was asked of them in the agreement that was negotiated previous to us landing as a government.

We were aware that there were concerns for a long time. The Minister of Health and Social Services had raised those with her colleagues — all of the members of Management Board — and we had been quite well-alerted to the issues that were at hand. The minister continued to work with the non-governmental organization to reach a mutually agreeable place to get to the point where the reins would be passed over. I don’t think there was anything inappropriate with that. It was about working with them.

I would like to say that — the member opposite said that they want to know what the plan is. Well the plan is — right now, in the interim — to get the Whitehorse emergency shelter back up on its feet, which has happened. The plan is, from there, to work with NGOs to see their interest and capacity to run the programming going forward. That is the work that we want to do — to work with NGOs to see what capacity they have and what they bring — sorry, not just the non-governmental organizations but also First Nation partners — Safe at Home, groups like that — the groups who had already been forming across multiple organizations to address wellness in our community.

What we are saying here is that, in the amendment as it’s proposed, it is talking about sharing across a financial breakdown of what’s planned. What we are trying to say is that we don’t have the financial plan yet because — the point is — we are sitting down with the non-governmental organizations and other partners to work with them to see what their capacities are. That work will lead to developing a financial plan.

I didn’t hear all of the debate from Committee of the Whole with the Minister of Health and Social Services, but all of it that I did hear — she was working to answer every question that was posed by the members opposite. If there

were some questions about the Whitehorse emergency shelter, I am sure that she is working to get that information across. There is no concern about sharing the detailed financial information about what it is costing at the moment; that is not the challenge. The challenge is that we want to work with those partners.

On the one hand, the members opposite are saying we should work with the non-governmental organizations, but they are saying that we should decide ahead of time what it is going to cost. Actually, that is not the way that we think it's going to work — it is work with them first and then see what capacity there is — see what aspects they will take over.

I am very glad that the members of the Official Opposition support NGOs now and are debating or arguing that we should provide them more support. I wish that had also been true when they were in government.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment?

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: In my opinion, the nays have it. The motion on the proposed amendment is defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 415 negatived

Speaker: We are returning to debate on the main motion, please.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased to rise to speak to Motion No. 415. Our government is strongly committed to working and helping Yukoners pursue happier, healthier lives. We are committed to the wellness and lifelong learning journey of Yukoners. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring our policies and services coordinate for the betterment of Yukoners.

The Department of Health and Social Services has done and continues to do tremendous work with our First Nation partners and community stakeholders. At the start of our mandate, this government laid out a set of enduring priorities to guide and inform the way we do business. These enduring priorities include our people-centred approach to wellness to help Yukoners thrive. Our strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation. Our strategic investments build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities and our diverse, growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way.

Mr. Speaker, these priorities inform our government's decision to negotiate with the Salvation Army and transfer the \$13.4-million asset back into the hands of the Government of Yukon. This occurred because, with the Salvation Army, we recognized that the services provided at the Centre of Hope were not meeting the needs of the community.

Despite what is said by the opposition, we are appreciative and we recognize the many years of commitment

that the Salvation Army provided with shelter supports for our vulnerable population, and we appreciate that relationship.

The Department of Health and Social Services assumed responsibility for the facility and programming on January 31, 2019. The facility is currently being called the "Whitehorse emergency shelter" until an official renaming occurs in consultation with our partners. As this building and the services provided within are important and symbolic to our community, we want to be deliberate in this process and get feedback from our partners, particularly First Nations.

Our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive. It has informed our service-delivery model since taking over the shelter in January of this year. We are currently operating the Whitehorse emergency shelter as a low-barrier shelter, which means that individuals who were not previously admitted to the shelter because of substance use issues or other challenging behaviours are now being granted access.

From the very first day that Health and Social Services took over operations of the Whitehorse emergency shelter, we have been operating at over full-bed capacity as the 25 shelter beds do not currently meet community demands. The average number of shelter guests served per night in February, including beds and overflow cot spaces, was approximately 31. However, in the month of March, there was a significant increase. Some nights, we saw 45 guests.

On some nights, there were even more individuals accessing shelter for a warm, safe place to spend a night. These numbers highlight the critical need for a low-barrier, harm-reduction based shelter in Whitehorse. It is also a testament to the environment that staff are creating for vulnerable persons every day — a space where they feel welcome and supported.

I want to thank the hard-working staff at the Whitehorse emergency shelter for the work they do, providing passionate, front-line support for members of our community.

Another positive change we have seen since assuming responsibility for the shelter is more women are accessing the shelter and its services. This is indicative that women now view the emergency shelter as a place of safety and that they are comfortable and able to access shelter beds. I am very proud of that.

I am proud to say that, in the month of March, the Whitehorse emergency shelter served just under 11,000 meals to our community. These are hot meals served with care to individuals in our community who may not have otherwise been able to find a breakfast, a supper or a lunch. In addition to shelter services, we also offer shower and laundry facilities, drop-in programs and three full-meal programs in a day.

It is important to note that the Department of Health and Social Services has only been operating the shelter for two months. Even in this short time, we have seen many positive outcomes with the change and anecdotal reports of positive system impacts elsewhere. I understand that there is considerable interest in the Whitehorse emergency shelter and the details of the transition of operations to Health and Social Services. I hope to be able to provide specific updates in the near future when we have a better sense of numbers and data.

We are currently compiling and analyzing a range of data so that we can get a fulsome sense of operation and guest needs to inform the next steps that we should take for the emergency shelter. Although program data will not be available for at least six months, we hope to have interim numbers for the first two months available soon, including guests accessing the shelter, the number of meals served per day and any other system impacts that we are seeing. One of the main things that we are hoping to see is a reduction in unnecessary use of other services and systems due to the shift to a low-barrier, harm-reduction based shelter. We will take time to ensure that our review and analysis of the data is accurate.

Currently, we are in the process of re-envisioning use of the housing units. We have been able to assist some tenants with successfully moving into permanent housing in the community. Eleven of the units are currently occupied. The Whitehorse emergency shelter staff and housing and community outreach services team are working to find housing for the current transitional housing tenants in order to accommodate and optimize a program model that incorporates best practices. Our government's plan is to have a higher discussion about the best use of the units before moving any new tenants in.

Our government is committed to providing comprehensive services to meet Yukoners' needs at all stages in their lives, and the housing units at the emergency shelter building are an opportunity for us to provide housing supports to some of our most vulnerable citizens. As anyone who has been in the Whitehorse emergency shelter lately knows, it is incredibly busy, with lots of people both spending time coming and going from the facility.

Our vision is, and always has been, that the Whitehorse emergency shelter is a hub of activity, where a range of different organizations and partners provide programming. We would like programs to be provided, not just by Health and Social Services, but by NGOs, First Nations and agencies as a collaborative approach to delivery to better meet the needs of our guests.

In March, we issued a callout for expression of interest to our local First Nations and NGO partners regarding their interest in delivering programs at the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We have received interest from key partners and continue to reach out and work with our partners. In the coming weeks and months, we will have more information on how this program will roll out and we will begin to schedule different programs and activities throughout the month of April. We are looking forward to the evolution of the emergency shelter into a community hub that provides activities with supports, with an emphasis on our most vulnerable citizens.

We are also developing a process of defining the future overall vision for the Whitehorse emergency shelter, including an exploration of possible partners or alternative service providers.

As we are seeing now, managing this project and meeting the needs of current guests — many of whom did not previously access the shelter or other community services —

is incredibly complicated and challenging. We look forward to discussions about how best to meet guests' needs and how the Yukon government and other partners fit into the continuum of care for this population group.

In April, we will also be convening the shelter operational advisory committee with key community partners. This group will include representatives who have direct experience in operating shelter or supportive housing projects. We have invited partners from Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, Blood Ties Four Directions and Safe at Home to join us in this committee. Our hope is that they will provide advice and recommendations to us regarding the difficult operational issues that we are seeing.

I would like to take the opportunity to talk about our government's partnership with and support for Blood Ties Four Directions. Blood Ties Four Directions is a well-established NGO that provides essential front-line services to vulnerable Yukoners. Their harm-reduction approach helps Yukoners stay safe and diverts significant pressures from other government resources. We provide funding to Blood Ties Four Directions for their core programming and additional services such as the outreach van. This year, we provided an additional \$50,000 for the purchase of a new outreach van. The new outreach van will allow Blood Ties Four Directions to offer mobile fentanyl testing and be outfitted to provide enhanced supports to marginalized individuals.

The outreach van staff work to connect vulnerable clients to social and health services, outreach nursing care and crisis counselling. Services include the distribution of survival gear for our clients, and they also look at overdose education and prevention and the distribution of naloxone kits. The services that Blood Ties Four Directions provides align with the philosophy and mandate of the Whitehorse shelter.

Partnerships between the shelter and organizations like Blood Ties Four Directions are a natural fit in aligning our service delivery to Yukoners. It is important to note that our government views shelters as a step toward providing individuals with safe, permanent, affordable housing. Ideally, shelters serve to connect people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing that best meets their needs.

Although we are still in the process of settling into operations, this is our goal for the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We feel confident that we, along with our community partners, will be able to accomplish this. To this end, we are working together with our community partners on a community-based coordinated access system to identify people experiencing homelessness and to quickly and more efficiently connect them to housing and supports that meet their needs.

We view the Whitehorse emergency shelter as being a key point of contact within a coordinated access system, and we will work with our partners to connect guests to permanent housing that meets their needs or to help them get back into their own communities elsewhere in rural Yukon communities.

Consistent with our government's belief in the importance of permanent housing and the Housing First approach, our government has invested in the first supportive housing project in the Yukon. Construction of this project will be completed in the summer of 2019 and will be in operation by the fall. It will provide 16 permanent housing units to individuals with moderate supports and will have an on-site staff presence available to residents.

Although we do not know yet what the impact of this project will be as it is not yet operational, we do know that there is extensive research regarding the benefits of the Housing First approach, and this will provide an opportunity for us to work with clients at the Whitehorse emergency shelter to ensure that they have permanent housing.

There have been a number of questions raised in the House recently regarding the use of the Whitehorse General Hospital emergency room. As a result of the national at-home study, which has shown that \$10 invested in providing housing supports to individuals with the highest care needs — there is an average saving of \$21.72. That means that every day, for every \$1 invested in permanent housing for our highest needs clients, there is more than \$2 in savings.

These systems savings include a reduction of use of emergency rooms, as our government knows that investing in social determinants of health, including housing, is key to reducing unnecessary use of other systems. In this way, our government supports providing housing for vulnerable persons. The Housing First approach is a key step toward reducing unnecessary emergency room visits, among other things. It also makes sound financial sense and is a better way to support our most vulnerable citizens.

Although we are looking forward to being able to open the territory's first Housing First project this summer, in the meanwhile, we are working with our community partners, which are busy supporting and finding housing for persons who are homeless within their own respective communities.

Over the past year, Health and Social Services and the community outreach services team has been able to secure permanent housing in the community for almost 60 chronically homeless individuals and persons with significant support needs. This is along with the work of our many NGOs and First Nation partners who work every day to support vulnerable and at-risk populations. We will of course be looking to provide added services in the future.

Over the coming year, we will continue to make great progress with our partners. We will work together to confirm the operational vision at the Whitehorse emergency shelter and will determine what role each of us are best positioned for in supporting homeless persons. In this way, we have committed to work in partnership with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council and the City of Whitehorse to implement the Safe at Home plan. In the fall of 2017, Safe at Home was endorsed by this government and our partners at a launch event that was held to initiate the implementation. The plan takes a community-based approach where the responsibility for implementation is shared among different organizations and governments.

The actions for Safe at Home are centred around five strategic priorities: increasing the support of safe, stable and affordable housing; access to housing —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: Again, in reading Motion No. 415 — I appreciate the comments the minister is making, but they don't seem relevant to that motion. Again, it's going to be Standing Order 19(b) — "speaks to matters other than (i) the question under discussion".

There have been other organizations brought into the discussion, but the motion is about the emergency shelter and working with NGOs and First Nations and moving that forward.

Speaker: The Minister of Community Services, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: A moment ago, I heard the minister talking Housing First and I wondered as well about the relevance. Then she suddenly talked about how it related back to the Whitehorse emergency shelter. So there is an overall relationship, and I hope there can be some latitude because I think that these things are interrelated.

Speaker: I think I have enough information, but the Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: I think that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King raises an excellent point. The minister seems to have gone far off course in her comments on this motion.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I tend to agree with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I have listened to the Minister of Health and Social Services over the course of her submission on debate here with respect to Motion No. 415. Of course, there are organizations in this community that likely, most members in this House will — have of course great community support and impact. But I do find that the minister has drifted away from Motion No. 415 at various times in her speech and provided background information with respect to various organizations in town. I don't disagree with the Minister of Community Services that she has then looped back; however, the tangents sometimes have been relatively substantial.

So I would ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to refocus her attention on this motion specifically in the final minutes of her submissions on this debate.

Hon. Ms. Frost: The motion says, "... determine whether there is interest or capacity in other organizations to take on delivery of some or all of the programs and services..." The objective here is really to highlight that we do have organizations in our community that are directly related to the motion that we are working with and that are very successful in terms of their initiatives — strengthening our community support and engagement, preventing homelessness, allowing us to then work with them to collect

the relevant data and evaluate the success of the systems that we have in place.

Since launching this approach — and since taking it over two months ago — I think I want to go back to some of the notes that have been made. The inability to make a significant decision — I would say that the decision to provide, take over and work with our community partners is not an insignificant decision. It was a decision that was necessary.

If you go back to 2014, the decision to go ahead and build a \$13.4 million facility without any scope around program services to meet the vulnerable populations' needs and handing it over lock, stock and barrel without any essential services around how the program will be looped in — I am not being tight-lipped about anything. I think this government is working with our partners in a transparent fashion to better align with service needs for vulnerable populations. I did not see that when I stepped into this role as a minister, so I am not sure that the comments that have been made across the way — we do have a plan. We have a plan to work with our community partners. We are moving forward. We are working with our NGOs.

Part of how we will determine how much this is going to cost — we know that if there are services delivered through our NGO partners — which we truly appreciate because they're doing significant work in our community. We are working with them and we will bring them into the discussion.

How we get about aligning data with service needs — I think we have seen significantly — I think the Member for Copperbelt North spoke about the numbers and some of the data we currently know. The majority of the clients — a lot of the clients — are indigenous and a lot of the clients come from rural Yukon communities. Our vision and our objective is to work with communities like Watson Lake, communities like Old Crow and communities like Dawson City to try to provide essential services in those communities for the supports that are needed in those communities. That's the reality that we're faced with.

We talk about reconciliation. We talk about collaboration. We talk about the need to change what we see as current service providers. Well, the service providers we have right now are doing the work that's essential and that's necessary. We've learned a lot and we want to expand, extrapolate and look at what we can do better with regard to program service delivery. We will only do that with our partners effectively and transparently.

To clarify the record: We're not disconnecting our partnerships; we're enhancing our partnerships. We're delivering the services. We will look at what we are doing at the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We will look at what we are doing in communities outside of Whitehorse. I would say that, as we proceed, there is a lot of public engagement and consultation that will happen as we move forward.

Ms. White: I think what we have here again is another example of this government bringing forward a motion when the action has already been taken behind the scenes. I didn't actually realize that until the Minister of Health and Social

Services just went through a list of the groups and organizations that she is calling together to meet with about the future of the emergency shelter.

I guess the reason why I am just calling attention to that is that is what the motion is asking us to do. It's asking that the House urge the Government of Yukon to work with First Nation partners and community stakeholders to determine whether there is an interest or the capacity — and what the future of the emergency shelter will look like. Again, we've just heard that is what is happening — which I think is fantastic, because if we really wanted to talk about the past — I mean, I was here for those discussions, and they happened a lot and they were actually quite painful at times.

But to quote out of Hansard from November 13, 2013 — and this is actually a quote from the now-Premier. The reason why is that there was a motion — Motion No. 510 — brought forward by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin — still the current member for Pelly-Nisutlin — where it was urging the Yukon government to do something that they said they were going to do.

So to quote the Premier, he said — and I'm quoting: "So, here we go again. I will support this initiative through this motion — absolutely. It was a good idea almost a year ago and it still is a good idea. I really don't think that we need a day in the Assembly to rally behind this. The Yukon Party has a majority. Let's just do it already."

Motion to adjourn debate

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Motion No. 415.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King that debate be now adjourned.

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are seven yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the motion defeated.

Motion to adjourn debate on Motion No. 415 negatived

Speaker: Member for Takhini-Kopper King, you have just over 18 minutes if you wish to continue.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the invitation to speak again to the motion.

I think what I am trying to highlight here is that there has been full agreement from the House. There were some more questions, but the Minister of Health and Social Services answered those essentially when she listed the group of people who were invited.

There are all sorts of things to talk about. The proposed amendment from the Yukon Party — I was just trying to ask about how that would look. We know that the Yukon government transferred \$1.2 million to the Salvation Army previously. We know from the Salvation Army's perspective that was not enough. There are all sorts of things. The questions about cost are relevant. We know that Kaushee's — one of the things, when they came out about the women's shelter — they said that they could not compete with the government wages being paid at the emergency shelter — that they were 40 percent higher than what they could pay.

The question is — and it is an honest one: What happens in the future?

We had this conversation with non-governmental organizations and First Nations. How does the money flow and what does that money look like? Is it now government-wage jobs, or are the people who have been hired to work there going to be paid less than what they are being paid right now? What does that look like? Those are all valid questions.

I appreciate that the minister has told us that this is already happening, that all of the groups have been invited and that the conversation is going to go on. To be clear, Mr. Speaker, I don't disagree with the emergency shelter being taken over by government. I never did. We did need an emergency shelter. No matter how it got here, it's an important aspect in the community, and I don't think that the responsibility of an emergency shelter should have ever fallen to just a faith-based organization or non-governmental organization. I think that is the responsibility of all of us.

I look forward to seeing what the future holds there. I appreciate that the minister has already taken the action urged in this motion. I guess we look forward to a ministerial statement that will be a maximum of five minutes and have a four-minute response, and then we will have all of the information.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to further discussion.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 415 on the subject of the Whitehorse emergency shelter. I would like to thank my colleague the MLA for Copperbelt North for raising this issue for debate. I do not think that this

is a waste of time. We have debated motions in this House on Wednesdays that are brought forward by private members. We respectfully debated them, and we ask for the same respect for our private members on this side of the House.

The Government of Yukon takes pride in promoting happy, healthy lives for all citizens in Yukon. Improving the delivery of programs and services to Yukoners is a priority for our government, and I am happy that we are talking about that today.

I would like to just say, Mr. Speaker, that I had hoped I would hear today the good ideas from all members of this Legislative Assembly — their thoughts in terms of what programming could look like and what innovative ideas that members of this Assembly could bring forward. That is ultimately what I expected to hear today.

The minister has clearly said that discussions have started, and that's a great thing, but this was our time, in bringing forward a motion specifically about the emergency shelter, for all members to participate in a discussion. I think that is what this is about.

The Whitehorse emergency shelter has been instrumental in helping people in need in our community, and we want to make sure that it continues and that it is done in a way that meets all of the needs of our vulnerable people. It is needed to save lives; it is needed to change lives. It is a pivot point for people to move beyond where they are.

Citizens' needs are evolving, and they require a broad set of expertise to appropriately meet those needs. The diverse needs of Yukoners — whether they are gender-, culture-, religion-, social, or health-related — in some cases require specific knowledge and expertise to serve the public better. The needs of our vulnerable citizens are often particularly complex and require more than a one-government approach. It really requires an all-of-community approach and, ultimately, an all-of-Yukon approach. Meeting those needs has historically been and continues to be a challenge that will require innovative thinking and program delivery. This is why it is important to work with our First Nation partners and community stakeholders to determine the level and interest and capacity to take on programs and services currently delivered in the Whitehorse emergency shelter.

We all share the goal of helping those most in need and enhancing supports so that all Yukoners can live safe, healthy and vibrant lives. I think it is important, as leaders in our community, that we have this discussion publicly and that we work toward solutions openly, because the needs of our most vulnerable affect all Yukoners.

You know what? I would like to go back in time too and have that discussion. I was part of the very first forum on vulnerable people at risk. It was hosted by Kwanlin Dün and the City of Whitehorse. I helped facilitate that day and it went back to April 2015. That forum came out of a discussion between Kwanlin Dün and the City of Whitehorse at an intergovernmental forum that they had in Kwanlin Dün's council chambers in the fall of 2014. That's when that discussion started.

We saw hundreds of people come together from all sectors of our community, and they cared. That's why they came. I recall, as one of the facilitators, not seeing ministers in that room. It was a bit shocking to me that was the case, but we went ahead anyway and had an incredible discussion. I think that is exactly where all of the information that we need to create something that will work the best for our vulnerable people came from.

I was personally disappointed when the government of the day made the decision at the eleventh hour to just wipe their hands of it, to hand over this responsibility to one organization. I believed at that time, and I believe today, that they were set up for failure. That was never the solution; that was not what those hundreds of people came together to talk about that day in the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, to talk about how we changed the story in the Yukon. Ultimately that's what it was about. They came together to talk about what we needed to do as Yukoners to change this. It was the business community; it was all the NGOs; it was different levels of government. We had other Yukon First Nations there and we had a great day. I was hopeful at that time, and so I was absolutely disappointed when the government of the day decided to — even with good warning: We said at the time that we don't think that's the right decision, but the government went ahead anyway and did it.

One of the goals of our government is to make Yukon a safer place for women and minorities. That's something that's really ultimately one of my biggest priorities in the position that I am in today. This is something I'm actively pursuing in my mandate as Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. This help must come in the form of increased and enhanced capacity and supporting the programming and service delivery of both government and non-governmental organizations. Again, it's more than a one-government approach, Mr. Speaker. It's an all-of-community approach and all-of-territory approach. We hear of issues happening in every single one of our communities.

I was listening today to the minister talk about some really challenging issues that are happening in Watson Lake. How are we going to address those issues, Mr. Speaker? That is a community that is very near and dear to my heart, and to see people displaced in any sort of way is absolutely heartbreaking. We want to make good decisions as a government to not only address the incredible issues that we have with the vulnerable people within the community of Whitehorse, but also in our communities. I have heard the minister talk repeatedly in this House about rural Yukon, and I stand with her on that.

The Women's Directorate supports advocacy, direct service delivery and public education initiatives through numerous funding programs. With gender-equality seeking organizations and First Nation partners, we contribute \$1.3 million annually to Yukon organizations supporting women and gender equality. Through the women's equality fund, the indigenous women's equality fund, the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Ms. Hanson: Again, on the Standing Order that's about veering from the motion. The motion is not speaking to the budget of the Women's Directorate or any of the other portfolios that the minister holds. It is specifically with respect to the Government of Yukon working with First Nation partners and community stakeholders to determine whether there is interest or capacity in other organizations to take on the delivery of some or all of the programs and services currently being delivered in the Whitehorse emergency shelter. It is not about the budget of any of the government departments that we are talking about here.

Speaker: The Member for Porter Creek Centre, on the point of order.

Mr. Gallina: I think when we hear about programs that the government is delivering — I think the programs that we have heard today are all relevant in determining success stories, where there have been challenges or where improvements need to be made to apply to this particular situation. I can appreciate that because the member is not talking specifically about the Whitehorse Centre of Hope, but the member is making reference to other programs that the government is doing. Those lessons learned could be applied to the motion that we are debating today.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I agree with the point of order made by the Leader of the Third Party, and I would ask that the minister tailor her comments a little bit, with a greater focus on the motion before the House. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, I take your direction absolutely and with respect.

I do think that the comments that I was making — talking about the support that our government provides to other organizations to be able to work with us and to provide the unique services that sometimes government is not able to deliver in the way that a non-governmental organization can. The emergency shelter is an incredibly important facility.

I have heard the minister talk about the access for women. That's where I was going with my comments around support to other women's organizations. Services are delivered in many formats, from direct outreach to development and distribution of publications and various campaigns. It comes as well in the form of events and commemorations and supports of gender equality and violence prevention.

Our government is also very proud of the work that we're doing with LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. I won't go into much detail about that because it looks like the Leader of the Third Party is not going to be able to handle that.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Ms. Hanson: We've been directed not to personalize comments in this Legislative Assembly.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I would agree. That was a personalization of debate. Yes, I would agree that should be avoided.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I think that we all have the right to do our work in this Legislative Assembly without — and I'm trying not to personalize this, but some days in this Legislative Assembly, it's very difficult to do your job when you do have people across the way making comments and making physical gestures that make it uncomfortable to stand and speak.

Coming back to the LGBTQ2S+ —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Leader of the Third Party, on a point of order.

Ms. Hanson: I do believe that, in the past, there have been rulings that we are not to argue with the Speaker. We're not to dispute the Speaker's ruling.

I find that what we've just seen is a repeat of personalizing after the Speaker has ruled on it. So I'm befuddled as to how that can continue and how that contributes to the respect for the Speaker that we all are supposed to show.

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: In fairness to the minister, I think she was expressing comments about her work here. I should also note that she was not asked to respond at all when the point of order was called, and so her opportunity to do that was not available and I don't see in any way that she would — she said nothing that challenges the Speaker's ruling other than she accepts it absolutely and respectfully.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I would have to review Hansard to determine the exact chronology and content. I recollect two things: The first thing is that members stand to be recognized, so if people wish to be recognized, they stand. So if any member wishes to respond or to be part of the debate or the point of order, they stand. That is the basic premise.

Secondly, as indicated, I will review Hansard. What I recall is that the minister went from the specific to the general. I understand why the Leader of the Third Party might interpret it as questioning the Speaker's determination. My recollection is that it is probably skating fairly close. But for now, I would ask that the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate refocus her efforts in her comments on Motion No. 415.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Again, I want to just reflect a bit on LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. There have been considerable issues with access, previously, to the Centre of Hope — issues that were raised around access for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. It is critical that our services like the Whitehorse emergency

shelter are available to all Yukoners on a non-discriminatory basis. It is also a step forward to realizing the vision that we have as a government and the good work that has been done so far to address the inclusion and non-discrimination of this part of our community.

I am really looking forward — again, these were some of the areas that I had hoped we would hear about today from all Members of the Legislative Assembly in terms of some good ideas from both sides of the House. It is important to take a people-centred approach to the delivery of programs and services, meeting individuals in need where they are and in a way that works for them in light of their circumstances.

An example of this is A Safe Place — a joint project of the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and the Yukon Status of Women Council. A Safe Place provides vulnerable Whitehorse women and their children with a safe place to go when other supportive agencies are closed or are felt to be unsafe. The Government of Yukon is pleased to be able to provide funding and continues to do that within this new fiscal year budget.

We are also following through on our commitment to improve services for victims of violence and sexualized assault in Yukon and to foster a more responsive, individually centred and culturally relevant system response. We are doing that through the development of the sexual assault response team. We are working diligently across government and with community partners to properly implement the SART initiative.

The Women's Directorate met with the Council of Yukon First Nation health directors in March, received feedback and have extended an invitation to further partner on the implementation of SART. The sexualized assault examination training has recently been provided for physicians and nurse practitioners. We are also adjusting systems to allow for a better coordination of medical and victim services.

I appreciate the work my colleagues at Health and Social Services and Justice have done in partnership with the Women's Directorate and external stakeholders on this important initiative, and I look forward to continuing the work and to how it will ultimately work with the Whitehorse emergency shelter in its future. The Whitehorse emergency shelter can help make spaces like this in our community more accessible and welcoming to those in need of support.

More can be done, however. It is important for leaders in our community to have these discussions openly and to come up with solutions and innovative ideas about how to provide services and programs effectively so that we can all achieve the objective of a safe, prosperous, happy and inclusive society for every Yukoner.

It is our duty to ensure that all programs and services are delivered to the best of their capacity. One example of a challenge — and one I have spoken a little bit about — is with regard to the relationship between First Nations and the LGBTQ2S+ community and the Salvation Army. When the emergency shelter programs were being run by the Salvation Army — the Salvation Army has a mandate to provide services within a framework of a certain set of values, and that

can create tension of course with some clients who don't subscribe to those values.

Our Liberal government really believes strongly that all Yukoners need to be supported without discrimination. We have made it one of our top priorities to improve the delivery of public services and programs in a way that is inclusive and respectful of all Yukoners. The programs and services we provide to the most vulnerable in our community should be no different. They must be inclusive; they must be respectful; they must provide a people-centred approach to wellness so that the necessary supports are provided.

As I said earlier, the needs of the most vulnerable in our community are complex and, in some cases, require special expertise. It makes sense to assess the capacity currently available in our community to deliver comprehensive programs and services that meet the needs of those who find themselves in very difficult situations and need our help.

With those thoughts in mind, I encourage all members to support this important motion and demonstrate that this House is working with our Yukon First Nation partners and community stakeholders to ensure that programs and services being delivered at the Whitehorse emergency shelter meet the needs of our community. It's a chance for us to really put our reconciliation efforts into action and those commitments we made to Yukoners into action and to really change the story of the Yukon — again, going back to that forum that we had in 2015 — looking at the vision that was created there that day and bringing it into the facility that we now have in our hands.

With that, I thank the member for bringing the motion forward. I was happy to provide some thoughts and contribute to the debate today.

Mr. Cathers: I will be brief in speaking to this at this point, but I do want to just note that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King made an excellent point earlier. We learned from some of the talking points shared by the Minister of Health and Social Services that this is another area where the government had already made up their mind. We are being asked to debate something that really is not open for debate. The government is going to use their majority to push it through one way or another.

I want to note that we were quite disappointed that the government voted against the excellent amendment brought forward by my colleague the Member for Watson Lake and our critic for Health and Social Services. I do note that we believe that providing a financial breakdown of current and planned expenditures at the shelter and details on the options was a reasonable request to make. It is unfortunate that the Liberal government refused to be open about that with the public.

I do want to note that, while we will be supporting the motion as it currently stands, we feel that the motion is a much weaker motion than it should be and is nowhere near as transparent as it should be in terms of the government's behaviour toward the public and the Legislative Assembly.

I would also note that the behaviour of the Liberal government today, in their approach to speaking on this, is a

good example of why Wednesdays are sometimes referred to as "wasted Wednesdays".

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Porter Creek Centre, on a point of order.

Mr. Gallina: Standing Order 19(b)(i): speaks to matters other the question under discussion. I don't understand how describing the importance of Wednesdays is relevant to the motion at hand.

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: If the member hadn't interrupted me with a point of order, I would have already connected the dots for him and pointed out the relevance to the motion under consideration.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I think I have enough information on this for now. The point of order was raised quite quickly, and the general concept is that it is difficult for the Speaker to determine relevance without at least having the benefit of having heard some additional content. The Member for Lake Laberge can continue.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In connecting the dots on the point that I just made — if the government has already made a decision on the subject matter at hand and they have brought forward a motion for debate — that they of course are going to use their majority to pass — regardless of the passage of the motion, they have already made the key decision. It does raise the question for all members of the Assembly: Why are we spending an entire — well, it is 3:30 now — but the better part of a day talking about something if the government is simply going to read speeches that staff wrote about the government and how wonderful they claim they are and the decisions that they have already made?

We also heard one government minister say that they want to hear good ideas, but we saw what happened when a good idea was proposed by my colleague the Member for Watson Lake. The government wanted to hear that good idea and then they voted against it. It would have, again, strengthened the motion by asking for financial transparency and clarity on the options that the government is considering.

Just in closing off in speaking to this motion, I do want to note that the approach that the government has taken on this issue seems to have been a "ready, fire, aim" approach. They shot before knowing what they were doing. We have seen that the government has had a focus on micromanaging NGOs and seems to have the idea in mind that they can find efficiencies in NGOs rather than work with them and support them. In the case of the Salvation Army, we recognize that there were clearly some operational issues with the facility, but the government had the option of choosing to work with them and support them — either on a permanent or temporary basis —

to address those issues. Instead, they chose to do a government takeover of this facility, and now it is apparent that they either have no plan or they are not willing to be transparent about it.

The details provided by the Minister of Health and Social Services make it seem like there is perhaps a third alternative that I hadn't mentioned earlier — that the government may have a half-baked notion of what they would like to perhaps do at the former Centre of Hope, but they do not have a realistic plan for actually implementing it.

It is worth noting that one of the issues faced by many NGOs is that this Liberal government has not been very supportive of NGOs and that it has waited until there is a crisis before acting to assist NGOs. We have seen this contribute to situations such as NGOs, including the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society, taking the step of publicly expressing their concern about the lack of funding. We know as well that the Child Development Centre was facing great difficulty in their finances and was not receiving support from government. There is a long list of NGOs that have seen their funding frozen.

This Liberal government is quickly developing a reputation for not supporting NGOs, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention that this goes beyond NGOs — in the areas addressed in their freeze related to failing to make decisions until the health care review is done — and that this is the third year in a row that we have seen a shortage of operational funding for the Hospital Corporation. We know that they had asked for a four-percent increase in what would have been the first year of this government's —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Minister of Community Services, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So now, when we are talking about the Hospital Corporation, I find that we are not on the motion before us.

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: One of the operational issues related to the Salvation Army was the effect that their hours of operation was having on the hospital. I believe that it is very relevant. I am disappointed that the minister does not see the connection.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I also heard recently the Member for Lake Laberge talking about a lot of different NGOs, which is getting close to probably not being involved in determining "... whether there is interest or capacity in other organizations to take on delivery of some or all of the programs and services currently being delivered in the Whitehorse emergency shelter."

So I understand where the Member for Lake Laberge is coming from, but I would urge the member as well to focus your attention, where possible, on Motion No. 415.

Mr. Cathers: Of course, I will respect that ruling. I do have to point out to the Minister of Community Services that one of the operational issues where I agree that there was clearly a need for government and the Salvation Army to do something different related to the effect on the hospital —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: If this is not challenging your ruling and explaining it to the Minister of Community Services, I am not sure what is. That is inappropriate.

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: If I misheard you, I will apologize, but I did not hear you tell me that I couldn't talk about the connection between the Hospital Corporation and the Salvation Army.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I expressed some concerns about what the Member for Lake Laberge — some of the other NGOs that you had referenced previously and that therefore you may have been running afoul of Standing Order 19(b), but I did concede that there is a possible nexus between the Hospital Corporation and the Whitehorse emergency shelter. So yes, I agree.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have to note that, in continuing to talk about the connection — the very direct connection between the hospital and the Salvation Army — clearly one of the operational issues that we had heard from the medical community was related to the hours at which the Salvation Army Centre of Hope was closing its doors and the direct effect that was having on emergency room visits, which created operational pressure at the hospital, which creates a direct funding pressure. That is the reason why I believe that is very directly relevant to the Salvation Army Centre of Hope — because if that issue is not addressed, it does have a direct operational impact on the emergency room at the hospital.

I would note that, again, the fact that several ministers of the government don't seem to see the connection paints a disturbing picture about their lack of understanding of our health care needs and the pressures on our emergency room services as well as the fact — as I noted — that government, while these pressures were occurring, provided the hospital with significantly less than what we know they had requested. In the first fiscal year of the government's mandate, a mere 1.5-percent increase — less than the rate of inflation — and every year — this is the third year in a row — when you pull out one-time costs such as the \$2.5 million shown in this year's budget to deal with the pension plan for the hospital, the hospital's budget is growing at less than the rate of inflation.

It is interesting that the government does not see the connection to that and the Salvation Army. It is also quite disturbing. Mr. Speaker, in talking about this, the lack of transparency shown by government about their plan — or lack of plan — is disturbing as well. We know that Yukoners care about this issue. They want to hear details from government about what they are planning to do. We know that, as it relates to the operation of the Salvation Army — a point that was touched on by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King relates to if these jobs that the 40 staff who have been hired for the government's takeover of the Centre of Hope — if those are positions that, as we have heard from other NGOs, are being paid government wages — significantly higher than a number of other NGOs can afford to provide — I have heard from one NGO that their staff have been offered jobs at the facility now that government has taken it over. They are effectively poaching staff from NGOs.

Again, according to what I've been told by this NGO — they said that their staff has been offered as much as \$10 and \$12 per hour more than they currently can offer as an NGO.

To the point made by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — if these positions are temporary, what happens for these staff at the end of that period? If the government hands over all or some of these services to an NGO, do these staff then simply go back to — do they lose their jobs? Do they transition to an NGO at \$10 or \$12 less per hour? What does this mean operationally? It's an example of this government's haphazard “ready, fire, aim” approach to this — that they haven't thought through the most basic details of this, which is, I have to point out, a fundamental flaw with their decision to make this decision outside of the Management Board process — to shoot from the hip, make a decision and then figure out the consequences of the decision they've made. Yukoners do expect better from this government.

In closing, I would just note that the amount of time taken this afternoon in making repetitive points by government members about issues that they've already announced through other means is, again, not the most effective use of this House's time, and since the decision has already been made, or the half-baked plan has already been come up with, it's questionable as to what the point is in voting on the motion in the first place.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 415?

If the member now speaks, he will close debate.
Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Adel: You know, I've heard a lot of cynicism in the Assembly today across the way. I wanted to bring this motion forward because it was a matter that has been brought forward by my constituents. It's a matter that I think is important for the community. If we didn't talk about it, we wouldn't be serving them.

I think we spent an awful lot of time — when I first asked the members across if they could share their long-term vision, their plan in 2014 — the efficiencies — what plan they had

when they brought this idea forward for the Centre of Hope — nothing. What I did hear was an awful lot, in my mind, of the cart before the horse.

I mean, in all honesty, how can we, without seeing that it's going to provide a full range of services — as my colleagues the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister of Tourism and Culture have brought the point forward — and it's not repetitive — it is important to understand that we need to know the full scope of what it's going to take to run this, to provide services to our most vulnerable.

I have some objection to the fact that we're going to get lost in the minutia of numbers and everything else when we really haven't even had a plan brought forward. My intent with this motion was to get some reasonable dialogue — not the cynicism, not the back-and-forth mortar going across the floor verbally — that we could get some work done on this. This is what I hope to get from this. I hope my colleagues from across the way — and with the support of my colleagues in the government — that we can move this forward because it is important.

We're talking about the marginalized people in our society; we're talking about what a democratic society is measured by. A comment by my colleague from Mayo-Tatchun was that societies are based on how they treat their most vulnerable.

So we need to come together as a group and get this to a place where we can have openness and transparency on the figures, where we can have the programs that give everything that we need. I am hoping that, above all of this, we can rise above some of the cynicism and support this motion to move forward so the emergency shelter provides the services and jobs we all hoped it would when it was first started.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 415 agreed to

Motion No. 450

Clerk: Motion No. 450, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT this House supports construction of a new school in Whistle Bend and consultation with community stakeholders prior to construction of the school.

Mr. Gallina: This is an important project to my constituents in Porter Creek Centre in the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend. I'm going to touch a little bit on my ability as a private member to bring this motion forward and the importance of it and the relevance to constituents of Porter Creek Centre.

As a private member, I have the right to bring forward issues that are important to constituents. This is a very important project to the residents of Whistle Bend. I hear this regularly at the door, with the community association and in talking with constituents.

I think it would be irresponsible for us to not be discussing important matters here among all MLAs of this House in providing input. The government has signalled that this particular project is a priority for this government, and the government has signalled that they have allocated dollars in a budget that's going to be debated on the floor of this Assembly. This is another opportunity for us to have a conversation about this project. Just because the government has signalled, that doesn't mean it's a done deal — contrary to what we have heard today — with government private members bringing forward motions where the government has signalled that they're moving in a particular direction. I fundamentally disagree with that, and I am taking this opportunity today to bring forward a project that will continue a conversation.

It's going to have the insights from me as the MLA for the riding where the project is being discussed and has been identified — I think it's important for all MLAs who represent constituents in other ridings to speak about this project. It is not a done deal. It has been identified in a budget and we will debate that budget. It would be faulty for anyone to assume that just because it has been budgeted for, it is going to go forward. We have had this discussion before.

When I look at amendments that have been brought forward by other parties — this government has agreed to amendments from both parties that have been made — amendments that have been made to government private motions that have been discussed here. So we are not closed to that idea in any way. Also, 50 percent of the votes that we

have had in this House have been unanimous. Fifty percent of the votes that we have held in this, the 34th Assembly, have been unanimous. I think that is significant. I speak to this in an effort to address collaboration among the MLAs here in this Assembly and the importance of us to have the ability to have a conversation about important topics.

Mr. Speaker, this particular motion is a very important project to me in my riding — by way of a new school — as is ensuring that community stakeholders are consulted prior to the construction of a school. We heard last week from the Minister of Education that the budget for 2019-20 includes over \$30 million in capital funding to ensure that our schools continue to meet the current and future needs of our education system. This funding will be used to modernize, maintain and build Yukon schools.

We are seeing: \$19 million invested in building the French language secondary school; \$3 million over the next two years to build and renovate portable classrooms; \$1.4 million for stabilization work at the school in Ross River; \$50,000 for planning with Kluane First Nation to move Kluane Lake School from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing; and budget funds have been allocated in the amount of \$1.6 million to plan for a new elementary school in the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend. This is promising news, Mr. Speaker.

Whistle Bend is the most rapidly growing subdivision in Yukon. We are starting to see parks constructed there. Whistle Bend Place is operational and is a foundational element to the community. Planning has begun on the town square to provide residents with an accessible shared space to be used for a host of activities throughout the year. Commercial developers are in their planning phase and are looking to develop a broad range of services for the community including local eateries, coffee shops, daycares, commercial spaces and convenience store and local shops. There are beautiful walking trails that I know the community is interested in expanding. All of these elements contribute to a strong sense of community, and a school that has been built with input from community stakeholders will only help to enhance this.

The population in Yukon — and specifically in Whitehorse — continues to see fairly rapid growth. We are seeing new young families move into Whistle Bend, and an elementary school will serve as a tremendous asset to these families,

Last fall, Whistle Bend was home to about 640 families with about 100 school-age children. The number will continue to grow as the subdivision expands and develops. Whistle Bend school construction is currently anticipated to begin in 2021, with completion projected by 2023-24. An important note — this school will be the first new elementary school in Whitehorse in 27 years. Our population has increased significantly. With population growth, we see additional pressure on our current schools. We see increased traffic, and therefore there are additional traffic concerns and questions around road safety. We are also seeing pressures on school capacity and enrolment. Right now, most residents in Whistle Bend are sending their children to either Jack Hulland or

Takhini Elementary School. A new school will provide relief to attendance areas at those schools and even throughout Whitehorse, which will help to ease some of the capacity pressures we are experiencing right now. A new school will provide the capacity and flexibility to begin renovating or replacing priority schools that have seismic mitigation work needs.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the importance of a new school in Whistle Bend is clear. This project will address population growth. It will alleviate catchment pressures at a number of schools throughout the city and become a foundational community asset in the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend.

The second part of my motion touches on the importance of consultation with community stakeholders prior to the beginning of construction. This is an important element to the community and to the project. When we look at engagement, we know the Yukon government has committed to better, more meaningful public engagement because the perspectives and input from citizens can inform the best possible decisions for Yukon. This government has made efforts to find out what meaningful public engagement looks like for Yukoners and are working toward making that a reality.

This government is proud of the efforts taken in public engagement such as the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, talking Yukon Parks and cannabis legalization, to name a few. Since 2017, we have hosted 53 engagements on engageyukon.ca. It is important to this government that Yukoners have the flexibility to share their thoughts in a meaningful way through our engagements.

Bringing engagement closer to home, the Whistle Bend Community Association has been very active on this topic, and I know they have been strong advocates for ensuring that the community has the opportunity to bring forward their ideas and their concerns. Whistle Bend residents in general tend to be very engaged. They have a vision for their neighbourhood. We should absolutely be hearing from community stakeholders as the planning for this project begins. The association has engaged with Whistle Bend residents on such matters as trail designation, trail connectivity, overall development priorities, traffic safety, greenspace and on transit routes, to name a few.

As I look at the Whistle Bend community Facebook page, I see over 600 subscribers talking about everything from upcoming events to recommendations to a lost-and-found section, and of great importance, this page is an avenue for the Whistle Bend Community Association. The association uses this page to inform residents with status updates and also as a way to engage with residents.

In March, we saw the association share correspondence with residents from the Department of Education — and I quote this correspondence from the department to the Whistle Bend Community Association. The president of the association states that she is pleased to inform that the Yukon government's five-year capital plan includes, in 2019-20, "... to support planning work for a new elementary school Whistle Bend. We anticipate the school's construction to begin in 2021 and be completed in 2023."

The response from the department: "We want to involve the Whistle Bend community in planning for the school and we will connect with the Whistle Bend Community Association once they are ready to begin discussing these plans. The new elementary school will be for both the Whistle Bend community and the surrounding area. As part of this project, we will be working with the nearby school communities to adjust areas and student placements."

From the association admin: "We need to increase participation in the formation of a school subcommittee for the WBCA to further the community involvement in this planning process — put your name below if you are interested. If there is not enough active engagement, then we risk not having a voice in the matter."

Mr. Speaker, 13 people responded within two hours, indicating their desire to be a part of this subcommittee to continue a further dialogue on this particular project. This is encouraging. By way of this motion and debating it here today, I want the House to let the government know that this type of engagement for this project is very important.

As well, I was happy to hear the Minister of Education last week speak about engagement on this project. She stated that part of the planning process for this new school would include working with nearby school communities to determine an attendance area and looking at how they may affect students. She also committed to reviewing all current Whitehorse attendance areas for long-term planning to ensure that all available learning spaces are being effectively utilized.

I heard commitments around meeting with school councils to hear their expertise and to take all of that into account in developing a plan for Whistle Bend school.

All of these types of engagements are important. They are important components in creating a healthy, sustainable plan.

As I close my opening remarks on this motion, I want to reiterate that there is a need for a new school in Whistle Bend. It will address population growth. It will alleviate catchment pressures at a number of schools throughout the city and become a foundational community asset in the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend.

I have outlined the importance of consultation with community stakeholders prior to the construction of the school — that it is paramount — and that it aligns with the vision of the community to be engaged with on an important project like this and that it aligns with the commitment of this government to conduct better, more meaningful public engagement. This government believes that the perspectives and the input of citizens can inform the best possible decisions for Yukon.

Mr. Kent: I thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forward this motion here today that speaks to a similar statement, I think, to the ministerial statement that was done recently by the Minister of Education with respect to planning and construction for a new Whistle Bend school.

We in the Official Opposition, as I mentioned in my response to the ministerial statement, support the construction of a new school in Whistle Bend. As we mentioned, it is the

fastest growing subdivision in Whitehorse, and the Electoral District Boundaries Commission estimated its population of eligible voters alone to reach 2,634 people by 2026. As I mentioned during that response, and as we have mentioned previously, we do support the construction of a new school there.

We also supported the subdivision of Whistle Bend getting their own MLA. Unfortunately, the government didn't support us in that regard, but hopefully we can all come together on supporting the planning and construction of a new school in Whistle Bend.

Just to sort of give a bit of a summary of what I am going to talk about here today with respect to this motion: I'm going to talk obviously about the capital planning aspect and how that's evolved under the Liberals from the school revitalization plan to the promised 10-year plan by the Minister of Education for school construction to the two competing five-year capital concepts that we've had over the past couple years and the significant changes that we've seen with them.

The Member for Porter Creek Centre mentioned the attendance area review. I'll certainly look forward to digging in deeper during my time here today and hopefully get responses from the Minister of Education or the member in his closing remarks or others across the way with respect to some questions we raised during our response to the ministerial statement on this subject.

Those are the two areas that I really wanted to focus on with respect to this particular motion. I guess sort of starting off, just to give the House some forewarning, I will be moving an amendment to this motion after I conclude my remarks, but I want to mention that on Monday, March 25 of this year, the Member for Porter Creek Centre gave notice of Motion No. 435:

THAT this House supports the construction of a new school in Whistle Bend.

It was obviously a very straightforward motion. So we're pleased that he amended his own motion by bringing forward Motion No. 450 which added the extremely important piece about consultation. That's what my amendment, when I move it, will focus on — additional aspects around the consultation phase with respect to the construction and planning of a new school in Whistle Bend.

Just to talk initially about the school planning and the capital planning aspects — when we go back to the 2016 Education annual report, it was the first report signed off by the new Minister of Education after she assumed her role as the Minister of Education following the 2016 election. In that report on page 41, it talks about the school revitalization plan. Just to quote a portion of that school revitalization plan, it says, "The conditions of Yukon school buildings were assessed in 2014, with the reports received in spring 2015. The School Revitalization Plan will be finalized in summer 2017 based on facility condition assessments, findings from the 2013 Seismic Evaluation Report from the engineering firm David Nairne + Associates Ltd., programming requirements and enrolment projections. Based on capital funding and this

plan, the goal will be to upgrade or replace one school building approximately every three years."

When we asked about that school revitalization plan and the commitment that the minister made in her initial annual report, what we received back is that the government was working on a 10-year capital plan for schools. We have talked about that for a number of Sittings now, but we haven't seen that. We haven't seen this 10-year capital plan that the minister promised.

Obviously, we are still hoping to get that at some point and talk about the engagement that the government has had with affected school communities with respect to that 10-year capital plan. The minister mentioned a number of schools when she initially talked about that. Whistle Bend, at that point, was not contemplated as being built, but here we are today with this motion before us and the commitment in this 2019-20 budget by the members opposite to begin planning and then look for construction.

One of the challenges that we have with the capital planning of the government is the extreme changes that the capital planning has undergone year after year. Last year was their first much-heralded five-year capital so-called plan that they brought forward. I will just run members through what was contemplated for work in the 2018-19 budget and the four subsequent years with respect to that capital plan. Kluane Lake School, Burwash Landing — so 2018-19 and 2019-20 — when you fast-forward to this year, it doesn't look like any work was funded for this project last year, and that project has been shifted into the future by a year. Christ the King Elementary School — there were three years of budgeting plans. Obviously, the members opposite chose not to put in numbers, so we can't tell what is planning and what is substantial construction, but they have coloured in the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 for Christ the King Elementary School. But that has disappeared; that is no longer in the five-year capital plan with respect to what the Liberal government is bringing forward.

Holy Family School — again, last year, in the inaugural five-year capital concept, it was scheduled for work in 2021-22 and 2022-23. I believe we even had the Minister of Highways and Public Works suggest that it was going to be a replacement and then was later corrected by the Minister of Education. We never did nail down what the work contemplated for Holy Family School was going to be in last year's five-year capital concept. Then again, if you fast-forward a year, Holy Family School is nowhere to be seen with respect to any work in the five-year capital plan.

I guess this is why there is a lot of confusion and perhaps some trust issues with whether or not these projects in this year's capital plan will actually get done going forward. The Member for Porter Creek Centre, in his opening remarks — I will paraphrase him — said that this is not a done deal. I can certainly appreciate that given the track record on a year-over-year basis with respect to the five-year capital plans that have been tabled by the government side. There are drastic changes that have been made all through it, but we're focusing here today on the school capital side of things.

Again, we're left wondering what next year's plan will look like and which of these projects will no longer make the cut. That ties back to the importance of the minister tabling the 10-year capital plan for schools that she has promised a number of times in the Legislative Assembly.

Something else that was in last year's planning was a scalable design. It was to be a generic design for schools that could be scalable. It was one of the signature projects in last year's five-year plan, and then you fast-forward to this year's plan, and it's no longer there. However, the minister has told us that work is either underway or completed. I believe it was a two-year time horizon. When we looked at last year's work, we raised some concerns that we had heard. Yes, it was a two-year time horizon, Mr. Speaker, for 2018-19 and 2019-20. We raised some concerns at that time that we had heard from the local consulting firms and architectural firms with respect to a generic design.

I believe the minister said that this design would save Yukoners \$7 million in design costs over 10 years. We're left wondering — and we hope we can get some answers here today, given there's a little bit more time to respond during motion debate — as to what exactly the status of that scalable generic school design is and how it fits in with the new school in Whistle Bend. Further to that, what will the \$1.6 million that is identified in this year's budget for planning of the Whistle Bend school be spent on? If we don't get a chance to get those responses here today, those are questions I will have for the minister when her department officials are here providing support to her during budget departmental debate.

There's this scalable generic design, and is the \$1.6 million for Whistle Bend part of that scalable generic design? What is the breakdown of that expenditure for this year? We certainly want to get a sense of what that money will be spent on and how it will be spent. Construction is still a couple of years away, so what kind of expenditures can we expect to see this year and what kind of expenditures can we expect to see in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24?

The other question I would have is about the gap in funding for the 2021 capital budget as identified in this five-year capital plan. The range that has been identified for the Whistle Bend school is \$25 million plus, according to the planning documents that were tabled with the budget. We would certainly be interested in a little bit more information on how much they're anticipating spending on this school over the life cycle and some more reasoning around the \$1.6 million this year and then the gap for a year and then 2021-22.

Perhaps there's a relatively straightforward answer to it, but it is certainly something that jumped off the page with the five-year plan that the government tabled with the Budget Address.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member opposite brought up the attendance area reviews, because it is something that I was hoping we would get to talk about with this particular motion today. As stated, the minister — with the construction of the new school, obviously he will need to set up an attendance area for the Whistle Bend school. We understand that. There

are some other schools that are in proximity that will be affected. Hidden Valley Elementary I believe was identified; also Holy Family School, Jack Hulland Elementary School and Takhini Elementary School were identified initially as part of this attendance area review for the Whistle Bend school construction.

What we have some concerns about with respect to that is — well, there are a couple of questions that raises for us in the Official Opposition. The first is with respect to Holy Family School and why that attendance area may be looked at with respect to a Whistle Bend school. Holy Family School and Christ the King Elementary School are both obviously Catholic schools here in the City of Whitehorse. Again, we have asked the minister to clarify what the Whistle Bend school will be. Will it be some sort of a dual-track school that includes Catholics and then some of the neighbourhood students there? Is that even possible? Is there a French immersion opportunity — is that even possible?

I think that including Holy Family School in that attendance area review linked to the Whistle Bend school is something that we certainly want to wrap our heads around. I think if you said that we are going to look at the attendance areas for Christ the King Elementary and Holy Family School, that would have made much more sense to us as they are the two Catholic elementary schools that feed into Vanier Catholic Secondary School here in Whitehorse.

Again, when we look at the capacity numbers for the start of the 2018 school year, Christ the King Elementary School was at 84-percent capacity and Holy Family School was at 96-percent capacity, so we would have hoped that, going back to last year's capital plan, something would have been done to address the concerns there. What we saw last year to what we see this year has changed drastically. I think the minister mentioned that she had met with the school councils and the Catholic Education Association, so hopefully we get a chance to hear some more from her with respect to what those conversations entailed.

One of the other schools contemplated for an attendance area review is Takhini Elementary School, which is a K to 7 school that is at the lowest capacity of any Whitehorse-area elementary school. Again, these numbers are subject to change. Obviously we don't have current numbers; these are the latest that we have. But again, that school was at 52 percent. So obviously there are going to be some concerns with the Takhini Elementary School community and what a Whistle Bend school may mean to the populations there.

Previously, I know that staffing allocation was tied to school population, so as some of these schools lose students — or have the potential to lose students — we certainly are worried about the potential viability of those schools and what the teacher allocation will look like. Again, Takhini Elementary School is — according to numbers provided by the Department of Education — at the lowest capacity now.

I can't recall if, when she did the ministerial statement on this project — if it was in her initial statement or if it was in her response to me and the member for the Third Party. She said that perhaps there is the opportunity for students outside

of the attendance area of the new Whistle Bend school to go there if there is excess capacity. Again, we are worried that might put additional downward pressure on some of the neighbouring schools, because I am sure that some parents and some families would choose the new school over their existing school as far as going there.

So those are some of the concerns that were raised within those school attendance areas that were identified initially as part of the Whistle Bend school.

Then we have heard more recently that the attendance area review will be done across the City of Whitehorse. The Minister of Education has talked on a number of occasions about 700 empty spots throughout the City of Whitehorse and the schools that are here. Obviously we are — I in particular and other Whitehorse MLAs — perhaps hearing from their school communities and their constituents about this new Liberal initiative to review attendance areas across the city. I will focus on Copperbelt South and the attendance area for Golden Horn Elementary School.

I have heard from a number of parents with questions that they have for this government and this minister about what this attendance review could mean for them and what it could mean for their kids. Will their kids who are already in an existing school — if their homes are no longer in a specific attendance area, will they have to leave their friends, their teachers and the programs that they have become used to, to attend a different school?

I have said on occasion — or on a number of occasions — that when it comes to making choices on places to live or where they buy a home — I have heard from many of my constituents that they chose the neighbourhoods in Copperbelt South — within city limits and beyond — because they were in the attendance area for Golden Horn Elementary School. So these are choices that they made. We posed a number of questions to the minister during our ministerial statement response. If she can't answer them here, perhaps we can get into them when we get into departmental debate.

Some of them are — just to put them back on the record — with respect to how the public engagement will happen, when the public engagement will start, when the minister will initiate these school council and school community meetings and, most importantly, that the minister attends so that she and others can hear first-hand what the concerns are for those parents.

One of the other questions that has come to me with respect to this is: How will the government determine whether an attendance area needs to be changed? Is it the majority of the residents who live in that area — if they want to remain in the attendance area for a specific school? Or is this going to be one of the decision-based evidence exercises that we have seen from the government where the decision is already made and the consultation is designed to fit whatever decision is made?

We are hopeful though. We are hopeful that the Liberals will live up to their “Be Heard” tagline. They haven't always done so. But when it comes to this and when it comes to where families and their children can attend school, it is

extremely important and it creates an extreme amount of anxiety. The more information that the minister can get out into the hands about this process — what it means, when it is going to start, how people can make sure that their concerns are heard, and again, most importantly, what kinds of thresholds will determine whether or not an attendance area is adjusted, based on feedback from parents in that area — I think that is extremely important because this initiative was announced — much like the school revitalization plan and the 2016 Education annual report — without any substantive work being done on it.

When you look back, this plan was to be finalized in the summer of 2017. Here we are, two years later. We haven't seen this plan. We haven't seen the government's 10-year plan. The five-year plan changes year to year, so I don't think — you can understand why we, as MLAs and those constituents whom we represent, are skeptical of this government's 2.5-year track record when it comes to capital builds and what it is going to look like.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I think I have touched on most of the important issues that I wanted to raise during this debate here today, so I am going to move an amendment to the motion brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

Amendment proposed

I move:

THAT Motion No. 450 be amended by:

(1) adding the words “after creating a Whistle Bend school council to advise and be consulted on the design, planning, and construction of the school” after the words “Whistle Bend”;

(2) replacing the word “consultation” with the words “and consulting”; and

(3) adding the words “First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse” after the words “community stakeholders”.

I do have copies for all members as well as how the motion reads after the amendment.

Speaker: If the copies could then be distributed to all members, I'll review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and can advise that it's procedurally in order.

It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT Motion No. 450 be amended by:

(1) adding the words “after creating a Whistle Bend school council to advise and be consulted on the design, planning, and construction of the school” after the words “Whistle Bend”;

(2) replacing the word “consultation” with the — I believe it's just going to be the word “consulting” because it appears that “and” is already there so — with the word “consulting”; and

(3) adding the words “First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse” after the words “community stakeholders”.

With the word “consulting” and “(3) adding the words ‘First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse’ after the words ‘community stakeholders’”, the new proposed wording would be:

THAT this House supports construction of a new school in Whistle Bend after creating a Whistle Bend school council to advise and be consulted on the design, planning, and construction of the school, and consulting with community stakeholders, First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse prior to construction of the school.

Mr. Kent: Again, I thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing forward this motion. It is obviously a project that is important to his constituents and to constituents of neighbouring ridings as well who may be affected by this.

This motion was designed to strengthen the consultation aspects with respect to the design and construction of this school. As I noted earlier, initially when the Member for Porter Creek Centre brought forward a motion on this matter — it was on Monday, March 25, 2019, Motion No. 435 — it read: “THAT this House supports the construction of a new school in Whistle Bend.” Then we fast-forward to Motion No. 450 which he has introduced, and it essentially says the same thing but asks for consultation with community stakeholders.

A motion that I did — it was similar, and it led to the initial part of this amendment before the House today — is with respect to the creation of a Whistle Bend school council. Whether there are policy, regulatory or even legislative changes that need to be made with respect to creating a Whistle Bend school council, there is obviously some time to do that work, especially given the one-year gap in this project according to the five-year capital plan.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I felt — and colleagues felt — that it was important to specifically name First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse. There will be effects on those two levels of government with the construction and when it comes to citizens attending the school, traffic concerns or other aspects with respect to whatever becomes the chosen construction site for this project. Again, I felt it strengthened this motion to add First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse when it comes to the original motion — Motion No. 435 — and the amended motion that the Member for Porter Creek Centre brought forward — Motion No. 450 — and then this actual amendment to Motion No. 450 which we are discussing here today.

I am hopeful that this amendment is taken for what I believe it to be, which is an opportunity to strengthen what we are doing here and to send a message to not only the new school community for the Whistle Bend school, but to the First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse that we want to make sure that they’re involved as well in planning and construction of this important project going forward.

With that, I will look forward to hearing from other colleagues on the amendment that I’ve presented here today.

Mr. Gallina: I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this amendment forward and reiterating the importance of consultation with community stakeholders and looking to further define that. I think that there is certainly some significance around that.

When I brought the motion forward and included community stakeholders, First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse were a part of that as well as residents and parents of students who could possibly be attending the school.

What about NGOs operating in this area? Maybe we want to list NGOs that are operating either daycare services or programming at Whistle Bend Place. Maybe they’ll be affected with a school. What about the business community? The business community that I spoke to in my opening remarks was in initial planning phases with lots that have been identified.

So I do agree that consulting First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse is important, and I think that there are other community stakeholders that we want to include as well. That’s not to say that we’re not supportive of this amendment, but as we debate motions in the House and there’s this aspect of engagement and consultation, we get into this back-and-forth. We tend to break it down and we get very specific on who is going to be spoken to and when they are going to be spoken to. These are important factors, so I identify that — on consultation.

On the aspect of creating a school council — Whistle Bend school council — so I’m not sure that the act allows for a school council to be created prior to the school being built. Maybe others can speak to that; I’m not sure.

What I am sure about is that I know that there is a desire for Whistle Bend residents to be a part of a school council. I also know that Whistle Bend residents want to participate in engaging with the government and the Department of Education on the build for the school and on a number of aspects for the school.

So I will just bring members’ attention to what I spoke to earlier when it came to correspondence from the Department of Education in working with the Whistle Bend community association. It stated that they wanted to begin a process to engage with residents of Whistle Bend. They wanted to formalize that process. By doing so, the Whistle Bend Community Association agreed to form a subcommittee of their association that would be in contact with the Department of Education. There were 18 people, in a matter of hours, who subscribed to that subcommittee. They said, “Yes, sign me up. I’m happy.”

Brian Laird is one of those people who asked to be a part of the subcommittee. Mr. Laird was someone who had been advocating for a Whistle Bend school council.

That correspondence on the Facebook page took place about two weeks ago. If we look to a post that was shared the other day on the Whistle Bend Facebook page — this was

from the Yukon Party caucus. I will quote the notice on the Facebook page from the Yukon Party: “As planning starts for this new school, proactively establishing a school council now and receiving meaningful input from these families will add significant value in determining the needs of the school and how it will best serve students and families of Whistle Bend and surrounding areas.”

There’s a link, Mr. Speaker, to an article put out by the Yukon Party caucus calling for the creation of a school council in Whistle Bend. There are four “likes” and there are two comments on this post. One of them states: “I for one would be grateful if territorial political parties of any persuasion would resist politicizing neighbourhoods for their own purposes. This is a neighbourhood issue and a neighbourhood Facebook page. I’m not a page administrator and my neighbours may not share my views, but I object to our neighbourhood being used by any political party to score political points in a territorial election.”

This is the comment that is on the school council page. So as the MLA, I am following the dialogue that’s happening with Whistle Bend residents and I’m seeing support for a subcommittee. There are 600 members on this Facebook page who are quite active. I would say that this page is probably the most active community page in the territory when it comes to a neighbourhood Facebook page.

It’s pretty significant. The residents of Whistle Bend gravitate toward communicating through social media, and this is one aspect — one way that I, as an MLA, am able to determine the values brought forward by residents of Whistle Bend. That particular aspect, I don’t see us supporting. I think there’s some relevance behind our alignment on that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will cede the floor.

Ms. Hanson: At the outset, I wanted to say that I was encouraged by the opening comments by the Member for Porter Creek Centre when he introduced his motion in the first place, when he spoke about the openness of the government to amendments and talked about the number of amendments that had been agreed to by this Legislative Assembly when they came from opposition members.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I see the proposed amendments being put forward here today as being positive and productive. In fact, they do speak to the kind of values that I hear being espoused by the member who put forward the motion in the first place and by this government.

He indicated that he didn’t think it was possible to create a school council in advance of having a school. Well, if I look at section 64 of the *Education Act*, it says, “... for each attendance area established by the minister...” and it is my understanding that the minister has established or is establishing — is establishing, so I haven’t got to the end point, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that the minister is establishing an attendance area for a school that has been put into the capital plan for this government, and it has been spoken to in numerous speeches by many Members of the Legislative Assembly. So if there is no intention to create a school, then it would render the proposed amendment moot.

But if there is an intention to create a school in Whistle Bend, then I do think that this is a great opportunity — I won’t even respond to the comments of the last few minutes about Facebook. I really don’t care.

We do know that there have been entreaties made by other residents of Whistle Bend to get ahead of the game with respect to engaging. It can be done. It can be done by the legislation, so this is not something that would be prohibitive, but it would certainly give further credence to the language and the words of this government with respect to wanting to respectfully engage with those people who are affected by government actions — in this case, the creation of a school.

This is an opportunity for this government to actually improve upon the advanced consultation around construction of a school. Some of us will remember the long and sad stories around the various iterations of what F.H. Collins was going to look like and the engagement of the communities — including First Nation governments and the municipal government of Whitehorse as well as various other community stakeholders — around what that design was going to look like before it became a prototype of Mother Margaret Mary — or whatever it was — out of Alberta.

Giving the opportunity for parents and prospective parents whose children will attend that school to be engaged — and it’s not just parents, as we know, who are on school councils. I was happy when the Member for Copperbelt South pointed out the importance of not lumping in First Nation governments nor the City of Whitehorse into “community stakeholders”. It should go without saying, Mr. Speaker. I am sure, despite his comments when he tried to clarify, that it was probably an oversight by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. But I would hope that he would agree with me that First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse are not community stakeholders in this, actually. They have a different relationship to the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Yukon has a different relationship with them.

I would hope that the members of the government will join the New Democratic Party in supporting what I believe is a constructive amendment from the Member for Copperbelt South.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing forward the amendment. I also thank both the Member for Porter Creek Centre and the Member for Whitehorse Centre for their comments on the amendment, as proposed.

First of all, I think that the latter parts of the amendment, as proposed by the Member for Copperbelt South, are good improvements to this — replacing the word “consultation” with the words “and consulting” and differentiating stakeholders — and as noted by the Leader of the Third Party, First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse are not community stakeholders; they are partner governments. It is appropriate. I do agree that consultation was not strong on the rebuilding of the F.H. Collins Secondary School, and we need to do better. That is for sure.

Like the Leader of the Third Party, I was also caucusing quickly with the Minister of Education. We opened up both the *Elections Act* and the *Education Act*, and we are starting to do some research under the regulations. What I want to say is that we are uncertain about the legislative and/or regulatory requirements to establish a council before there is a school in existence. While we are happy to go off and do that work, it just comes back to the same challenge that we have — that when we are here on the floor of the Legislature, it is tough to do that work on the fly.

So I don't think that there is any concern with trying to consult and get the perspectives of the citizens of Whistle Bend and those folks who would form a school council. It is just that, as the government, we need to be sure we are acting appropriately under the authority that is given to us.

I appreciate that the Leader of the Third Party read one clause within the *Education Act*, but of course that clause also referenced another clause and I don't see it as cut and dried as she does.

I am going to propose a subamendment to the amendment. I have it here.

Subamendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move:

THAT the amendment to Motion No. 450 be amended by deleting clause 1 and renumbering the subsequent clauses accordingly.

Speaker: If copies could be distributed to all members, I will review the proposed subamendment with Mr. Clerk.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed subamendment to the amendment of Motion No. 450. I can advise that it's procedurally in order. It's moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes:

THAT the amendment to Motion No. 450 be amended by:

Deleting clause 1 and renumbering the subsequent clauses accordingly.

The proposed amended motion would read:

THAT this House supports construction of a new school in Whistle Bend and consulting with community stakeholders, First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse prior to construction of the new school.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I somehow thought the "and" was gone as well, but that's fine. I had that it was:

THAT this House supports construction of a new school in Whistle Bend, consulting with community stakeholders, First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse prior to the construction of the school.

I have two small, small points that I want to make — and I hope that the Minister of Education will provide a few comments as well. One is that I support the spirit and intention of clause 1, but the challenge is that we're just trying to make sure that we're doing our diligence around the legislative and regulatory side of this.

The second point I want to make is that I think it is important — when the Member for Porter Creek Centre stands up and talks about comments that are coming from the community, I find them very relevant. They happen to be the whole point of this engagement — of the notion of consultation, and hearing them directly in this House, I think, is quite meaningful.

I will leave it there. I appreciate what the Member for Copperbelt South is working to do with the overall amendment he proposed. I support it in principle. We're trying to keep the parts that we can, and we're trying to keep our diligence there as well on the legislation and regulatory side.

Mr. Kent: It's relevant at this point for me to read into the record Motion No. 443, which I gave notice of last Wednesday, on March 27. It stated that this House urges the Government of Yukon to make any necessary policy or regulatory changes and introduce to this House any legislative amendments that may be required to allow for the creation of a Whistle Bend school council to advise and be consulted on the design, planning and construction of the new Whistle Bend school.

I think it's important — and I'm not saying that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes or the Minister of Community Services was insinuating this — but it certainly shouldn't have come as a surprise as to what our feelings were with respect to the establishment of a school council.

The Member for Porter Creek Centre referenced some Facebook research that he had done with respect to this particular motion that we brought forward last week. While I understand how busy it can be upstairs for government members and for ministers, it's again nothing that should have come as a surprise as to what position we had with respect to this particular school planning and design.

Obviously school councils — I know that everyone in this Legislature has either been on a school council or attended school council meetings or engaged with the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees at some point. They obviously serve an extremely important purpose. They're an elected body, and they do a tremendous amount of work and represent their constituents extremely well.

When I gave notice of that original motion last Wednesday and then brought forward this amendment today suggesting that creating a Whistle Bend school council ahead of time would be one of the important steps and would strengthen the Member for Porter Creek Centre's motion — as I mentioned, after he tabled his initial one, he clearly felt that wasn't adequate because it didn't talk about consultation, so he amended his own Motion No. 435, and we ended up with Motion No. 450, and I brought forward this amendment.

I'm happy the government is leaving in the aspects with respect to elevating First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse to the status that I believe they should have within this motion, as amended. Again, I'm disappointed that we couldn't come to some sort of an agreement around the establishment of a school council.

I understand that — looking at the pieces of legislation here on the fly this afternoon by the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Justice and of Education, as she serves in both roles — perhaps it wouldn't have given them the clarity, but the option would have been — especially given the one-year gap in this project, as identified — to take some time and establish that school council, and then they could have fed into the other community stakeholders, the First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse with respect to this motion.

It is disappointing that the government side has chosen to take this route — I guess I will say that I am disappointed that we had an opportunity to establish another elected body through policy, regulatory or even legislative changes — we have the time to do it. We would have had the opportunity to have an elected body from the school community participate in this, and the government has chosen to go a different route for some reason. It is disappointing, but that's okay. We will persevere. I still have a motion on the Order Paper asking for the establishment of a school council, and we will continue to advocate for members of that school community as the Official Opposition. I'm sure that the Third Party will continue to do the same — holding the government to account on promises that they have made and on spending decisions that they have made and trying to bring forward ideas here to the floor of the Legislative Assembly that improve or strengthen existing ideas.

That's what Wednesdays are often all about. I have sat through a number of Wednesdays in here on both sides of the floor, and the Member for Porter Creek Centre is correct that it is not just this government, but it was also previous governments that accepted amendments. We had motions pass unanimously in this Legislative Assembly — not all the time, obviously, for one reason or another.

Again, it is too bad that the government didn't take my original amendment for what it is worth, which was to strengthen the consultation aspects around the design, construction and eventual opening of a school in Whistle Bend.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, in my view, it is not appropriate for our government to agree to a motion that it can't abide by or that would, in this case — I am going to suggest — cause unnecessary delay in the process.

As mentioned by the Leader of the Third Party, the *Education Act* requires an attendance area in order for a school council to be established. In addition to that, the attendance area for a potential new Whistle Bend school, which is of course part of a budget proposal before this Legislative Assembly, requires full analysis and consideration by this Legislative Assembly.

In the event that the budget is passed and a Whistle Bend school is included therein, the opportunity for work on the attendance area would presumably be almost immediate.

I read the amendment made by the member opposite to indicate that no such work would be able to begin until after the creation of a Whistle Bend school council, in order for

them to participate in that process. I reiterate completely what my colleague the Minister of Community Services has said. There is no issue whatsoever with a broad consultation with respect to this process. I recollect, based on the years when an elementary school has been built — now certainly the members opposite have some experience with building a high school with the F.H. Collins plans and process — but with respect to the opportunity to build an elementary school, I would dare say none of them have been involved. I think my math is correct on that. A new neighbourhood and the consultation that has to happen there must absolutely be broad.

There is no question whatsoever that the spirit of what is paragraph 1 in the original amendment made by the member opposite is valid. I just simply cannot agree, based on the way in which it is worded, that the creation of a new Whistle Bend school council would be the triggering event for any of the other work to happen with the school. As such, I think it would cause unnecessary delay.

I think that, in addition to that, the section of the *Education Act* that has been noted — and I note that section 79 is also pertinent to this situation — I have simply not had an opportunity to review it. I'm not surprised at all, frankly, and the member opposite seems to say that his motion last week somehow should have triggered this work. Well in fact it did trigger this work, and the conclusion that I have at this point is in fact that we don't know the full answer as to whether this can be contemplated.

As for a suggestion that a legislative change would be appropriate — we all know a policy or regulation change can be done with some expediency, but a legislative change, as the member opposite is well aware, couldn't even be introduced until October of 2019 — if it were introduced in the next session, if the work and the policy work were done to have that be the case, if there was a full understanding of that process and if there were resources both at the Department of Education and the Department of Justice for the purpose of proceeding through that process and that work could all be done over the summer and introduced in October. The member opposite may well say that can and should be done. Mr. Speaker, I say to you and to the Legislative Assembly that this is work that, in this situation, may not be necessary. I don't know the answer as to whether it requires a legislative change. We will find out the answer to that. In the event that it would, it would unnecessarily delay it. Even if it were a policy change, it would unnecessarily delay it.

I also don't see the magic of a school council if we are connected to the school community, the neighbourhood, the individuals who live there, the people who have children in that neighbourhood and, in addition to that, the neighbouring neighbours and schools. As we've said, an attendance area review will require us to work with the other schools that are there, from which some of those families and children may be drawn.

We are well on our way to doing some of that work by having maps done of the attendance areas, which I understand has never been done in recent memory. Mapping the current

school attendance areas is an important piece. I understand that work will be given to me quite quickly and we can proceed with further conversations about what we do next.

With respect to paragraphs 2 and 3 — I take no issue whatsoever with those suggested amendments. I find them, like other members of this Legislative Assembly, to cause more certainty with respect to the requirements of the motion and the requirements of the action to be taken following the passing of a motion.

Replacing the word “consultation”, of course, with the word “consulting” is not an issue. I take absolutely no issue. I agree that specifically noting First Nation governments and the City of Whitehorse is an additional amount of clarity for all parties involved.

I am concerned about the matter that is before the Legislative Assembly — the amendment being put forward by the member opposite. Of course, I am also noting my comments with respect to the subamendment which would delete paragraph 1 — that the spirit is appropriate. It is important. I am not keen to have the work that has begun to be underway, partly because, as the member opposite has mentioned, there have been some discussions about this, in answer to questions proposed by the Official Opposition and the Third Party, that some school councils that are affected are keen to have conversations about that and are keen to have conversations about how their school communities may or may not be affected. Those conversations must begin very soon. We all know that school has a break in the summer and school councils also take a break. I am keen to make sure that we have as many of those discussions as possible as soon as possible so that this work can be underway.

The planning of a Whistle Bend school in that community will not at all be hampered if paragraph 1 were to be removed from this amendment. In fact, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and to this Legislative Assembly that would in fact be enhanced in that it would not be delayed at all.

I appreciate the sentiment, but I am concerned that we cannot support the amendment without the subamendment because it is simply not appropriate or correct for us to be agreeing to a motion in which we cannot live up to the terms. I don't think anyone would suggest that is appropriate. In this case, perhaps we see it differently, but I think there needs to be some specific research done as to how a school council could be created with a new school or how a school council could be created even without a school yet. That research will provide information to us, and nothing in this motion or any of the work going forward, if it turns out to be a relatively easy fix, would prohibit that from happening.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the subamendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the subamendment carried.

Subamendment to Motion No. 450 agreed to

Speaker: Is there further debate on the amendment as amended?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the amendment, as amended, carried.

Amendment to Motion No. 450, as amended, agreed to

Speaker: Is there further debate on Motion No. 450 as amended?

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the motion as amended, I note that in this area we are disappointed that the government, despite having time to consider adding a school council, chose not to go down that route. Finding out the answer to the question of whether there should be a legislative amendment, policy change or regulation is something that the minister should have been able to get the answer to from her department in a matter of a very short time. I would expect that, within a day or two, that information was already provided by officials. It is disappointing that it is being used as an excuse not to add a school council.

We have seen that the Minister of Education has had a bit of a troubled record when it comes to school councils. We have seen her claiming that she hasn't received any notification about problems with a shortage of space and then being contradicted by school councils. As we established last fall, the minister, despite having received a letter months previously from one school council, claimed not to have known about the problem.

We have also seen a situation where, in the case of the Hidden Valley School Council in my riding, they had difficulty getting a meeting with the Minister of Education. The minister refused to attend one meeting, and the school council had offered alternatives, but did not receive any confirmation of that or even an indication from her office of her willingness to attend a different date until we embarrassed the government and the minister into agreeing to meet with that school council.

It is part of a growing pattern of the Liberal government's difficulty or unwillingness in working with boards and committees, including those duly constituted under the *Education Act*. I do also have to note a specific response to comments made by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. The Member for Porter Creek Centre read a Facebook post and was quick to criticize the Yukon Party, he claimed, for politicizing community associations. I did find that statement quite odd, Mr. Speaker, and it made me think how quickly the Member for Porter Creek Centre forgets. We saw the situation where, after the president of the Porter Creek Community Association wrote a letter expressing concern with the government's lack of consultation —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Hon. Premier, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the member opposite is rebutting a conversation on an amendment and had an opportunity, if he wanted to, during that amendment to debate the conversation on that amendment. We have passed that. We have passed that into the record, and now we have moved on. So I would ask the member opposite to keep his comments to

the motion, as amended, as opposed to the debate that was happening during the amendment.

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: I don't believe there is a point of order. I was responding to comments made by the Member for Porter Creek Centre. I know the Premier just doesn't want me to talk about what I'm talking about.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The Premier did not cite a Standing Order, but he was referencing relevance. I will have to look now at what we have as far as the motion. I'm looking to see what the amended motion is now. I think it is close to a dispute among members on the debate. I will let it go.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 450, as amended, accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.