



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Culture and Community Spirit

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8:30 a.m.

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The 27th Legislature
Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Lois Hawkins	Deputy Minister
Parker Hogan	Director, Communications
David Link	Assistant Deputy Minister, Heritage
Tom Thackeray	Assistant Deputy Minister, Culture, Community, and Voluntary Services

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Mr. Sandhu: Agreed.

[Mr. MacDonald in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. My name is Hugh MacDonald. On behalf of the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts I would like to welcome everyone in attendance. Please note that this meeting is recorded by *Hansard*, and the audio is streamed live on the Internet.

Perhaps we could quickly, as we usually do, go around the table and introduce ourselves for the record, starting with the hon. Member for Highwood.

Mr. Groeneveld: Thank you. Good morning from Highwood. George Groeneveld filling in for our hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, committee research co-ordinator, Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Vandermeer: Tony Vandermeer, MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Griffiths: Doug Griffiths, Battle River-Wainwright.

Mr. Kang: Good morning, everyone. Darshan Kang, Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Chase: Good morning. Harry Chase, Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Hogan: I'm Parker Hogan. I'm the director of communications for Alberta Culture and Community Spirit.

Ms Cribbs: Susan Cribbs, executive director of policy, planning, and legislative services.

Dr. Link: Good morning. David Link, ADM, heritage division.

Mr. Thackeray: Good morning. Tom Thackeray, assistant deputy minister of culture, community, and voluntary services with Culture and Community Spirit.

Ms Hawkins: Good morning. Lois Hawkins, deputy minister.

Ms Arnston: Pam Arnston, senior financial officer with Culture and Community Spirit.

Mr. Babiak: Brad Babiak, acting director of planning and performance measurement for Culture and Community Spirit.

Mr. Arklie: Graeme Arklie, with the Auditor General.

Mr. Ireland: Brad Ireland, Assistant Auditor General.

Mr. Saher: Merwan Saher, Auditor General.

Mr. Xiao: David Xiao, Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Sandhu: Good morning. Peter Sandhu, Edmonton-Manning.

Mr. Allred: Ken Allred, St. Albert.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk, Legislative Assembly Office.

The Chair: Thank you.

The agenda was circulated. May I have approval of that agenda? Mr. Sandhu.

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Sandhu that the agenda for the March 9, 2011, meeting be approved as distributed. All in favour? Seeing none opposed, thank you.

The approval of the minutes, that were circulated, of the March 2, 2011, meeting. Moved by Mr. Allred that the minutes of the March 2, 2011, Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting be approved as distributed. All in favour? None opposed. Thank you.

Of course, we come to the next item on the agenda, which is our meeting with Alberta Culture and Community Spirit today. The reports we are dealing with for today's meeting are the Auditor General of Alberta's reports for April and October of 2010; the annual report of the government of Alberta 2009-10, which includes the consolidated financial statements, the Measuring Up progress report, and the business plan annual report from '09-10. As well, of course, there's the Alberta Culture and Community Spirit annual report for 2009-10.

I would remind everyone of the briefing materials prepared for the committee again by the LAO research staff.

At this point I would now like to please ask Ms Hawkins, the deputy minister, to make a brief opening statement on behalf of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit. Please proceed.

Ms Hawkins: Thank you very much, Chairman. On behalf of the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit I'd like to thank you for giving us the time today to share our ministry's key accomplishments, financial results, and response to the Auditor General's report.

We're a small department, but we are very proud of the work that we do to help Albertans make their communities safer, more vibrant, and inclusive. Our ministry has worked diligently within our own means to meet the goals of our four core businesses: to further the spirit of Alberta, our province's cultural policy; to preserve Alberta's historic resources and make them accessible; to support our province's nonprofit, voluntary sector; and to protect human rights and promote fairness and inclusion for all.

A number of entities report to the minister, including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, Government House Foundation, Wild Rose Foundation, the historic resources fund, the human rights education and multiculturalism fund, and the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

A key portion of our work is providing grants to those Albertans that I mentioned earlier to help support individuals, organizations, and communities to improve the quality of life of all Albertans. Almost 71 per cent of our budget is allocated to those grants. In 2009-10 1,569 community facility enhancement program grants and community initiatives program grants were provided across the province. As well, the community spirit program donation grant, in its second year, provided proportional funding grants to 1,741 Alberta-based nonprofit and charitable organizations.

In 2010 we had an ideal opportunity to help build awareness and appreciation of Alberta's culture. In February of 2010 our country hosted the Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games in Vancouver. Canada's games were an excellent opportunity for us to tell the story of our province to the rest of the world. We shared that story through more than 80 Alberta artists and groups, who showcased their talents as part of the games as well as the Cultural Olympiad. As well, more than 40 Alberta artists participated in free concerts at the Alberta Plaza. The intent was to create business and cultural opportunities before, during, and after the games,

and certainly in terms of informal reports that we've received from artists, that was achieved.

The passion Albertans have for arts and culture, especially at the local and grassroots culture level, was on display once again during the 2009 Alberta Arts Days in September. That was the first year that we expanded to three days. In total more than 571 events took place in over 116 communities, including 122 libraries and 80 schools that also participated.

To help further support our cultural policy and its goals of ensuring that all Albertans have access to participate in arts and cultural activities, an online community resource, Culture in High Gear, was launched. This site along with a user-generated calendar of cultural events around Alberta helps to promote Alberta's heritage, arts, volunteer, and other cultural activities.

In 2009-10 we participated in a number of dialogue sessions around the province with arts nonprofit, voluntary sector stakeholders to share ideas, collaborate, and help gather input on how we can work with them to sustain and enhance those sectors in Alberta.

Also, 2009-10 saw a number of changes and milestones for Alberta's film and digital media industry. For the first time in the history of the awards the Gemini awards were held in Alberta, Calgary to be exact. As well, four new grant streams to the Alberta film development program were created to support and encourage Alberta-based screen productions in our province. Those new streams were project and script development, Alberta stories, export market development, and training and mentorship to help grow capacity in the sector.

It's imperative that all Albertans are able to freely participate in the social, economic, and cultural life of our province without discrimination. The Alberta Human Rights Commission and our legislation help to ensure that. In 2009-10 the Alberta Human Rights Act was updated and renamed. As well, the Alberta Human Rights Commission began a series of processes to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and to create greater capacity to respond.

We know that Albertans value their heritage and our historic sites and world-renowned museums across the province, that help to showcase our history. To promote and preserve our province's heritage, our ministry designated 14 new historic resources throughout the province. To increase access for Albertans, we also saw our museums and historic sites take advantage of the Super-Net and our technology to deliver over 200 learning distance programs to students across the province as well as across Canada.

To help us evaluate our programs and our successes, we have a series of performance measures tied to our core business goals. Performance targets that essentially met or exceeded included arts participation, community volunteerism, customer satisfaction with capacity-building facilitation services and workshops, the importance of Alberta's historic resources, heritage facility visitation, protection of human rights, and discrimination-free workplaces. We're still working on a few of those other performance measures, including the dollars spent in Alberta as a result of our film development program, but that we attribute a great deal to the impact of the global economic situation. We're still going to look at some other ways of improving the program.

The community initiatives program and community facilities enhancement program grant recipients also indicated a slight reduction in their satisfaction. We're also looking at those results although they still remain remarkably high at 94.4. Adult Albertans who agree with overall historic resources being adequately protected and preserved in the province is 3.4 below our stretch target, but it's still 1.5 per cent over the previous year.

8:40

In addition to the performance measures our ministry also was able to rate its performance through involvement in a number of other significant events, achievements, and the recognition that we received through awards. We organized another very successful Vitalize conference for our voluntary sector. We participated in the cultural component of the 2009 WorldSkills competition in Calgary, and also our Remington Carriage Museum as well as the Royal Tyrrell received Alberta tourism awards. The Royal Tyrrell received two very prestigious American museum awards as well.

In terms of financial results for 2009-10 the ministry revenues totalled \$236.1 million, a decrease of \$258.5 million from the prior year. The primary source of revenue for the department consists of \$215.1 million from internal government transfers. Our operating expenses were \$309 million. As I mentioned before, 71 per cent, or \$217.9 million, is grants. More than \$64 million was provided for arts and cultural industries. We had \$7.7 million that was used to protect human rights through the commission and also through our human rights education and multiculturalism fund. Almost \$51 million was spent on heritage programs to support our network of historic sites and museums.

Finally, I would like to address the April and October 2010 Auditor General's report with respect to the ministry. The ministry has one outstanding recommendation from 2006-07, that we share with the Ministry of Tourism, Parks and Recreation, relating to computer control environment. We have a shared services agreement with Tourism, Parks and Recreation, and both departments are working very closely with Service Alberta on resolving that outstanding recommendation.

In addition, our ministry was subject to review through two systems audits. These included a follow-up review of the executive corporate credit cards and a review of the infrastructure stimulus fund agreement between the government of Canada and the province. We are working with the Treasury Board and our credit card holders to ensure sufficient supporting documentation is provided so that this recommendation is fully implemented. Regarding the infrastructure stimulus fund projects the Auditor General made no recommendations and noted that we have good processes in place to ensure that costs of the projects met the eligibility requirements of the infrastructure stimulus fund agreement.

This is an overview of Culture and Community Spirit's 2009-10 fiscal year. In the face of a turbulent global economic situation our ministry adjusted well to continue to offer high-quality service to Albertans while also undertaking some very significant provincial, national, and international projects to showcase and to expand the understanding of who we are as Albertans.

Thank you, Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Hawkins.

Mr. Saher.

Mr. Saher: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Brad Ireland will make our comments.

Mr. Ireland: Mr. Chairman, the results of our audit of the Ministry of Culture and Community Spirit are on page 131 of our October 2010 public report. We did not have any new recommendations for the ministry in 2009-2010.

On page 209 of our October 2010 report we noted one recommendation from our October 2007 report that was still outstanding. In 2007 we recommended that the ministry work with Service Alberta to document the services that Service Alberta is to provide and its control environment for information technology

and implement a process to ensure that Service Alberta consistently meets service level and security requirements as well as provide evidence that control activities maintained by Service Alberta are operating effectively.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ireland.

We'll now proceed to questions from members. We will start with Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Vandermeer.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I'm referencing goal 5, human rights. As a former public schoolteacher of 34 years I believe that Bill 44 was the most regressive, intrusive piece of legislation, legitimizing prejudice rather than promoting tolerance. On page 36 of the annual report it is stated that Alberta's human rights system was reviewed to make it "more efficient, effective and transparent." This review resulted in Bill 44 amendments to the Alberta Human Rights Act to require schools to provide notice to parents where a course deals with religion, sexuality, or sexual orientation to enable the parents to remove the child from the class. My first question: how did this policy decision contribute to making the human rights system more efficient or effective?

Ms Hawkins: Mr. Chair, I believe that policy questions probably would be most appropriately directed to the minister. I can talk about, though, the implementation of that section, about notification of parents. The implementation was delayed until September 1 of 2010 in order to give adequate notice and involvement of school boards, with the implementation, in fact, to take place at that time, which is now in place. That's how I would answer that question.

Mr. Chase: Hopefully, you're able to answer this question, and if you're not able to, possibly the minister should be here to respond. Most of the amendments came into force, as you noted, in 2009, but proclamation of the amendments allowing parents to take children out of class was delayed until 2010. What action was your department taking to address the administrative burden this policy decision placed on teachers, and what costs were involved?

Ms Hawkins: In this case we worked very closely with Education, who took the lead on working with school boards to ensure that there were adequate processes. As you may be aware, there already had been parent notification processes in place with school boards in terms of when there were discussions regarding sexuality. Again, I don't want to speak for Education, but they looked at those kinds of processes to see how they may be implemented to also address the implementation of that section.

Mr. Chase: So there were no costs associated with this implementation?

Ms Hawkins: That would be a question I would suggest could be directed to Education, who worked with school boards.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

Mr. Vandermeer: On page 177 of the ministry annual report it states that the only expense reported by the Wild Rose Foundation was the Vitalize conference. What happened to the support to the Alberta nonprofit organizations and the international development program?

Ms Hawkins: Thank you for that question. When the Wild Rose grants were discontinued, the minister committed to ensuring that the dollars that had been spent for the operating grants in the Wild

Rose would become a separate stream under the community initiatives program as well as for the international development program, and we have done that. In fact, we have protected that. Although even our budgets may be reduced, we always retain that proportion of those operating grants and international development grants so that those nonprofit groups are still able to benefit from that funding.

Mr. Vandermeer: Can you explain how the Wild Rose Foundation's other programs were changed and implemented? Did they go somewhere else?

Ms Hawkins: Yes. As I said, the CIP increased by two streams so that we could take care of those grants, but the department took on the board development program and also the Vitalize conference, so all of the functions that had previously been undertaken by the Wild Rose Foundation have been absorbed within the department. The dollars that are here in the budget are the dollars that we use for the conference itself to help defray the costs for participants, who are primarily people who are in the nonprofit, voluntary sector.

Mr. Vandermeer: Do we still need the Wild Rose?

Ms Hawkins: I'm going to ask my senior financial officer to speak to the accounting part of this.

8:50

Ms Arnston: Okay. With respect to having the entity called Wild Rose Foundation, it's a legal entity. With respect to winding it up, we'd have to change legislation, and that takes time. At this point we still have the entity. It still has some operations. It still has revenue with respect to the Vitalize conference, and it still has some expenditures, so it's still operating. With respect to winding it up, it would take some time with respect to withdrawing legislation, and we haven't undertaken those processes at this point.

Mr. Vandermeer: Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kang, please, followed by Mr. Xiao.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A bit has been talked about the AG's October 2010 report on computer control environments. Culture and Community Spirit is responsible for Alberta human rights, which handles a lot of sensitive personal information. What measures is your ministry taking to ensure that information that is collected or created by the commission is securely protected?

Ms Hawkins: The system that's used: its acronym is CHRIS. It is probably our number one priority in terms of ensuring the confidentiality, certainly, because of the personal and the very sensitive information. Our commitment is to ensuring that that system meets all the standards that are set certainly within our own government, but also other standards to ensure that we protect that privacy are in place.

Mr. Kang: Okay. My supplementary to that is: what kind of evidence do you have that the controls in the computer environment are working effectively? Do you have some measures in place to see how Service Alberta is meeting your needs for security?

Ms Hawkins: Yes. In terms of some of the more technical stuff, I would be prepared to provide that to the committee chair. What we do, as I mentioned before, is we work with the standards established through Service Alberta as well as the standards for

protecting both our privacy of information under our legislation as well as, again, the technical standards. I can make a little bit more information available to you.

In terms of the specifics of our security systems some of that information, because of the nature of it, wouldn't be something that we would talk about, all of our vulnerabilities. That is a process of checks that we have to ensure that we can protect that information.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Xiao, please, followed by Mr. Chase. The chair would like to recognize and welcome Mr. Mason this morning as well.

Mr. Xiao: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning. First of all, I just want to make a comment. You know, I feel that your department, although you have, comparatively speaking, a small budget, you do make a great impact in our society, in the arts community, and also in the volunteer sector. I'd really like to commend your efforts. I hope you can continue doing a good job or an even better job in the future.

My question is regarding the revenue, which is on page 63, from the film classification industry. When you look at the numbers, there's an increase from the projected budget of \$750,000 to \$761,000. So there's this increase. Can you explain why there's such an increase?

Ms Hawkins: Yes, I can. As of year-end only \$109,000 of the actual revenue was received for the historic places initiative program. There was some uncertainty whether any additional funding would be coming from the government of Canada, so no accrual was processed at year-end. In July 2010 additional funding of \$300,000 was received and was identified as final funding.

Oh, we're talking about film classification. Sorry. That was on historic places.

Mr. Xiao: Yeah, the film classification.

Ms Hawkins: Could you ask your question again? I'm sorry. I misunderstood.

Mr. Xiao: Basically, on page 63 the projected revenue from film classification was \$750,000, and the actual number is \$761,000, so there's an increase. Can you explain why there's such an increase although it is a small amount?

Ms Hawkins: As with most estimates, we base that on previous years, and we try to average that out. In this particular case, there was a greater amount of activity than we had projected.

Mr. Xiao: Is this a cost-recovery program?

Ms Hawkins: Yes, it is. There is a fee that's charged for the classification of films.

Mr. Xiao: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Is that it for now?

Mr. Xiao: I've got two more questions. Can I keep going?

The Chair: You could ask one more if you would like. Sure.

Mr. Xiao: Okay. Another question is related to human rights, which is, I believe, on page 36. Basically, in your report you talk about amendments being made to the human rights legislation to improve the complaint resolution process, but the amendments are

not listed in this report. Can you briefly describe those amendments?

Ms Hawkins: Yes, I can. Effective October 1, 2009, the chief of the commission and tribunals is now able to delegate to another member of the commission the task of reviewing decisions made by the director to dismiss or discontinue a complaint. This amendment will shorten the time it takes to complete reviews.

Another is that the commission director now requires written approval from the chief of the commission and tribunals to participate in proceedings before a court. Now, this amendment ensures that the best decision regarding appeals is made in each case. Under certain circumstances the director may refuse to accept a complaint or may accept a complaint pending the outcome of another forum or under another act, and this is, again, intended to eliminate duplication, where people may have access to other routes of appeal.

Then the last amendment will improve the commission's efficiency by allowing it to deploy resources to cases that can't be resolved in any other forum so that, again, only those cases that really require the review of the commission will go to the commission. Others will go to the more appropriate forum.

Mr. Xiao: Okay. My supplementary question to that is: what department assisted the Human Rights Commission in the last fiscal year to reduce the human rights complaints that arose in the workplace?

Ms Hawkins: Well, previous to the fiscal year we're discussing, there was an increase of \$1.7 million, and then since that time we have not reduced the Human Rights Commission at all although the department did undergo significant reductions. We also ensured that any of the full-time equivalent recruitment that was required was there if there was a request for some additional FTEs, so we have addressed those types of resource requirements.

The commission itself undergoes a number of opportunities to communicate with stakeholders and partners. They hold workshops. They do information bulletins. They have a website, that provides a great deal of information, and are also open to visits to give information to employers or to other groups that wish to know more about the human rights process.

Mr. Xiao: Do you have specific numbers . . .

The Chair: Mr. Xiao, we're moving on, please. You've gone from one question to three.

Mr. Xiao: I just have one on this point.

The Chair: No. We're moving on. Thank you.

Mr. Chase, please, followed by Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. The Auditor General's report of October 2010, outstanding recommendation on the computer control environment: the Auditor General notes in his October 2010 report, page 209, that a recommendation from 2007 to tourism, parks, recreation, and culture, as it then was, is outstanding and that there has not been a follow-up audit. That recommendation had three parts: to work with Service Alberta to document the IT services provided by Service Alberta, to implement a process to ensure that Service Alberta meets service levels and security requirements, and to provide evidence that controls are operating effectively. Could you tell us where Culture and Community Spirit is in responding to the Auditor General's recommendation?

Ms Hawkins: As I indicated, we work very closely with Tourism, Parks and Recreation, who provide services to us on this recommendation. We have invested resources also to ensure that where we might have equipment that might need to be updated, we've done that. We have also worked at reviewing our processes both in terms of the technical security but also the policies that we want to encourage staff to follow as well so that they do everything that they can do also to ensure that we support those technical improvements. Our expectation is that when we report in '11-12, there will be significant results reported.

9:00

Mr. Chase: Thank you. You partially answered my question in terms of upgrading equipment and co-operating with Tourism, Parks and Recreation. I have concerns about Service Alberta and cross-ministerial initiatives. Could you comment specifically on the process you have implemented to ensure that Service Alberta, which cut 400 positions last year, is meeting your ministry's service level requirements? It's that cross-ministerial connection and how effectively it's working.

Ms Hawkins: There are a number of things that we do in terms of ongoing communications with Service Alberta, but in our department and in conjunction with Tourism, Parks and Recreation we also have some systems that are an independent domain. We also, as I mentioned before, follow the standards in making sure we have the best possible standards met in terms of technical security. We have a number of committees that we work on – the CIO Council; I sit on the DM's IT council – to ensure that the needs of our systems and our stakeholders are reflected in the Service Alberta considerations.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Griffiths, please, followed by Mr. Mason.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you very much. Performance targets and measures are always what my questions are about. You have public opinion surveys, which sort of ask people if they're satisfied. Then you can measure outputs, but the best measurement is always outcomes. The challenge you guys have, I know, is that you have very meaningful benefits, but it's very hard to measure how those benefits impact the community. I know you sort of get forced to go with satisfaction surveys because it's hard to measure exactly what the impact of the programs that you have is.

A couple of questions. In performance measure 3(a), the level of community volunteerism by adult Albertans – it's on page 8 of the annual report – I notice 68.9 per cent to 65.4 to 68.6 to 81.4, and then it carries on this year. So far it's 82.7. Was there a change in the way you were measuring that that caused the leap, or was it the downturn in the economy that made everyone volunteer? Can you attribute that to something?

Ms Hawkins: I will ask Brad Babiak, who can give us a technical explanation.

Mr. Babiak: Actually, in 2008-09 there was a change to one of the several questions that comprise that measure. It was in regard to informal volunteering. Previously it simply asked: had you informally volunteered during the year? The program area wanted to provide a more detailed explanation of what that meant, so they added an example such as helping a neighbour in need. What we saw was a 30 per cent increase in informal volunteering, which

eventually fed into this performance measure. It was that example being added onto the question that provided this huge increase.

Mr. Griffiths: That's what I was wondering. It's like shovelling your elderly neighbour's walk. You don't consider it volunteering. You just consider it being a decent human being. Okay. Good. That's what I thought.

The second question I had, on performance measure 4(b): "percentage of visitors to provincial heritage facilities who rated the knowledge they gained of Alberta history as excellent or good." I didn't see anywhere in the performance measure that asked how you accumulate those numbers or what we actually use to educate visitors about Alberta's history or heritage. What do you do, and have you considered using our poets and our painters and the great storytellers Alberta has to help enhance the storytelling to get those numbers up even higher?

Ms Hawkins: We may have a couple of people who can speak to that. Brad and then David, I'd ask you to comment.

Mr. Babiak: In terms of how that information was collected, it is from a survey done at the actual heritage facility after a person has gone through it. It's an exit survey, which wasn't conducted in 2009-10. Basically, based on their trip, they're asked to answer a couple of questions in terms of what they did learn from their trip or their visit.

In terms of the other piece, I'll go over to David.

Dr. Link: I'll just add to what Brad stated. The visitor receiving the question could have just viewed exhibitry or could have participated in an actual program at the museum or historic site, and he would base his answer to that question on that experience.

Mr. Griffiths: I'm glad they're bringing someone in who knows about performance measures now. I ask so many questions about it. It's good.

The Chair: Mr. Mason, please, followed by Mr. Allred.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. My question has to do with library funding. During the time that I spent on Edmonton city council, I was also a member of the Edmonton public library board for a number of years. I'm looking at the research that we've been provided here by staff in terms of per capita funding for libraries, and we are the second lowest. I'm wondering if you can tell me what the proportion is of provincial funding to libraries to municipal funding of libraries.

Ms Hawkins: Libraries is a part of Municipal Affairs, not our department.

Mr. Mason: Okay. Well, it's listed on this table as per capita cultural expenditures. So that doesn't come out of your department?

Ms Hawkins: No, it doesn't.

Mr. Mason: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I'm at a loss. You'll have to come back to me. I'll come up with a better question next time.

The Chair: Okay. I bet you will.

Mr. Allred, please, followed by Mr. Kang.

Mr. Allred: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Ms Hawkins, for your presentation. You've anticipated some of my questions, so I'll leave them out.

I'm going to dwell on the CIP program, which provides a lot of excellent funding for some really great programs in all of our constituencies. I do have some concerns in that a lot of the funding ends up going to municipalities and schools, and I feel those should be funded out of the MSI grant for the municipalities and schools, for computers and stuff for schools. We see the creation of a lot of friends of this and friends of that by municipalities just to get around the problem of giving money directly to municipalities. Really, all it does is put a lot of money in the hands of the lawyers and the accountants to create these organizations. I guess my first question is: would you just comment on that? Is there a way we can be a little more vigilant to direct the funds to real community organizations?

Ms Hawkins: Yes. We have been reviewing our community initiatives program and the community facilities enhancement program guidelines. I mentioned the dialogues that we've been participating in. We've been getting the kind of feedback that you've expressed, that some organizations seem to have multiple sources of revenues and that others don't. So what we did in October of 2009 was restricted the access of municipalities to CIP. The reason that we did that: first of all, they do have access to the municipal sustainability initiative funding, and we also wanted to make sure that particularly those small, human service, community-based organizations had access to the limited funds that we have.

The other thing that we did in terms of schools: we again looked at the other kinds of resources that were available. We changed our guidelines, and we reduced the amount of money that a school could request for technology upgrades so that, again, we can ensure – we recognize there are challenges there – that particularly other community-based organizations would have access to funding.

Mr. Allred: Okay. Just a supplementary to that: how do we get around the creation of the friends of this and the friends of that, which are really just arms of, say, a municipal organization?

Ms Hawkins: You know, one of the things that we've certainly heard from Albertans is that they really want to participate in their community. They want to engage in helping. There are certain requirements under Service Alberta's Societies Act in terms of forming an organization, but there's a difference between forming organizations and government providing funding to them. There may be instances where people want to create an organization to help other institutions, but it wouldn't necessarily mean that government funding would be available. In some cases maybe it would and maybe not.

9:10

Mr. Allred: Okay. Thank you. My second supplementary. On page 25 you talk about a survey by your organization and a 94.4 per cent favourable response. What is the nature of that survey? It seems to me that if you ask a question of somebody you give money to, they're bound to say: hey, it's a great program. Could you maybe describe a little bit about the nature of the questions?

Ms Hawkins: I'll ask Brad to speak to that in just a moment. We've taken a look at that. One of the concerns could be, as I mentioned before, that we have reduced the ceiling for some. One factor that we are investigating is that some people's satisfaction might have been affected by the fact that instead of getting \$75,000, they got \$50,000. I mean, we do need to make sure that the money we give creates a viable project or operating, but we also realize that we can maybe spread that money out.

Mr. Babiak: That survey is actually two surveys, one for clients of the community initiatives program and one for the community facility enhancement program. The survey was sent out to all people who completed their accounting reports and reported back on the spending of the money. There's a list of questions, obviously, around the program itself and how it's delivered but, most importantly, around this performance measure in terms of how the funding benefited the community as well as what some of the things were that were done with the money. Some examples of that are provided in the annual report in terms of whether it was used for health services, expanding services, or improving services. That's how we kind of look at the program level to try and see what those benefits actually are to the community.

Mr. Allred: Thank you.

The Chair: Before we move on to Mr. Kang, I would like to remind all members of the committee that this is not like question period, where you have an opportunity to ask three questions, hopefully one related to the other. We only have two at this Public Accounts Committee.

We will now proceed to Mr. Kang, followed by Mr. Sandhu.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the annual report '09-10, page 12, core business goal 1:

The ministry supports this goal on an ongoing basis by:

- Coordinating the support and promotion of the cultural policy within the Government of Alberta by working with the other ministries to identify linkages and opportunities to champion the policy.

There are currently no performance measures for this goal. Could you tell us what linkages and opportunities you identified and acted upon during the reporting year?

Ms Hawkins: Yes. We formed an ADM's committee of representatives from all of the departments and asked them to take a look at, again, their core businesses and look at their goals to see where they intersected with ours. We found some interesting things. For instance, in terms of safe communities many of the activities that we're involved in help new immigrant groups or young people or urban aboriginal people or people who are experiencing other kinds of personal challenges in their life. They are helped in our programs, and that, in fact, helps to make safer communities, which, of course, is another very major initiative. We saw that those were very complementary kinds of things.

We saw with education, working with young people in terms of leadership development in some of the programs that we do, that they were complementing.

We found also that some of our funding was being used by groups that worked, for instance, with people who might be in the Glenrose hospital and transitioning to mainstream living. I had an e-mail once from a woman who talked about the fact that one of the programs we funded provided a speech class, a debate class. It was where they were having fun debates. She said that although this gentleman was a professional, he had lost much confidence because of a stroke. Through this program he was able to gain skills but also confidence. From that experience she felt very positive about him being able to re-enter his community. With each of the departments there is a similar kind of story where we could see that the kind of investments that support our cultural policy really help Albertans in a number of ways and complement some of the goals in other departments.

Mr. Kang: I think you answered my supplemental question with that, too. My question arises from what you told me. Is there any overlapping of programs with other departments?

Ms Hawkins: In order to avoid that, we ensure that we have representatives from our programs work with others. But one of the things that I can certainly say and, I'm sure, is not surprising is that the demand outstrips any dollars that we have in our department. We work closely with other departments to ensure that we don't double fund for the same purpose. So we ensure that we're broadening the impact of the dollars that each of the departments has.

Mr. Kang: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Sandhu, please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the annual report, page 49, the human rights budget was \$8.6 million, but the actual expense was \$7.8 million. What is the reason for the lower than budgeted expenses?

Ms Hawkins: I mentioned before that we had increased the budget for the Human Rights Commission just prior to this. What we found was that the recruitment for some of the positions, the chief commissioner and the director and some of the other commissioners, was delayed, so we didn't expend all the money that we had intended. The savings, though, were offset by an approximately \$584,000 increase in expenses for supply and services to support the human rights panel review activities.

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, please, followed by Mr. Xiao.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. This set of questions has to do with goal 3, the nonprofit sector. The nonprofit sector is the ministry's major business, consuming 73 per cent, or \$383 million, of its operating expenses. The annual report states with respect to strategy 3.1, page 20, that the ministry continued with a forum "where 11 ministries come together with leaders from the nonprofit/voluntary sector with the common goal of building vibrant and sustainable communities." Could you provide an example of what the activities of this forum comprising 11 ministries contributed to the nonprofit sector?

Ms Hawkins: Thank you for the question. There are a couple that I'll mention. One is that we have been working with this sector to get a better understanding of the actual impact of the economic upheaval that happened, you know, starting in 2008. So over the course of the last couple of years and certainly in '09-10 we worked with private and public funders as well as nonprofit, voluntary sector representatives to talk about, first of all, what we were all experiencing in terms of the impact, to raise awareness of any promising practices that groups were finding in terms of being able to cope. Certainly, during those sessions we found that people were talking about further collaboration. They were talking about trying to find opportunities to have joint or shared purchasing and to find shared services opportunities. So that's one of the ways that we've wanted to work with them.

Another is that we have worked with the nonprofit, voluntary sector and Employment and Immigration on a workforce strategy as well for that particular sector.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. My supplemental. The ministry engaged in a number of "regional dialogues" in 2009-10. In this case they were "aimed at finding ways to continue to work together for the betterment of Albertans." This is a commendable goal. However, were there any measurable outcomes of these dialogues with the nonprofit sector? In other words, how would you evaluate the success?

Ms Hawkins: We feel that the dialogues are not just a one-time activity. In '09-10 we engaged in six of the dialogues in terms of programs. We also had six in terms of facilities and some of the demands there, and subsequent to that we are also engaged in having ongoing dialogue. So we recognize that it's not a one-time thing. We need to keep those discussions under way.

9:20

However, we had some very significant input in terms of, for instance, the onerous burden, that was mentioned, I think, earlier in a question, that some organizations felt when they applied for our grants. So we've started to streamline our application process as a result of those discussions. We're going online, but we'll still have the paper channel just until, you know, everyone can transition. That would be an example.

We also heard that we needed to recognize that the Alberta population is changing. We know our demographics are changing, and our programs were designed maybe 15, 20 years ago, when Albertans as a group might have looked different, maybe had different aspirations, different goals. So we have now engaged in a number of activities, including an advisory committee to give us advice on how we should be changing and updating those grants to make sure that they meet the needs of people.

As I mentioned before, one of the things that groups also asked for was an opportunity to be able to use the department to connect with one another. As I mentioned before, we do now have some mechanisms online where people can put their activities in our cultural calendar – and culture we've defined very broadly in terms of not just arts but also community involvement – so that those groups can stay in touch.

So those are a few of the things. We will be coming out with another report. Again, for our next annual report we'll be able to talk more about those changes.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Xiao, please, followed by Mr. Mason.

Mr. Xiao: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When I look at the revenue portion of this statement, page 89, there are premiums, fees, licences, and other revenues. As we know, we are operating two Jubilee auditoriums – right? – one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. Can you tell us how much revenue these two facilities generate on an annual basis?

Ms Hawkins: I'm going to ask Pam to speak to it, and, Tom, you may want to speak also to the Jubilee auditoria.

Ms Arnston: Okay. With respect to the Jubilee auditoria their revenues and expenses are recorded in the historic resources fund. Actually, if you would turn to page 147 of your annual report – that's the statement of operations for the historic resources fund – you will see that the Jubilee auditoria in 2009-10 brought in \$6.5 million.

Mr. Xiao: Okay. Yes.

My supplementary question is related to the revenue of the Jubilee because this facility was built and funded by tax dollars. From

time to time we get complaints from, you know, community organizations. It just feels as if sometimes it becomes so expensive. A lot of the community organizations just couldn't afford to go there. I can give you an example. If you want to host a reception there, then you have to buy the wine from the Jubilee. They charge – I don't know – \$5 or \$6 per glass. That's huge. I'm wondering. Can we make the rules a little bit flexible in order to accommodate those community-based nonprofit organizations?

Ms Hawkins: I'll make a general statement, and then Tom may want to speak to that as well. First of all, we do have different rates for nonprofit groups than we do for professional companies' use and also for resident groups as well. They have a different rate, too, that's less than the commercial. So we do try to ensure, because, as you said, this is an asset owned by Albertans, that those nonprofit groups are able to get, you know, a lesser fee.

Tom, did you want to add to any of that?

Mr. Thackeray: The only thing that I would add is that we do regularly check across the country to see what comparable facilities charge for comparable activities and try to ensure that we are competitive but not over the mean for those facilities across the country.

Mr. Xiao: Yeah. I disagree with that kind of competitiveness concept because this is a facility that is funded by tax dollars, and we should enable the nonprofit organizations, the community-based organizations to have easy access to that facility. The bottom line is that this is not a facility for making huge profits. You know, \$6 per glass, to me, that's very expensive for house wine. So I know exactly what I'm talking about.

Ms Hawkins: Perhaps we can note that comment.

The Chair: We're going to move on now to Mr. Mason, please, followed by Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Well, I'm going to try another question now, and it has to do with the community grant expenditures. You know, the annual report indicates that there was a very significant cut in this program, but it attributes that to the ending of a two-year program, the major community facilities program. But if you do the math, that still doesn't account for a \$50 million cut from community grants spending since 2006-07. So my question is whether the criteria for allocating the money in this program were changed and whether or not you've measured the impact of the cut and what that is.

Ms Hawkins: You're absolutely right. The majority of that reduction was the major community facilities program, but we also had some other one-time funding, too. For the Telus World of Science I think it was about \$40 million. So that accounts for part of it, but we did have a reduction that year with our funding.

As I mentioned, we did do some review of our criteria, first of all, to look at whether – again, we had historic limits like \$75,000 or, you know, whatever for a program or \$50,000 for a certain kind of grant. We looked at those and looked at whether we might be able to reduce them so that we could still, again, meet a greater demand and still meet the basic needs of those grant recipients. We didn't want to cut them too low. I mean, then they're not viable. We looked at finding a balance there. There were changes to our CIP criteria to ensure that the organizations that deal with the most vulnerable people – again, usually they're community-based and small human services – would have access to funding. So we did make those changes to deal with the fact that we did have a

reduction that year in addition to the one-time dollars that were gone.

Mr. Mason: Okay. You didn't really go on to say whether you'd assessed the impact on these organizations and whether or not those reductions still permitted them to operate with a reasonable degree of effectiveness. You know, these organizations are all very much working on the margins and paying low salaries. They're really on the edge. So I'd like to know how you assessed the impact of these reductions.

Ms Hawkins: As I mentioned before, the Alberta nonprofit, voluntary sector initiative is a group of government departments who are involved with the nonprofit groups in some way or another: some in human services, some in recreation, some in terms of justice, in education, or health. What we do is meet with representatives who are from about 11 different areas in the nonprofit. We meet with them probably about every six weeks to talk about how we can work together but also how we can learn from them about what the impacts are. We work closely with the capacity-building organizations: Volunteer Alberta, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. In fact, we provided them some three-year funding so that they also could help us to know: how can we best support the groups? We know there is always going to be more demand than there will be funds.

9:30

Are there ways, for instance, we can remove any disincentives to those groups collaborating? Are there ways that we can remove any disincentives if they want to amalgamate? Are there ways that we can ensure that if we are creating an onerous administrative burden on them, we can reduce that? So we talk to them. We meet with them.

We're not just concerned about the impact of the reduction of our funding, and that's what I mentioned before. We initiated through ANVSI a series of discussions that included private funders as well. We wanted to hear from the private funders because they were undergoing stresses. We listened to the capacity-building organizations about what they were seeing and what they were hearing. We listened and talked to individual organizations. As I mentioned before, the result of those conversations has meant that we have changed our criteria, and we have wanted to keep an eye on the viability.

In terms of even setting ceilings, we've really wanted to be very careful, in consultation with some of those groups, that we didn't cut too deeply into that and made sure that the dollars that we were putting out there were going to be really encouraging those benefits that we intended.

Mr. Mason: I think I understand the process, Mr. Chairman, but not yet the outcome, so we'll come back.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Griffiths, please, followed by Mr. Kang.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you. Performance measure 5(b) on page 9, "percentage of Albertans who believe their current or last place of work in Alberta is free of discrimination." I have to admit I was quite shocked that 1 in 5 people doesn't feel it's free of discrimination here in Alberta, and I got thinking about it. You know, I'm one of the younger MLAs. I was the youngest for quite a while, and I had lots of people come up to me and say: oh, you're too young to be an MLA. I know they were meaning it as a compliment, like "That's great," but I could have easily been somebody

else and taken it as an insult, like: “What do you mean I’m too young? Am I being discriminated against?” This seems a little fuzzy and hard to measure. Do you think it’s a fair measurement for the department – you’re going to be graded against this – for you to measure that when it’s a difficult thing to really contextualize or change? And if you are going to change it, how do you do that?

Ms Hawkins: I will ask on the technical side to have Brad comment. We work very closely with Employment and Immigration on this particular piece. Also, I had mentioned before that we see that the commission and our education fund are involved with public education because, as you indicated, some people may not recognize that the comments that they are making might be offensive or might be intimidating to people. We want to start with the assumption that if people have the correct information about the expectation of behaviour in the workplace, they will live up to it.

We also work with employers about processes that they can put in place to ensure that people feel respected. We also, though, want to ensure that individuals understand what they can do if they find themselves in a situation where they don’t feel that, you know, it’s a workplace free of discrimination. So we have a series of activities that talk about raising awareness, informing, then making sure people understand the appropriate processes to use.

An important thing that sometimes people don’t realize is that most cases of complaints end up being resolved through conciliation and negotiation and mediation. It really speaks to the fact that we want to ensure that there’s good public education out there about what constitutes discrimination in the workplace.

Mr. Babiak: Really, to add a couple of points on the technical side, this is just one question out of I believe about 20 that are around the workplace. We try to use all of that information, and this is kind of just to capture all we can provide to the public as an outcome kind of measure about what we’re trying to do. Then we get very specific questions in terms of the program, in terms of what they’re trying to do and whether or not it’s effective. Then, hopefully, by monitoring both, we’re able to influence this result ultimately, but it is challenging, like you say, because it is far-reaching from the programs we directly deliver, be it in the workplace or not.

Mr. Griffiths: My second question. You said that you work closely with EI, so both departments are spending money trying to improve other factors that ultimately come up to produce this performance measure about whether Albertans believe their current or last workplace is discrimination free. I’m curious on how much money is being spent on programs to try and change people’s beliefs in the workplace and make them feel safe, but I’m also curious about whether or not it’s value for money. I mean, from the results year after year – 81 per cent, 79 per cent, 81 per cent, 81 per cent – it’s not changing anything. Is it money well spent when it’s not changing the performance measure or bringing it up? It’s still 1 out of 5 that believe their workplace isn’t free of discrimination.

Ms Hawkins: I’m just getting the documents here. The actual for 2010 was \$489,000 in terms of those programs, the education programs. I think those questions that you raised are ones that are always being asked in terms of, you know: are we adjusting our information sessions for the type of situations that are there in terms of workplace issues? For instance, we’ve seen temporary farm workers come into the province or different kinds of arrangements that we may not be familiar with. Those evaluations

are a part of the feedback that we receive from the education programs.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kang, please, followed by Mr. Xiao.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 16 strategy 2.7 says: “collaborate with municipal and federal governments to review proposals to raise film production capacity in the province.” You know, that is to recognize the need for a studio facility in the province. I would be remiss if I did not point out that the province is not without such a facility. Edmonton has Film Alberta Studios, with about 51,000 square feet, just off Calgary Trail. Was that capacity not enough? The ministry took a lead role in facilitating the development of the Alberta creative hub facility in Calgary. Could you tell us what kind of role the ministry played in that?

Ms Hawkins: Yes, I can. The studio was, again, one of the issues that was raised during the minister’s conversations not only through his Alberta Film Advisory Council members but also through his contacts with people throughout the industry in the province and also his many conversations with industry representatives from across Canada as well as around the world.

One of the interesting things about being at the Cultural Olympiad in Vancouver was that he was able to meet with film producers from other parts of the world who were curious about Alberta and wanted to look at how they might be able to come here. Our crews have a wonderful reputation around the world and in the sector. But one of the shortcomings appeared to be the adequacy not only of film studio capacity – as you say, here in Edmonton there is some capacity – but with the closing of the Currie barracks in Calgary that capacity was lost.

What we looked at was working with a nonprofit entity that was created by the Calgary Economic Development Authority to look at bringing stakeholders together from the sector but also to look at other private and public funding. We provided \$1.2 million to just initiate for that nonprofit entity an opportunity to put a business case together. The interest here is in ensuring that our young people who are educated in our postsecondaries, who are creating stories about Alberta are actually able to perform in a very high functioning sector. That not only creates jobs for people who are in that sector, but it creates for hotels, restaurants, businesses that might provide construction materials a great economic impact. So for those reasons we wanted to work with that nonprofit entity to create that business case.

9:40

Mr. Kang: Okay. My supplementary. You said that you spent \$1.2 million. Is there any more money you’re putting into that project?

Ms Hawkins: Not at this time.

Mr. Kang: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Xiao, please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Xiao: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the past the Wild Rose Foundation had a program called the international development program, right? I’m wondering: do we still have such a program in place? I remember two years ago, when I introduced the minister at the Rotary Club of Edmonton, he was talking about strengthening the partnership with organizations such as the Rotary Club and the Lions Club and so on. I couldn’t find any figures in the state-

ment that indicate that there's a certain program which is related to that.

Ms Hawkins: Yes, it does exist. What we created were three streams under the community initiatives program. The first is projects. Then there's operating, and that corresponds to, again, the program that was in the Wild Rose Foundation grants. Then the third stream is the international development program. It still is in place, and it is being conducted as it was before. The minister has ongoing contact with Rotary and some of the other organizations that you mentioned to ensure, again, that our program is being effective and is being really up to date in terms of the needs that those organizations are seeing that need to be met.

Mr. Xiao: You know, myself as a Rotarian I like to see that we as a government can work closely with organizations such as Rotary because Rotary has done a lot internationally; you know, in Africa, in Latin America. I hope that we can strengthen the relationship with such organizations because that's just a little bit of money, and it really can go a long way.

Thank you.

Ms Hawkins: Yes. That's very true. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chase, please, followed by Mr. Allred.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. This set of questions has to do with the ministry budget. The amount spent on community and voluntary services in 2009 was \$33.6 million, as noted on page 40, compared to \$26.8 million in 2010, a decrease of \$6.8 million, or 20 per cent, over one year. At a time when government services were being cut and nonprofits were attempting to compensate, these cuts to the funding of nonprofits had significant consequences. What feedback did you receive about the cuts, and how did you address that feedback?

Ms Hawkins: Again, as I mentioned, we are only one source of funding to the nonprofit, voluntary sector community. In terms of their revenues there may also be not only grants that might be given for projects or operating, but there might be contracts for services from other departments. In terms of our grants and the impact, as I mentioned before, we worked through the ANVSI, which has other government departments in it, so we can have the conversations with the sector itself to talk about that kind of cumulative impact so that we have an understanding of what we can do in the departments, again, to streamline the process so that we don't create an administrative burden.

For instance, one of the things that we heard during the dialogues was that sometimes small organizations getting relatively small grants were having to pay maybe \$4,000 or \$5,000 to get a formal audit done. So we started to talk to some of the accounting institutes as well as the office of the Auditor General to get an understanding about what would be the appropriate level of accountability that we could put into place without creating a burden. This work is ongoing, and we just yesterday met with students and talked to them about that fact that in terms of their internships or summer jobs they may want to look at the nonprofit, voluntary sector to get a better understanding of some of their needs. At the same time, that's a way for those groups to receive some very good advice, too. That's one of the ways that we've looked at doing that.

The other, as I mentioned before, is that we have actually adjusted our criteria in order to meet changing demographic needs. I mean, we heard loud and clear and also saw through our environ-

mental scan that populations in the province are very different from what they looked like 25 or 30 years ago, when some of our programs began. So we also are working with those groups to get a better understanding of what they need.

Sometimes it's not money that they need. We met with a new immigrant group, and when it came to the end of the conversation, they weren't quite sure of exactly what their needs were. The first thing that we talked to them about was having one of our community development workers sit down with their group and start to talk about, you know, what was their first need and then to talk about what are some of the ways that they might be able to address it. Oftentimes we think of just grants, but what we find is that it's the expertise of our staff in helping to build capacities with those groups that is equally as important.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

While significantly reducing grants to a variety of arts, nonprofits, and community groups, the cost of ministry support services increased by \$0.8 million, or 16 per cent, an inverse equation, which suggests you hired more ministry members in order to make deeper cuts. This is from page 40. Can you explain what drove up the cost of ministry support services by 16 per cent?

Ms Hawkins: Yes, I can. We had received information from Service Alberta. I mentioned before that we are an independent domain, and we recognized that we had to absorb those costs. In addition to that, as I mentioned before, we are increasingly using technology to do distance education programs. We are putting into place, again, self-generated information on our community calendar. We are also looking at other ways that we can use Live Meeting and Communicator to help people to get information. We've done some video conferencing not only with people in the department but with the minister and nonprofit, voluntary sector groups. So the use of that technology and increasing that use has bumped up our ministry support services costs.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Allred, please.

Mr. Allred: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Ms Hawkins, just to follow up on Mr. Xiao's question on international development, I wonder if you could describe the focus of that program. What is it intended for? Is it educational programs? Is it hockey trips to Cuba? What is the focus of it?

Ms Hawkins: For the international development program?

Mr. Allred: Right.

Ms Hawkins: This program is one where Alberta-based organizations have a project that is linked internationally. It could be an education project or a clean water project that is conducted overseas.

Mr. Allred: Okay. I note that some of the CIP grants that I've seen are for what I might call junkets such as the invitational hockey tournament in Cuba type of thing. That certainly isn't part of the international development program, but that is apparently an approved type of grant in the CIP program.

Ms Hawkins: That would be under the CIP project grant, and in that case, there is a ceiling. It used to be \$75,000, and now we've lowered it to \$10,000.

Mr. Allred: Okay. Thank you.

9:50

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I can just correct some information.

The Chair: Please.

Ms Hawkins: Yes. I said that for the Alberta creative hub we hadn't given other monies. Just to clarify, we gave \$75,000 through CIP for the development of an initial business plan. We then provided the \$1.2 million for the development of the non-profit entity that was created. So just to ensure that the information is complete.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have a question at this time myself and it's not, you know: is there an ice arena in Havana? On page 91 of your annual report, schedule 5, you note under element 4.0.5 other initiatives, operating expense. There is no mention of this in the 2009-10 estimates, nor is there any mention of it in the authorized supplementary, but there was an actual amount spent of \$12 million, and it is noted as an overexpended amount in the column on the far right-hand side. What was this money used for, this \$12 million, please?

Ms Hawkins: I'll be asking my senior financial officer to speak to that.

Ms Arnston: Okay. The additional funds were basically in-year projects that had been approved. For example, the Canada Sports Hall of Fame received \$10 million. These are emerging issues that aren't planned for. So during the year through the forecast process these things come up, and as they are approved, they are usually approved within the other initiatives program because they're one-time initiatives. For example, the Canada Sports Hall of Fame, and if you look at the '10-11 year, there's the GO Community Centre, those kinds of things. Since they're one-time, in-year approved projects, they are not budgeted for.

The Chair: My next question would be: where did you get the \$12 million, and can this committee please have a detailed list of precisely where this money went?

Ms Arnston: Through the forecast process if the ministry's spending authority, the appropriation, isn't exceeded, we just use that spending authority for these types of one-time approvals. For example, in '09-10 we had the horse-racing initiative. There was a spending lapse there, so that spending authority was used for these one-time initiatives. When we have a fiscal year where we don't have those lapses or that spending authority room, then we get a supplementary spending estimate.

The Chair: Thank you for that. I appreciate your answer.

Mr. Kang, please.

Mr. Kang: Where are we here? You got me lost here, Mr. Chair.

Page 17, strategy 2.9: examine innovative means to support the arts. Could you please tell us what innovative means were examined, in what respect they were innovative, and what resulted from that examination? What was the result of that examination?

Ms Hawkins: I'll just start with some general comments, and I'll also ask our ADM of culture and voluntary services to speak. We have been working with the organizations, again, to look at the fact that technology is having quite a dramatic impact on them, as we all know. So some of their interests are, first of all, getting a

better understanding of how some of these technology changes will affect them but also in terms that some of the regulatory and intellectual property and copyright rules will affect them as well. We have worked with the organizations, particularly the book publishers, to make presentations to the federal government about the impact of some of the changes because most of that legislation is at the federal level. So in terms of some of that changing dynamic, we want to work with them to make sure that, again, we understand what's happening in the sector so that our programming and our support can be conducive to supporting it during these changes.

The Chair: I'm afraid we're almost out of time, and there are still some members with questions.

Mr. Kang, could you please read your second question into the record and any other questions that you may have that you want to get a written response through the clerk to all members?

Mr. Kang: Okay. The annual report states that following consultation, Alberta-specific funding models were developed. Could you describe what these funding models are and what makes them Alberta-specific?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any other members? Mr. Chase.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. With regard to goal 2, the arts sector, film, question one. There are a lot of jurisdictions competing for a stake in the film industry. It's been observed that filmmakers tend to go to the jurisdictions that provide the best business incentives in the short term, but investment in infrastructure and people requires returns over the long term. What was your greatest success in the 2009-10 year in terms of providing support for the Alberta film industry over the long term?

Lastly, it has been reported in the industry that the number of film and television crews working in Alberta declined significantly during the past five years. Can you tell us specifically what your funding model achieved with respect to retention of Alberta-trained production expertise, which, we might assume, is important for the growth of the industry?

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Is that it?

Okay. Mr. Kang, please, quickly.

Mr. Kang: Goal 3. The nonprofit sector is the ministry's major business, consuming 73 per cent, or \$383 million, in operating expenses. The annual report states with respect to strategy 3.1, page 20, that the ministry continued with "a forum where 11 ministries come together with leaders from the nonprofit/voluntary sector with the common goal of building vibrant and sustainable communities." My question is: could you provide an example of what activities this forum comprising 11 ministries contributed to the nonprofit sector?

The second one. The minister engaged in a number of regional dialogues in 2009-10. In this case they were aimed at finding ways to continue to work together for the betterment of Albertans. This is all very well, but were there any measurable outcomes of these dialogues with the nonprofit sector?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That concludes this portion of the meeting. I would like to thank Ms Hawkins and her staff for their time this morning. We appreciate the answers that you have

provided to us. I must note that the ADM to your immediate left was very quiet this morning.

Ms Hawkins: Uncharacteristically so, are you saying?

The Chair: No. I'm just noticing certain things.

We wish you all the very best in this fiscal year. Again, on behalf of the members, thank you. You're free to go while we conclude the other items on our agenda.

Ms Hawkins: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Item 5. Under other business I would like to note for the record to the hon. members that we have received written follow-up responses from all meetings held during the fall 2010 session. In accordance with our usual practices these responses are available on our public website and will be attached to the committee minutes as well. The documents from Alberta Energy that are currently available on the public website will also be attached to the minutes.

Is there any other business committee members would like to raise at this time? No? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has no issues?

Mr. Vandermeer: I'm from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. Edmonton-Manning is over there.

The Chair: Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. I'm sorry. They're next door. They're neighbours.

The date of the meeting with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development will be next Wednesday, March 16, at 8:30 a.m.

May I have a motion to adjourn? Mr. Sandhu. Thank you. Mr. Sandhu moves that the meeting be adjourned.

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Have a good week, members.

[The committee adjourned at 9:59 a.m.]

