



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Justice and Solicitor General

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First Session**

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General

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Ray Bodnarek, QC, Deputy Minister, Justice

Tim Grant, Deputy Solicitor General

Rae-Ann Lajeunesse, Executive Director, Maintenance Enforcement

Shawkat Sabur, Acting Senior Financial Officer

Lynn Varty, Assistant Deputy Minister, Court Services

Donavon Young, Assistant Deputy Minister, Justice Services

8:32 a.m.

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

[Mr. Anderson in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to order. My name is Rob Anderson. I'm the committee chair and the MLA for Airdrie, and I'd like to welcome everyone in attendance today. We'll go around the table to introduce ourselves, starting with the deputy chair on my right. Please indicate if you are sitting in on the committee as a substitute for another member as well.

Go ahead.

Mr. Dorward: My name is David Dorward. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Ms Fenske: Good morning. Jacquie Fenske, MLA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mr. Khan: Good morning. Stephen Khan, MLA, St. Albert.

Mr. Allen: Good morning. Mike Allen, MLA, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Jeneroux: Good morning. Matt Jeneroux, MLA, Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Goudreau: Hector Goudreau, Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Quest: Dave Quest, Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Mr. Amery: Good morning. Moe Amery, Calgary-East.

Mr. Hehr: Kent Hehr, MLA, Calgary-Buffalo.

Mr. Sabur: Good morning. My name is Shawkat Sabur. I'm the acting senior finance officer.

Mr. Bodnarek: Ray Bodnarek, Deputy Minister of Justice.

Mr. Grant: Tim Grant, Deputy Solicitor General.

Mr. Bauer: Good morning. Jim Bauer, ADM with Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Ryan: Good morning. I'm Ed Ryan, Assistant Auditor General.

Mr. Saher: Good morning. Merwan Saher, Auditor General.

Mr. Stier: Pat Stier, Livingstone-Macleod. I'm observing for the first half of the meeting.

Mr. Donovan: Good morning. Ian Donovan, MLA, Little Bow riding.

Mr. Saskiw: Shayne Saskiw, MLA, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, and a substitute for Pat Stier.

Mr. Hale: Jason Hale, MLA, Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Anglin: Joe Anglin, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mrs. Sarich: Good morning. Janice Sarich, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Ms Sorensen: Good morning. Rhonda Sorensen, manager of corporate communications and broadcast services for the LAO.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research services.

Mr. Tyrell: I'm Chris Tyrell, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you, everyone.

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Is that somebody on the line? Who's on the line?

Mr. Quadri: Sohail Quadri, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

The Chair: Welcome, Mr. Quadri.

Do we have anyone else on the line? No? Okay. Good.

Oh, yes. Please also put your cellphones on silent or vibrate or whatever. That would be great.

You've all had the agenda circulated to you. Hopefully, you've had a chance to look over it. Do we have a mover that the agenda for the March 6, 2013, Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting be approved as distributed? Mrs. Sarich. Those in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

The reports to be reviewed today in primary examination, anyway, are the 2011-12 annual report from Justice, the 2011-12 annual report from Solicitor General and public safety – of course, they were not the same ministry in 2011-12, so that's why you have the two different reports – reports of the Auditor General of Alberta for March, July, and October 2012 as well as the 2011-12 annual report of the government of Alberta, consolidated financial statements, and the Measuring Up progress report. Members should all have a copy of the briefing document prepared by committee research services that was distributed.

Joining us today are representatives from Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. What we're going to do is that we're going to do the regular thing that we do. We do have a little bit of business at the end, so we're going to wrap up at about 10 to 10, but we'll ask for a brief opening statement from the department. Try to keep it to no more than 10 minutes, hopefully less.

Thanks.

Mr. Bodnarek: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As mentioned, I'm Ray Bodnarek, Deputy Minister of Justice, and I'm pleased to be here with my deputy colleague Tim Grant, who is Deputy Solicitor General. We'll be reviewing the 2011-12 financial results for our respective areas, and as you highlighted, we were separate ministries at the time.

Before I get started, I just want to briefly introduce the other members that are with us here today from our joint ministry. We've got Lynn Varty, ADM, court services; Donavon Young, ADM, justice services; Rae-Ann Lajeunesse, executive director, maintenance enforcement program; Tracy Wyrstiuk, ADM, finance and planning; Shawkat Sabur we've talked about; Bruce Anderson, ADM, correctional services; Clif Purvis, acting ADM, public security; Jim Bauer has introduced himself; Kurt Sandstrom, ADM, safe communities; Gerald Lamoureux, executive director of SafeCom; Dan Laville, director of communications.

I'll just quickly start with an overview of Alberta Justice. Alberta Justice's core businesses are to ensure that Alberta's communities are safe, that we have fair and independent prosecutions, that we have a fair and accessible justice system, that services are provided in an effective and efficient way to

Albertans, that we have an innovative and effective justice system, and that as the law firm to the government the government gets strategic legal advice. In 2011-12 Justice spent \$512 million to advance these core business goals. This is \$13 million less than budgeted and \$21 million, or 4.3 per cent, over 2010-11 actuals.

First, I'll speak very briefly about safe communities. Safe communities spent \$22.4 million on initiatives in 2011-12, the majority of the funding, \$18.1 million, spent on safe community innovation fund grants, referred to as SCIF. SCIF grants were launched in 2008 and extended over three calls, each with three-year funding for each year of call. The final call of the three-year funding was awarded in 2011-12. Another SafeCom initiative announced in February 2012 was the integrated justice services project, a \$3.3 million pilot project which brings together government and community-based services to provide wraparound services to help offenders get their lives back on track.

The criminal justice division: in '11-12 the prosecution service scheduled nearly 30,000 criminal cases. The division worked with law enforcement to improve the management and administration and transmission of digital assets such as video and audio information from law enforcement to the Crown and then to defence counsel as part of the disclosure package and has done significant work with our court case management project, which is a co-led event with the provincial court focused on efficiency and effectiveness in the criminal justice system; \$81.8 million was spent by the division.

8:40

The court services division continues to provide administration and technical support to the three courts in Alberta and to develop strategies for access-to-justice services such as mediation and other dispute resolution mechanisms. The division operated law information centres, family justice services to provide help to self-represented litigants, and also supported the running of the law libraries to provide legal information to judges, the Crown, lawyers, and the public. The division spent \$214 million.

The justice services division was formed in April of 2011 to bring a number of distinct, public-facing programs together to provide support and protection to Albertans. In '11-12 \$48.1 million was spent by the division. Our maintenance enforcement program is part of this division and has continued its good work with respect to monitoring and enforcing court-ordered child support and spousal support. The division also supported access to justice by providing funding to legal aid to help those that cannot afford legal representation; \$58.8 million was earmarked for legal aid in '11-12.

Another vital part of the justice system is the office of the medical examiner, which is also under this division. Work began in 2011 to expand and upgrade the office in Edmonton to assure it can efficiently handle growing workloads, and also we were dealing with building the capacity with the forensic pathologists.

The legal services division: the department continues to help other ministries achieve their goals and strategic priorities by providing legal, strategic, and legislative services. In '11-12 \$40 million was spent in this area.

Lastly, the Alberta Human Rights Commission. On October 12, 2011, responsibility for the Alberta Human Rights Act, including the Human Rights Commission, was transferred to the then Ministry of Justice. The commission's mandate is to foster equality and reduce discrimination, fulfilled through the resolution of human rights complaints made under the act and through public education initiatives. In '11-12 \$7.3 million was spent on the Alberta Human Rights Act.

I will now turn the floor over to Tim Grant.

Mr. Grant: Thanks, Ray.

Mr. Chairman, good morning. Solicitor General's core business is to ensure effective and co-ordinated police and law enforcement in Alberta, maintain secure custody and community supervision of adult and young offenders, and to ensure integrated programs and services for crime prevention, offender rehabilitation, and community transition supports as well as to provide services and support for victims of crime.

We've made progress on a number of fronts in relation to public security. In August 2011 we signed a 20-year contract to keep the RCMP as Alberta's provincial police force. We continued to support the Alberta law enforcement response teams, better known as ALERT. These teams include an Internet child exploitation team and teams that focus on gangs and organized crime as well as domestic violence.

The department also continued to make progress on a common radio system for first responders and emergency personnel. Currently the lack of a common radio system can hamper a co-ordinated response to crime or disasters and create security concerns.

Another vital component of safe and secure communities is the work done by our sheriffs. Sheriffs are responsible for the security of Alberta's courtrooms. They provide security services to government at large and transport prisoners between institutions and courts. Traffic sheriffs also work with the RCMP and 20 integrated traffic units to enforce the rules of the road, educate the driving public, and ensure traveller safety. In 2012 these integrated units conducted approximately 200,000 enforcement actions. In the fall of 2011 our enforcement activities were expanded when all of the province's conservation officers, fish and wildlife officers, and commercial vehicle enforcement officers were consolidated within Solicitor General and public security.

The corrections division focused on the secure custody of adult and young offenders and supervised offenders in the community. Our secure institutions held a daily average of over 3,000 inmates, and we also supervised an average of 22,000 adults and youth in the community. Fifty additional probation officers were hired to help these caseloads and provide enhanced case management for more serious offenders.

Work continued on the new Edmonton Remand Centre, which, when it becomes operational early next month, will help alleviate inmate population pressures through the entire province.

We continue to support victims of crime in two complementary manners. We received 2,679 applications for financial benefits for victims of crime. This was an increase of more than 156 per cent since the program was introduced in 2000. The department also supported victims of crime through grants to 75 police-based and 135 community-based victims' services units. These units assist victims of crime as they deal with their injuries and navigate the justice system. More than 68,000 Albertans received assistance through the victims' services unit in 2011-2012.

There are two outstanding Auditor General recommendations for Solicitor General, both addressing commercial vehicle safety. The first recommendation is regarding incorporating risk analysis into the selection of vehicles for roadside commercial vehicle inspections and increasing the information available to officers at the roadside. We've implemented all the measures to address this recommendation with the exception of deployment of laptops into officers' vehicles and access to commercial vehicle drivers' abstracts held by the Department of Transportation.

The second recommendation was for the further development and improvement of data analysis practice for use in program delivery and performance measurement. Again, we've implemented all the measures to address this recommendation with the exception of the deployment of laptops as noted above.

We expect both these recommendations to be fully implemented in the upcoming fiscal year. In fact, the laptops should be incorporated into vehicles by the end of this month.

That concludes our opening remarks. We'd be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Auditor General.

Mr. Saher: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We made no new recommendations to what is now the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General in our last three public reports. Those are the reports in July and October 2012 and February 2013.

The outstanding recommendations are two from our 2009 audit of the commercial vehicle safety systems. See page 178 of our October 2012 report. The Deputy Solicitor General has just discussed those.

We provided unqualified auditors' reports on the March 2012 financial statements of the Ministry of Justice and the ministry of Solicitor General and public security.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

All right. Well, we're going to start the questioning now. We're going to do it a little bit differently today just because Mr. Saskiw, who is our Justice and Finance critic with the Wildrose, needs to be chairing our morning caucus meeting, which I usually chair but can't chair today. So we're going to do it just a little bit differently and give Mr. Saskiw 10 minutes, and then we'll save our additional five minutes for the end.

Mr. Saskiw: Thank you very much for coming in this morning. I'd first like to go off a research report that was prepared dated March 1 of this year and focus on the court case management system. What, of course, we all want is access to justice, and that includes timely access to justice. My first question is: what are the current clogs in the system that are resulting in delays of court cases getting into the judicial system?

Mr. Bodnarek: Thank you very much for the question. I'll take that. As I mentioned, we introduced court case management – in this fiscal year, '11-12, it was fully implemented – the first phase of court case management, in June of 2010.

There are some key aspects to court case management that we view as being critical to unclogging the system. The first is that we are adopting a day-of method of scheduling trials in assignment courts. Our trial courts are fed by the assignment courts, so that means that when matters are going to a trial court, we actually know that the witnesses are there, that both counsel are there and ready to proceed. Prior to the assignment court you would have people go to a trial court, matters would collapse, and the trial court was not properly used. With day-of assigning we're getting longer sitting hours of the trial courts, which is key. We can still improve on that, of course, but it is helping.

In addition, we are reducing the number of appearances in a courtroom. We've done that through a couple of measures. One is that we have case management offices now in a number of locations that have justices of the peace that can deal with preliminary types of matters, scheduling issues, and items that don't require judicial input. There are huge time and cost savings associated with having these dealt with at the counter. There's also a significant access to justice benefit in that people don't have to wait two hours in docket court to be heard for a preliminary issue. They can wait in a line – and it's usually no more than 10 minutes – and have their matter dealt with at a case management office.

8:50

Another benefit is that we don't have people waiting in docket court to schedule trials. We now offer remote court scheduling. Similar to if you want to book a trip on Air Canada, you can go online at any hour of the day and access the court schedule and book a trial date. That's a big innovation.

Lastly, a key component has been that on more complex matters we have something called Crown ownership. One Crown prosecutor carries the file from start to finish as opposed to it getting handed off to a number of Crowns, who then have to get up to speed on the case. It's much better for defence counsel because they're dealing with one Crown on the matter. It's much better for the witnesses, who only have to speak with one Crown. It's a more efficient way of doing business.

Those are some of the key innovations on court case management.

Mr. Saskiw: Have there been any, I guess, delays in the court due to self-represented litigants being more common given the fact that sources to legal aid are somewhat being reduced?

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay. Well, I'll sort of answer that in two parts. Self-represented litigants in the court system definitely slow things down. The reason is that our court system right now is very much structured to have counsel on both sides and the judge to adjudicate based on representation from two skilled advocates. When you have a self-represented litigant, obviously that person has to get up to speed. They are not as familiar with court process. They're certainly not as familiar with the law. It is a slowing of the system.

However, we are looking at ways to support self-represented litigants. You probably are aware that we have brought in law information centres, that can help people navigate and give them not legal advice but good, solid legal information on process. Coupled with that, there are a number of online training videos that we've partnered on with both the courts and the public legal education groups and Pro Bono Law Alberta to kind of walk people through court processes.

On legal aid, as I mentioned, for the year '11-12 the funding was just over \$58 million. I can say that the Alberta government contribution has more than doubled in the last seven years for legal aid. The federal contributions have flatlined, essentially, for the last 10 years. We have been fortunate to sort of renegotiate a floor for contributions with the Alberta Law Foundation, which is the other funder. Their new floor in terms of the minimum that they will contribute to legal aid every year now is \$5.5 million, and that's through legislation. So we've increased their contributions.

At the height of the economy boom the funds in lawyers' trust accounts were very high, and the Law Foundation . . .

The Chair: Mr. Bodnarek, we only have four minutes left in this bit. Let's keep the answers a little shorter.

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay. Sure.

Mr. Saskiw: I just have one other question. With the implementation of the .05 law is there any expectation of how that's going to affect court times?

Mr. Bodnarek: I can start with that as it relates to court times. It's too early to tell. As you know, we brought in the full package of administrative responses to impaired driving to supplement the Criminal Code effective in September of 2012. It is truly too early

to tell what impact we're going to see on court times, but we will be monitoring and tracking, for sure.

Mr. Saskiw: Just a couple more questions. With respect to the victims of crime fund have there been surpluses in the past? I'm just wondering why there would be those surpluses when there are groups that could use those funds.

Mr. Grant: In general terms, yes, there have been surpluses in the past, but there are some potential draws against that fund that have been identified by the Auditor General in his report. From our standpoint, we continue to deal with the requests that come in on a yearly basis, but there is a concern that there are possible draws against that fund as we go forward. There's about a \$50 million surplus in the fund right now, but about \$37 million has been identified as potential draws in the future.

Mr. Saskiw: Just going to the Human Rights Commission, is there a breakdown in the reporting of how much cost is incurred with respect to dealing with what I'd call section 3 cases?

Mr. Bodnarek: We certainly don't have a breakdown with regard to what the dollar allocation would be for section 3.

Mr. Saskiw: Okay.

Mr. Bodnarek: We can certainly undertake to see if that information is available.

The Chair: Please do. That would be great. Just provide it to the committee.

Mr. Saskiw: There have been some recent cases that have come to my attention with respect to the issuing of death certificates by the chief medical officer. I'm wondering whether or not there's information in these reports about what is the average time to issue those reports. It's very tough for families to move on with their lives if they can't get these certificates on time.

Mr. Bodnarek: We have a policy, which we try to follow, which is 90 days to get out the death certificate. As I mentioned a little bit earlier in my opening comments, we have been in the process of staffing up, particularly the Calgary office. We were at a point where we had no forensic pathologists in Calgary. We are now at a point where we've got four in Calgary and five in Edmonton, including the chief, and we've now got caseloads that are well within the accepted range for forensic pathologists.

The Chair: All right. That'll do. That's 10 minutes.

Really quickly, because we've been talking about the case management system, I have a question. On page 55 of the Justice business plan for 2012-15 it specifically says:

Justice's mission is a fair and safe Alberta. Its core businesses are to:

- promote safe communities for Albertans;
- provide prosecution services to Albertans;
- provide accessible frontline justice services for Albertans;
- provide court services to Albertans;

and so forth.

My question. Coming from a city where we have seen the justice system drop the ball many times, most recently, of course, this child sexual abuse in Airdrie, which was dropped, I would like to know why the court case management system did not pick that up and has denied not just this family but other families that have been documented in the newspapers and so forth – why was

this allowed to happen, and what are you doing to make sure that it does not happen again?

Mr. Bodnarek: That's a very good question, a very fair question. Our head of the prosecution service has undertaken to do a complete review and report, which will be made public, with regard to Airdrie in particular, but it will also look at the broader systemic issues.

I know that one of the areas of exploration right now to avoid another Airdrie is to do a much better job of triaging cases and taking a look at and flagging those ones that are getting stale-dated based on process kinds of delays and making sure that those serious matters get bumped to the head of the queue. So having a much better flagging and tracking system on those is going to be a key part of this. The report will be fairly extensive, though, and it will be coming out in the near future. I've certainly seen a draft. We take it very seriously, and I know that there are a significant number of recommendations in there and approaches in terms of how we're going to make this better.

9:00

The Chair: Thank you for that. I appreciate that response, and I look forward to the report.

I want to recognize Ms Rachel Notley, who's been here for the entire meeting, but I just lost my mind and didn't recognize her. It's happened before. [interjections] I know, lost my mind: it's very surprising to many in here.

We'll move on to the government side for 10 minutes.

Mr. Dorward: All right. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I want to recognize Hector Goudreau, Matt Jeneroux, Stephen Khan, and Dave Quest, who are here as new members of our committee with the change that was made, and thank the former members of our caucus that sat on the committee. I know that Matt Jeneroux is chomping at the bit to dive right in and ask a few questions, and he's not nervous about that at all. However, we don't have him on the speaking list yet.

Mr. Moe Amery, would you like to take a moment?

Mr. Amery: Sure. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair and Deputy Chair.

Good morning, and thanks for being here this morning. I represent a riding in Calgary that's probably one of the most diverse in the province. It's middle to low income, a lot of single parents. There isn't a day that goes by without getting at least a call or two calls about maintenance enforcement. On page 12 of the Justice 2011-12 annual report performance measure 4(a) shows that the maintenance enforcement program regularity of payment rate for 2011-12 was 70 per cent. What is the correlation between the staffing level and the maintenance enforcement ability?

Mr. Bodnarek: There is some correlation, but the staffing and the regularity – first let me say what regularity is. Regularity at 70 per cent means that in any given month 70 per cent of the monthly payments that are due for child support are made on time. If not, they go into arrears, and then we go after the arrears.

Increasing staffing helps to a point, but you have to remember that with maintenance enforcement, first off, the people that register with maintenance enforcement typically are those that are having trouble collecting from their former spouses. So we've got a bit of a challenging group already. Economic conditions, including the labour market and so on, in Alberta are also a factor in how regular we can have those monthly payments. So to try to say that we could add 100 staff and get up to 100 wouldn't be feasible. You get to a point of diminishing returns, and you're not

getting good value for your money with each additional staff added.

Mr. Amery: Your target is 70 per cent. You're telling me that even if you add more staff, you will not be able to reach 100 per cent.

Mr. Bodnarek: Yes, that's what I'm telling you. We've got a group that already has some problems right from the start, and then if you add to it possible unemployment, some are incarcerated, and so on, you'll not get to 100 per cent.

Mr. Amery: Talking about targets, when a judgment is issued, your target is to register that judgment within 14 days. I have had calls from constituents saying that now you're telling them it's going to be six to eight weeks. If you're meeting this 70 per cent target, how come you're not meeting the 14-day target for a court-issued judgment?

Mr. Bodnarek: I'm going to just call on my expert behind me, the executive director of maintenance enforcement, to speak to that issue.

The Chair: Please, when anybody is asked to the mike, just identify yourself and your title if you could.

Ms Lajeunesse: Thank you. I'm Rae-Ann Lajeunesse, the executive director of maintenance enforcement.

Thank you for that question. We do try to triage requests of any sort that come into the program, whether it be correspondence and registration, that sort of thing. Registrations are a priority, but there are times, certainly, when we receive an influx and do fall into a backlog situation.

Mr. Amery: The reason I'm asking this question is because I have constituents who have been, you know, looking after their children and waiting for that judgment to be registered and waiting for the collection to be made and their payments to be received, and now they're being told that instead of 14 days – like, this is our target; 14 days is our target – it's going to take six to eight weeks.

Ms Lajeunesse: Yes. I can also tell you that with the registration process in particular we do have sort of a back and forth with the registrants to make sure that the information they provided is complete before we can actually take action on their file. So that also contributes to part of the delay in having a registered file that we can take action on.

Mr. Amery: Another thing that's really frustrating for your clients and our constituents is when they're trying to get in touch with you guys and it takes days. When they don't get to you, they call our offices, so we make the call on their behalf. What is the reason for it taking so long for a client to get in touch with you?

Ms Lajeunesse: I think there are many factors in response to that question. First of all, we have approximately 48,000 files at any given time. In any particular month we receive 16,000 pieces of correspondence and staff will field 8,000 phone calls on average directly. So there is a very high volume attached with that. We do try to offer many avenues of contact in terms of the information line, the MEP accounts online, text chat capabilities. So there are a number of different ways that they can call us. We do have staff that work extended hours to try to reach out to clients who are better reachable after regular daily hours. There are a number of

factors that sort of cause some of the frustration in contacting us, but I think that under the circumstances with the volume we face we do a fair job of reaching back to them.

Mr. Amery: Mr. Bodnarek mentioned booking on Air Canada. When you call Air Canada, they say that there's a waiting time of an hour to an hour and 59 minutes. Is there a waiting time that you can tell them: you're expected to wait an hour for your call, or leave your message and we'll call you within the next 24 hours?

Ms Lajeunesse: Yes, absolutely. There are a couple of different mechanisms for that. First of all, there is a callback service where people can call in and just go through the voice prompts and request a call back, and it might be at a time that's beyond business hours. At the same time, when they call into our call centre – and those are the folks that handle about 8,000 calls a month – they know in the queue where they are. We do try to balance timeliness of response with the quality of response that's being given. For instance, we typically sit around a 15-minute wait time. It seems to be a threshold where people are willing to wait to get good information as opposed to fast information or a fast answer and more follow-up required.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you, Mr. Amery. We can certainly follow up in writing with another question in that area.

Mr. Amery: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Are we okay for a couple of minutes?

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Dorward: Could I just surf through the Justice annual report for 2012, reference pages 23 and 49 – and I'll get you to look that up – goal 5, an innovative, effective justice system. It talks about JIMS in here in the first paragraph, and then it talks about the court case management system. Then on page 49 a reference at the bottom of note 6 talks about tangible capital assets, and it goes through showing the asset's historical cost and amortization for computer hardware and software for the ministry. However, it says: "Excluded from the Ministry's computer hardware and software at March 31 . . . is \$2,888,000 for the . . . (JIMS) initiative. These costs are recorded in the Ministry of Service Alberta's financial statements."

You certainly have my permission to get back to us with respect to this answer because we are going to be tight for time, but I have two questions, one soft and then one numbers related. What is the difference between JIMS and court case management itself? Or is that one versus the other?

Mr. Bodnarek: Yeah.

Mr. Dorward: Then why is it that you do have assets on your ministry financial statements, however that particular one, the JIMS initiative, was a subset over to the Ministry of Service Alberta? How was that decision mitigated out? Is there a contract with the Ministry of Service Alberta whereby there should be a contractual obligation for them to complete something? I don't see that unless it's included in that note 7. What is the total budget there for that? Our research showed that there was about a \$50 million number at some point in time, and I'm seeing \$2 million here.

Maybe just take 30 seconds on that now if you want to hit some of it, and then get back to us in writing because that was a fairly involved question, I admit.

9:10

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay. First, the difference between JIMS and court case management. JIMS is our overall court modernization program that is made up of multiple projects, court case management being one of those projects. So court case management is a subset of our bigger modernization program.

With regard to the dollars referenced with regard to Service Alberta, as you probably know, Service Alberta was holding the capital funding for this IT initiative. The JIMS modernization initiative started at \$55 million. It's currently at \$45 million. The \$2.8 million that you referred to was the amount of our draw of that capital for the '11-12 year.

Mr. Dorward: Okay. Great. Was most of the \$45 million, then, spent prior, or was it after? Will we see it in next year's?

Mr. Bodnarek: Yeah. It's \$45 million remaining of the \$55 million.

Mr. Dorward: Okay. Good. That's sufficient for now. Thank you. Do you want us to keep going?

The Chair: You're at 11 minutes. You can do what you want.

Mr. Dorward: Jacque.

Ms Fenske: Thank you. A couple of questions on technology; they might overlap. You said that you were going to have some laptops in your commercial vehicle inspection vehicles. Are drivers' logs on some kind of electronic device, or are they still paper copies?

Mr. Grant: That really is the issue that the Auditor General had raised, that at the time of this report they were paper copies. We've taken a number of steps. We've built the mobile office, which will be finished off when we can actually put the ruggedized laptops into the vehicles by the end of this month. Perhaps more importantly, we're going to an e-inspection, an electronic inspection, process where officers can input the data directly into their laptops. That will get immediately put into the two major systems that Transportation runs, MOTRIS and MOVES, and that will then allow any other member of the commercial vehicle enforcement branch to draw on that material anytime and anywhere in the province.

It really is going from a paper-based approach to a technology-based approach, an electronic-based approach. Not only do we have the ability to put information into the system using the new e-collision process, but we can draw it out and use that material to analyze how we should be focusing our enforcement activities around the province.

Ms Fenske: Do we require private companies to use e-driver logs? Also, do our private auditors put their information into that MOTRIS system?

Mr. Grant: The Department of Transportation – and I'm speaking with my old hat on right now – may give you a more detailed answer, but essentially the MOTRIS and MOVES systems: Transportation is responsible for using those to keep a record of companies and vehicles and their maintenance records as they develop. We're able to actually access those, and the information we put into them is added to that record, but the record is actually held by Transportation. We're just able to put stuff into it and draw on that information in our daily business.

Ms Fenske: Okay. Do you deal with partners in compliance, then, or is that Transportation?

Mr. Grant: Transportation.

Ms Fenske: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Dorward: Janice Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and Deputy Chair as well. Thank you very much for your opening presentations this morning. I'd like to direct a couple of questions in the area of nonfinancial performance measures reported in your performance report of 2010-11. I was wondering if you could highlight for us today any of the benchmarking of your performance as it relates to the public security and the correctional services divisions. For example, the Correctional Service of Canada reports on measures such as safety of inmates and staff in the institutions. Your existing ministry measures for the Solicitor General and public security are primarily survey related. I'm just wondering if you have had an opportunity to take a look at that. Are you going to be shifting to benchmarking and then reporting with some solid performance measures in that way?

Another question for consideration. In my days with the Sol Gen department there was a heavier indication in our correctional facilities within the province of an aboriginal population, and I'm just wondering if that proportion is still the case today. How would you be analyzing those proportions of inmates from that particular population group? Is there a performance measure, or are there any benchmarks? How would you look at assessing your own performance in terms of recidivism rates amongst that population?

Mr. Grant: If I can deal with your first question first. There are crossjurisdictional statistics available through the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. In fact, that organization has been working with the heads of corrections from all the provinces and territories to develop greater consistency in the reporting on six key indicators that really are effective and impact all jurisdictions across the country. They would be recontact, costs of incarceration, institutional capability, average daily count, average time in custody, and the number of admissions. Including the assistant deputy minister of corrections and his staff, we are working with our provincial, territorial, and federal partners to develop a performance management set of indicators that will be applicable across the country. They don't exist right now, but we are working towards that specifically.

Mrs. Sarich: Just if I can interject, do you have a sense of how long that's going to take the department? Maybe you have a comment today about that.

Mr. Grant: The next meeting is actually scheduled for May of this year, and at that point the heads of corrections will receive an update from the working group. After that point we would be able to provide a much clearer picture of what the timeline would be.

Mrs. Sarich: I'm just wondering if as that information becomes available, it could be updated to the committee if you don't mind?

Mr. Grant: For sure. I'd be happy to do that.

On the issue of the proportion of aboriginals in correctional facilities you are correct that aboriginals are overrepresented in the correctional institutions right now, but correctional services doesn't actually control the intake of any individuals. The

division, however, has contracts with native elders and employs full-time aboriginal program co-ordinators in most of its adult and young offender communities. These are folks who deliver community supervision services to offenders in their respective areas of the province. Some programming in areas where we can't contract out is actually delivered by aboriginal staff members, and one example would be the New Dawn program at the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre. Last fiscal year correctional services actually embarked on a three-year aboriginal corrections strategy, and we're working towards bringing that to life right now.

Mrs. Sarich: Maybe a subsequent question would be: are you benchmarking or putting performance measures in place so that you can evaluate the extent of success or lack of success in programs or services specific to this population to ensure that you're on track in delivering and identifying what the real needs are?

Mr. Grant: This is one of the things that we will be looking at. Hopefully, we will have some clarity as we go through the aboriginal corrections strategy that I mentioned previously. We don't have it specifically right now.

Mrs. Sarich: What is the time frame for that type of development?

Mr. Grant: It's a three-year strategy. We're still in the governance stage right now, so we're developing job descriptions and those kinds of things. But it will probably be in the next fiscal year when that is brought forward.

Mrs. Sarich: So just around the corner, then?

Mr. Grant: Just around the corner.

9:20

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. I appreciate your response. I ask the time question because this is a population where, just like any of the programs and services that the government of Alberta provides for the public, there is an expectation in terms of development, delivery. You know, the need is now. So if you're trying to stretch things out and are taking a little bit longer than intended, it's not really servicing what needs to happen today. It's just a general comment that I hope that your people are striving really hard to deliver even quicker on some of the targets that you may have set because that'll really make a difference for today.

Mr. Grant: I agree completely. This is one small portion of dealing with aboriginals and their interface with the justice system.

We're also working with safe communities and with our other ministry partners to look at how we can influence through poverty reduction and early childhood education and use some of the services in Alberta Health Services to make sure that we can influence this particular population before it enters the corrections facilities. So this is one part of an overall government approach to ensure that this at-risk population is given all of the supports they need to not enter the justice system.

Mrs. Sarich: Just in closing, I'm really pleased to hear that you are striving to have that crossministerial lens on this very important issue and any other issue that might require that type of strategy in this particular economic time.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Dorward: I just wanted to reference page 84 of the annual report for Justice. It's a schedule to the financial statements, talking about court services. There's a \$28 million authorized supplementary supply. Again, you could get back to us in writing or if you have an answer now. I know I'm kind of popping that one at you fairly quickly here.

Mr. Bodnarek: No. I can answer that. That relates to a supplementary estimate that we had to go forward to cover the cost of implementing the recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Commission. It was for two years of retroactive pay to Provincial Court judges plus the in-year costs associated with pension and salary for the judges as a result of the compensation commission report.

Mr. Dorward: Okay. Good. Thank you.

On to Mr. Quest.

Mr. Quest: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of things related to impaired driving stats. Page 18 of the annual report talks about impaired driving still being the leading cause of death in Canada. Now, stats that were just recently released by Stats Canada still show Alberta with amongst the highest impaired driving rates in the country and still with the lowest conviction rates. I was wondering if you could talk about that a little bit.

Mr. Grant: Let me start, if I can, on the statistics. The statistics for the province are actually held and developed by the Department of Transportation. The reason that happens is that although the police actually lay charges and deal with impaired drivers, the material is actually put into the system by Transportation. So there is sometimes a difference in numbers between what the police are doing and what's actually put into the system as some files are rationalized.

The other piece that is important to note is that when you compare the statistics between provinces, not all provinces take the same approach in how they determine what is an impaired driving charge and what isn't. You know, for example, in this province the statistics are based on charges laid by the police. In other provinces they would be based on charges laid by the Crown and in files that are actually accepted by the Crown. So you can have a difference in the number of cases that are actually looked at from an impaired driving standpoint.

Mr. Bodnarek: Sorry to interrupt. Just on the charges laid by the Crown. Actually, the police always lay the charges, but in some jurisdictions before the police lay the charge, they consult with the Crown and get precharge advice, and they will make a decision as to whether to go ahead with the charge based on precharge advice from the Crown.

Mr. Grant: As far as the impaired driving charges, as was mentioned earlier, under the new Bill 26 it was only in September of 2012 when all of the administrative sanctions had been put in place. As I understand it, Alberta Transportation is consolidating and gathering those statistics, but we don't have them right now to determine what the impact of the new administrative sanctions is in the province.

Mr. Quest: Are we getting any closer to a standardized reporting system across the country so we can get accurate comparisons?

Mr. Grant: I think the short answer is no.

Mr. Quest: All right. Just a quick supplemental if I may. In Sherwood Park we've been waiting patiently for a courthouse for

some time, and it's become quite a media story. Now, I don't expect you folks to have this answer at your fingertips, but we did recently have a media report of an impaired driving case that was thrown out because, frankly, it had taken too long in the system. Some had blamed the facility. I'm not clear on whether that was actually the case or not. Would you be able to find that out for me, whether that delay was facility related or was something else?

Mr. Bodnarek: I probably would need a little more information to be helpful.

Mr. Quest: We'll get that for you.

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay.

Mr. Dorward: Mr. Chair, we'll go back to you now so that the other parties can get some stuff done.

The Chair: All right. That was 26 and a half minutes there. Good stuff.

Mr. Dorward: I'll take that three and a half minutes.

The Chair: That's right. You still have three and a half minutes at the end.

Off to the Liberals. They'll have seven and a half minutes. We'll follow them with the NDP for seven and a half, and the Wildrose will take their remaining four minutes.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, for coming in to discuss this ministry with us. Jumping right in, we refer to pages 30 and 33; specifically, the human rights arm of your department. The ministry used public perception surveys to measure performance relating to goals 1 and 2 as well as the human rights goal in the 2011-12 ministry annual report. Does the ministry have operating plans for these goals that include measures of performance other than the surveys?

Mr. Bodnarek: First, I'll say that I don't have a representative here from the Alberta Human Rights Commission. I know that they do track certain things operationally within their organization in terms of the outputs of their organization – processing times, things like their outreach and education program, and so on – that are more specific to output types of measures as opposed to survey measures. I can undertake to get what kinds of output measures they currently track for their operations.

Mr. Hehr: Well, I think that would be important. Like people do, I have many constituents who have filed a human rights complaint for one issue or another. Oftentimes I get back questions of: "When will this decision be rendered? When will I get my time before a panel?" and the like. This comes up on a fairly regular basis. It appears to me that if these aren't being tracked, there has to be some mechanism for us to do a better job. Would you agree?

Mr. Bodnarek: I will get you what they track because I believe they do track many of the things that you're talking about in terms of time to disposition, processing time, and so on. So I'll get you their metrics.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. But those metrics aren't covered under your department. They're covered specifically by the Human Rights Commission, an entity separate and apart unto themselves.

Mr. Bodnarek: That is correct.

Mr. Hehr: So is there any oversight at all done by your department?

Mr. Bodnarek: The minister ultimately has some oversight. We provide administrative and corporate types of support to them, but they are set up as an independent agency and tribunal.

Mr. Hehr: And there are rules and regulations and timelines associated with the administration of justice under the Human Rights Commission, right?

9:30

Mr. Bodnarek: They certainly use their legislation as their base for their operations. I mean, that's their guide.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. Thank you.

Moving on, from time to time I have constituents who come in who have used legal aid services. A continuing and ongoing and consistent report I have is from mothers and people involved in divorce proceedings who get assigned a legal aid ticket and then carry on with their process as best they can under that ticket, yet prior to there being any resolution in the case, for one reason or another, through applications, contradictory evidence, different judges on the file, whatever, their funding runs out before push comes to shove and, actually, the legal representation they need is fully delivered. Do you guys have statistics on this? Do you have means of looking at how, when a person qualifies for legal aid support, they get that support through to the end of their trials and tribulations with the legal system? Or is it simply, "Here's your dollar in, and good luck to you when that runs out"?

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay. I'm going to call upon our assistant deputy minister of the justice services division, that has sort of the oversight for the legal aid program, to speak to this issue. If he's able to give you the details, he will. If not, we'll undertake to get you the details.

Mr. Young: Thank you. Donavon Young, ADM of justice services division. As the deputy indicated, we may have to get back to you with some supplementary information. I can tell you that it is Legal Aid Alberta itself that sets the financial eligibility guidelines. Those are not set by the department. It's not my understanding that, quote, funding runs out and they're left to their own devices. Legal Aid Alberta moved in 2011 to a different service delivery model, where they provide a level of service to anyone who walks in the door, but each of the cases is really assessed on its own merits. Without getting into the specifics of a case which I wouldn't know, it's difficult to really comment, but I can say that the financial eligibility guidelines are established by Legal Aid Alberta themselves.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. Again without getting into the specifics, if you qualify for legal aid, does that funding then run through till the completion of the goals that you and the people at Legal Aid decided were the goals of what you were trying to accomplish in this instance? Let's say that for getting resolution on what the maintenance support level is in a certain case, to use that specific case, to ensure that the husband or the mother is paying their freight on a legal aid file, this runs into eight, nine applications for whatever reason. Is your department seeing that this legal aid funding follows through to the completion of a resolution of a matrimonial settlement in this regard?

Mr. Young: I'd really like to consult with Legal Aid and try to get a better understanding of sort of the actual service delivery and

respond back to the committee because the delivery of legal aid is with that nonprofit corporation, so I just don't have that information.

Mr. Hehr: Okay. If you could get that to me, that would be important. In my view, I see an awful lot of my constituents – and I assume many others – who are receiving legal aid funding for a short period of time, and it's not being followed through to any resolution. Okay? That's what I see.

Anyway, those are my questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was fantastic: 7:30 on the dot. You are a pro.

All right. To Ms Notley.

Ms Notley: Okay. Well, you know, I think, actually, that I will take the opportunity to follow up on that line of questioning. There are so many important things to cover, but this really is fundamental. What I'm going to start by linking it through is the confidence levels that we report for the ministry and, in particular, that they appear to be dropping quite substantially over the years. Going back to 2004, the confidence level in the justice system has gone down.

I'm going to query about the degree to which access to fair representation becomes a critical feature in that confidence level. I read quite a bit of documentation in my last-minute attempt to prepare for this meeting around mechanisms that have been put in place to speed up processes and make things more efficient and ship people off to no trials or short appearances before the judges and all those kinds of things, but we still have this fundamental issue in terms of access to legal representation. While there may be a nonprofit organization that's administering it, we're putting in \$58 million a year, and I suspect it has very major implications for the ministry.

The first thing that I would like to ask about. You talked about how self-represented litigants slow the system. Have you been tracking the absolute number or the percentage – both, actually – of self-represented litigants that are running through our courts by people, not by the amount of court time but by people? Every time someone is self-represented, that's an experience with the justice system. Regardless of how long it takes, there's probably going to be an experience.

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay. I'm going to call upon my assistant deputy minister of court services to talk about our tracking on self-represented litigants.

Ms Varty: Lynn Varty. I'm the ADM for court services. We don't specifically track the self-represented litigants that go through the doors of the court system. What we do track are the litigants who access services from our law information centres. We know that on average there are about 30,000 people a year that access services from law information, but we don't know specifically how many of the folks that go to court are actually self-represented litigants.

Ms Notley: I would suggest that that seems somewhat odd because the majority of your work is actually making those courts work. The entry of those self-represented litigants into the court is a different measure with different outcomes and different implications than simply accessing an information centre, which may or may not actually give people confidence that they have the capacity to navigate an otherwise inaccessible justice system. Is there any thought to potentially starting to track the frequency of self-represented litigants? To me one of the key, key issues in our

justice system these days is the incredible growth in that number. I'm surprised that you're not tracking that.

Mr. Bodnarek: I think there is some merit in tracking self-represented litigants through the system, just the numbers, in addition to how we support them than. I think anecdotally we get the information from the judges that they are seeing significantly more over time. I think it would be a good metric, and I do appreciate you bringing it forward.

Ms Notley: Okay. Another question I have, which again – and this is a tough issue. You mentioned it at the beginning. You said that our system is designed in a traditional judicial model of having a neutral adjudicator and two equally represented parties, so the quality of that equality of representation is important. Under goal 6 in your annual report you talk about the services that the ministry provides to government as legal counsel. Now, I imagine that a lot of that legal counsel is provided by in-service, on-staff counsel, but I'm sure that some of it is also contracted out. I'm wondering if you can tell us on average what the rate of hourly compensation is to the lawyers that the government hires for itself and how that compares to the rate that Legal Aid currently pays to litigants and what your observations are on what that disparity would do to the functionality of our justice system.

9:40

Mr. Bodnarek: I don't want to guess for you, but I can tell you that outside counsel for government are compensated on our legal tariff, which tops out for the most senior lawyer at over 15 years at \$250 an hour. The average rate that we pay would be something less than that because not everybody working for a government file is at the top. I can get you the average number. A Legal Aid lawyer is in the range of 80-some dollars, and I can get you that number.

Is there a disparity in those? Yes, there is. The issue and the challenge is one around sustainability of the legal aid system. If you were to have a significant increase in the legal aid tariff with a finite pool of money, they would be performing less work. It's that challenge. I appreciate it's not a great explanation, but that is reality right now. We have a finite amount for legal aid, and any time you do something significant like modifying the financial eligibility guidelines or moving the tariff for counsel, it affects the sustainability of the program and what they can deliver.

Ms Notley: That's why I'm so shocked to see that you're not doing something like tracking self-represented litigants and talking about the implication of that on the speed of the system. You've got your confidence levels dropping dramatically. You've got your system slowing down because of the number of self-represented litigants. So at what point does there become a cost-benefit analysis to actually giving Albertans access to counsel when they go into a system that is still structured on that historical notion of there being two people equally represented?

Mr. Bodnarek: I'm not sure what report you're referring to in terms of a significant drop in confidence level over time.

Ms Notley: I'll have to find it. I got it from a document that was prepared for the committee from the researchers here, suggesting that since 2003-04 there's been a significant drop in confidence levels.

Mr. Bodnarek: On what measure?

Ms Notley: I'm not sure. I suspect it was yours. But I would have to ask the people from the Legislative Assembly Office research who prepared the document for us.

Mr. Bodnarek: Okay. I mean, I can't respond to it without knowing.

Ms Notley: Right. I certainly will make sure that – I trust their research. It was information provided to the committee.
How am I doing for time?

The Chair: That's it.

Ms Notley: I guess it's done, eh?

The Chair: Yeah. Absolutely. At the very end if you have any other questions to read into the record, you can stick around. We usually take a couple of minutes and go around, and you can read them into the record, and the department can get back to us.

All right. Four minutes for the Wildrose. We'll start with Mr. Stier.

Mr. Stier: Yes. Good morning. Thank you all for coming in. I just want to refer to some of the previous Solicitor General's annual reports, 2010-2011 and also 2011-2012. In fact, 2011-2012, page 18, point 4, referred to efficiencies in police training, referred to the requirement for uniformity and standards, referred to a lot of the studies that have been done for many, many years – in the past decade, in fact – with regard to how policing should be done in Alberta and particularly how there needs to be some sort of a consolidation of resources. Of course, I'm referring to, naturally, the decision that was finally taken – it was a great decision – to have a central training facility. The place chosen to do that was Fort Macleod. After all of these studies, after all of these agreements that were made, and after the depth and length that people across Alberta took to put into this project, which I thought was a wonderful decision to be efficient for Albertans, the project was cancelled. I'm wondering what was the total overall expenditure.

Mr. Chairman, I may ask a couple of extra questions all at once here, and perhaps they could come back.

The Chair: Sure. We can't talk about the policy, but the expenditure is fair game.

Mr. Stier: What was the expenditure? We realize that there was a cost recovery to the town and so on and so forth, but there was an awful lot of money spent in this overall picture. Also, I'm just wondering about those funds that were not spent therefor. Have they now been reallocated already to other main police forces, or just what has happened to those funds?
Thank you.

Mr. Grant: Thanks very much for the question. I'll ask Mr. Bauer to take that specific question.

Mr. Bauer: With regard to costs that are incurred, I'll speak specifically with regard to 2011-12. Within the Ministry of Solicitor General and public security we incurred just under half a million dollars in terms of the work that was undertaken with regard to developing a business model and some of the training models – the core competencies, et cetera – associated with moving to, I guess, a more standardized type of program. That was what we spent with regard to designing some of the standards and common delivery mechanisms.

With regard to the costs associated with the facility, et cetera, those are capital costs that were budgeted and included with Alberta Infrastructure. Questions on any of those costs, I would say, would need to be posed to that ministry with regard to costs associated with the development in 2011-12, et cetera.

Mr. Stier: If I may just follow up, then, on the funds that were directed towards that, half a million dollars doesn't seem to me to be an acceptable number, in my imagination, for all the years of study and effort that went into that. Is there another segment you didn't mention, or am I misunderstanding your answer?

Mr. Bauer: I guess what I am referring to – within the context I don't have the information in terms of what was incurred over the period of time in which this was developed. The figure that I referred to is specifically what was spent within the 2011-12 fiscal year as it relates to, I guess, the period which we're speaking about today.

The Chair: Okay. If you could provide the information that was requested there, how much was spent in total on that. Of course, all previous annual reports are the subject for this committee to examine. The focus, though, is '11-12, and you've answered that question, Mr. Bauer, very well. So if you could just provide the total amount, that'd be great.

All right. Let's go to the government. Four minutes.

Mr. Dorward: Due to the limited time I would like to reference the Auditor General's report that was done for the Ministry of Transportation at the time, October 2009, the recommendations on pages 124 and 129. Rather than go through them right now, I wonder if I could just ask for a response. Those were recommendations that were, by restructuring, transferred over in October 2011 to the Department of Transportation. They are referencing the inspection tools and vehicle safety. Some analysis and recommendations were in there. I would need just for the committee, because we do circulate amongst all the committee members the responses, some kind of response of where that's at now. It's important to make sure that the roadside safety inspections are the best they can be. So I'll leave it to you to maybe review those unless you have a quick answer for me now and we take a minute.

Mr. Grant: Mr. Deputy Chair, that is the issue that I addressed in my opening comments. I believe one other point was that those two recommendations from the Auditor General have been addressed completely with the exception of the installation of ruggedized laptops into the vehicles and the finalized access to Alberta Transportation's computer network. We expect that the ruggedized laptops will be in place by the end of this month. The remaining access to the Transportation computer systems will be done in the next fiscal year.

Mr. Dorward: Is there more of a focus now on the driver or on the vehicle?

Mr. Grant: It is both, but for commercial vehicle enforcement, clearly, the vehicle is the major issue that we look at although we can address the driver records as well.

Mr. Dorward: Thank you.

Mrs. Sarich, is that on that issue? A different issue or the same issue?

Mrs. Sarich: Similar.

Mr. Dorward: Okay. Go with your similar. You've got 30 seconds.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Deputy Chair. I just want to read a question. When there's a decision to restructure a department, I'm assuming that there is an analysis of cost to the department on restructuring. I'd like to have a sense as to what the costs have

been on restructuring. I'm not expecting an answer today. It would be a follow-up question back to the committee.

9:50

Mr. Bodnarek: Of course, for this period of time we were two separate ministries. So this seems to be outside the scope of this committee, to talk about something that happened subsequent to '11-12.

The Chair: I'm going to let the deputy chair deal with that. What do you think, Deputy Chair?

Mr. Dorward: Yeah, you know, I tend to agree. These ones are March 31, 2012. That's probably a valid question, and we'll see some of that in the annual reports coming up.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay.

Ms Fenske: I have four, I believe. First of all, on page 22 of the Solicitor General report there is a comment about fish and wildlife enforcement. You certainly use the metrics of how many checks and how many responses to complaints, but do you have a metrics of whether or not those responses are timely and effective? You can respond to a complaint, but it might be five months after the complaint. I would hope that we could find something on that.

The one below that is on park enforcement. You have a pilot project that is looking to recognize the certification of horses in search and rescue. That's always of interest to me, so I'd like to know how that pilot program is doing and whether or not it's going to be continued.

On page 27 under Direct Supervision – and this is with respect to our correctional institutions – you have said that you have moved to the direct supervision model and that it's going to go into the Edmonton Remand Centre. I would wonder what the metrics are in how you decided that it was more positive and why it's the system you are going to use, so metrics not only for the inmate relationship but also for the staff, whether or not that's being effective for them.

That's it. Thanks.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.

Are there any other very quick questions that people would like to read into the record for a response? Ms Notley.

Ms Notley: Yes. I didn't get a chance to talk at all about safe communities. What was the acronym you had for it?

Mr. Bodnarek: SCIF.

Ms Notley: SCIF. My understanding is – and I'm just looking at a document on my computer here – that some of those programs have been asked to do evaluations, not quite social investment bond evaluations but result based. Like, if you hadn't been to this program, would you have been in jail anyway? Did this program stop you from being in jail? That kind of thing. I'm just wondering if you could provide us with more information about how these evaluations were developed and how they're going to be assessed because they seem to me to be open to a great deal of subjective stuff.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan: Thank you. I have a quick question and a subquestion in regard to the annual report of Justice, page 9, the Fatality Review Board. Let me just read a little bit here. "The duties of the board are to review death investigations under the Fatality

Inquiries Act." I'm just curious to know the number of investigations for 2011-2012.

Then my subquestion: in terms of some of the criteria reviewed in these investigations, is it standard to seek information from the investigating police officer in these death inquiries?

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Goudreau, did you have one?

Mr. Goudreau: Just very quickly if I may, Mr. Chair. The Alberta first responders radio communication system: that's been on the books for quite some time, and you know, finally we're slowly moving into that particular direction. I guess I'm just concerned about the co-ordination that's going on and the policies used to do that. I specifically refer to the Slave Lake fires, where things fell apart after power outages and those kinds of things. My question is on the relationship of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency with municipalities. As municipalities are investing and upgrading their individual systems, are we still ensuring a co-ordinated approach to emergency management responses, and when can we expect more action on this?

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much. We really are out of time, so I think we'll move on now unless there is somebody that just must say something. Good.

Thank you very much to the ministry for coming. We really appreciate your comments today. You faced a lot of questions. If you could provide the answers to those questions that were read into the record, that would be great. Thank you very much for your time.

We do have some business here. At the working group meeting last week the issue of a communications plan was discussed. Rhonda Sorensen, the manager of corporate communications and broadcast services for the LAO, is here to discuss an option for the committee. Go ahead.

Ms Sorensen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I'm sorry about the time. We'll have to go fast.

Ms Sorensen: That's okay. I'm not sure if I'm being timed, too, but I will be very quick.

What we're recommending is that in the interest of alerting the media and our public to the fact of what goes on at these meetings, we start issuing media notices that simply provide information on who we're meeting with and when we're meeting with them. To supplement that, we would also be recommending Facebook postings and Twitter tweets. When we do this, we do recommend that members of the committee, if they're not already following us, either friend us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter so that they can even expand that reach further to their social media communities.

The last recommendation that we would make on this is that if there are multiple meetings coming up in a month or in a short period of time, we only use one media notice so that we are getting the information out there but don't become irrelevant to the audiences that we're trying to reach.

That, in a nutshell, would be my recommendations.

The Chair: All right. We discussed this as a working group. I think we do fantastic work on this committee. I think that we ask a lot of great questions from all sides and get a lot done, and we think that it's important that the media at least know who we're

talking to and when. I saw Ms Karen Kleiss from the *Journal* here, but that's about it. I think a lot of the media don't follow it because they just don't know. So I think that would be a very good thing.

I don't know if the deputy chair has anything to add in that regard.

Mr. Dorward: No. You've said it. I agree with it totally, a hundred per cent.

The Chair: Any discussion on this? We're good? Can someone move that

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts approve the communications plan according to the directions provided to them at the March 6, 2013, committee meeting.

Mr. Goudreau: I'll so move, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Goudreau. Those in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

Last piece of business. Our committee clerk was contacted by Alberta Health Services last week. It was explained that Stephen Lockwood, the board chair, would be out of the country on March 20 when AHS is scheduled to appear before Public Accounts. In the interest of having him present at our meeting to answer questions, I'd like to propose that we swap the weeks that AHS and the four postsecondary institutions are scheduled to present. This would mean moving the four colleges – Northern Lakes, NorQuest, Olds, and ACAD – up to March 20 and AHS back to April 10.

Now, further complicating matters is that we may have to postpone both of those meetings, depending on what is agreed to by the House leaders and the legislative policy committees on the estimates schedule. There's a little bit of uncertainty here, but please bear with us. We'll probably in the next week know what that schedule is and be able to make the changes necessary.

I was hoping that somebody could move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts invite Northern Lakes College, NorQuest College, Olds College, and Alberta College of Art and Design to appear before the committee on

Wednesday, March 20, 2013, and invite Alberta Health Services to appear before the committee on Wednesday, April 10, 2013, subject to the proviso that doing so does not conflict with the main estimates schedule.

Mr. Amery: So moved.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Amery moved it. Those in favour? Oh, a question.

Mr. Allen: Mr. Chair, I understand that because we made a motion in the last meeting for April 10 for the colleges and for AHS the other date and they've only just received notification for April 10, by only giving them a week and a half or two weeks, is that sufficient time for them to prepare? I guess my only thought is that we're surprising them with a much shorter date.

The Chair: Well, it's a very good question.

Mr. Allen: I guess if there's a challenge by the colleges or the board of AHS, I would just suggest that we may want to consider adopting a different date or changing that date to after estimates.

10:00

The Chair: I think we'd be happy to listen to the feedback from the colleges if it's a problem.

Are there any other discussion points on that matter? All right. Those in favour of the motion, say aye. Those opposed? Carried.

Is there any other business that anyone else would like to bring up?

Our next meeting will be next Wednesday, March 13, with Alberta Human Services and the office of the Public Trustee. The prebriefing with research services and the Auditor General will be at 8 a.m. in committee room B. There will be a working group meeting at 7:30, with the main meeting starting at 8:30 in committee room A.

Could we have a member move to adjourn? Mr. Donovan. All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 10:01 a.m.]

