



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Families and Communities

Ministry of Service Alberta
Consideration of Main Estimates

Thursday, April 12, 2018
9 a.m.

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The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

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Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP), Deputy Chair

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Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)
Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (NDP)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)
Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (NDP)
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* substitution for Mike Ellis

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Also in Attendance

Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Participants

Ministry of Service Alberta

Hon. Stephanie V. McLean, Minister

Mark Brisson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Modernization

Darrell Dancause, Senior Financial Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Financial Services

David Morhart, Deputy Minister

9 a.m.

Thursday, April 12, 2018

[Ms Goehring in the chair]

**Ministry of Service Alberta
Consideration of Main Estimates**

The Chair: Good morning. I would like to call this meeting to order and welcome everyone.

I would just like to start by saying that myself and several other members around the table this morning are wearing our jerseys today in support of the Humboldt Broncos.

The committee has under consideration the estimates of the Ministry of Service Alberta for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

I'd ask that we go around the table and have all MLAs introduce themselves for the record. Minister, please introduce the officials that are joining you at the table. I am Nicole Goehring, MLA for Edmonton-Castle Downs and chair of this committee. We'll start to my right.

Mr. Smith: Mark Smith, Drayton Valley-Devon, vice-chair.

Mr. Yao: Tany Yao, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Cyr: Scott Cyr, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Orr: Ron Orr, Lacombe-Ponoka.

Dr. Starke: Richard Starke, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Ms McLean: Would you like me to introduce my officials now?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Ms McLean: I'll have them introduce themselves.

Mr. Dancause: Darrell Dancause, senior financial officer, Service Alberta.

Mr. Morhart: David Morhart, Deputy Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Brisson: Mark Brisson, Service Alberta.

Mr. Horne: Good morning. Trevor Horne, MLA for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Ms McKittrick: Bonjour. Annie McKittrick, Sherwood Park.

Mr. Hinkley: Good morning. Bruce Hinkley, MLA, Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Ms Luff: Robyn Luff, MLA for Calgary-East.

Mr. Shepherd: Good morning. David Shepherd, Edmonton-Centre.

Drever: Good morning. Deborah Drever, MLA for Calgary-Bow.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, St. Albert.

The Chair: I would like to note the following substitution for the record: Mr. Cyr for Mr. Ellis.

Please note that the microphones are being operated by *Hansard* and that the committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of this meeting.

Hon. members, the standing orders set out the process for consideration of the main estimates, including the speaking rotation. The rotation for a two-hour meeting, as provided for in Standing Order 59.01(7), is as follows. The minister or the member of Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may make opening comments not to exceed 10 minutes. For the 50 minutes that follow, members of the Official Opposition and the minister may speak. For the next 20 minutes members of the third party, if any, and the minister may speak. For the next 20 minutes members of any other party represented in the Assembly or any independent members and the minister may speak. For the next 20 minutes private members of the government caucus and the minister may speak. For the time remaining, we will follow the same rotation just outlined to the extent possible; however, the speaking times are reduced to five minutes as set out in Standing Order 59.02(1)(c).

Members wishing to participate must be present during the appropriate portion of the meeting. Members may speak more than once; however, speaking times for the first rotation are limited to 10 minutes at any one time. A minister and a member may combine their time for a total of 20 minutes. For the rotations that follow, with speaking times of up to five minutes, a minister and a member may combine their speaking time for a total of 10 minutes.

Discussion should flow through the chair at all times regardless of whether or not the speaking time is combined. Members are asked to advise the chair at the beginning of their rotation if they wish to combine their time with the minister's time. If members have any questions regarding speaking times or the rotation, please send a note or speak directly with either the chair or the committee clerk about the process.

A total of two hours has been scheduled to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Service Alberta.

Committee members, ministers, and other members who are not committee members may participate; however, only a committee member or an official substitute may introduce an amendment during a committee's review of the estimates.

Ministry officials may be present and at the direction of the minister may address the committee. Ministry officials seated in the gallery, if called upon, have access to a microphone in the gallery area. Ministry officials are reminded to introduce themselves prior to responding to a question or questions. Pages are available to deliver notes or other materials between the gallery and the table. Attendees in the gallery should not approach the table. Members' staff may be present and seated along the committee room wall. Space permitting, opposition caucus staff may sit at the table to assist their members; however, members have priority to sit at the table at all times.

If debate is exhausted prior to two hours, the ministry's estimates are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule, and the committee will adjourn. The scheduled end time for today's meeting is 11 a.m.

Points of order will be dealt with as they arise, and the clock will continue to run.

Any written material provided in response to questions raised during the main estimates should be tabled by the minister in the Assembly for the benefit of all members.

The vote on the estimates and any amendments is deferred until consideration of all ministry estimates has concluded and will occur in Committee of Supply on April 19, 2018.

Amendments must be in writing and approved by Parliamentary Counsel prior to the meeting at which they are to be moved. The original amendment is to be deposited with the committee clerk, and 20 copies of the amendment must be provided at the meeting for committee members and staff.

Prior to inviting the minister to open, I would like to call upon Mrs. Pitt for her introduction.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you. Angela Pitt, MLA, Airdrie.

The Chair: Thank you.

I would now invite the Minister of Service Alberta to begin with her opening remarks. You have 10 minutes.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to present the 2018-19 estimates for the Ministry of Service Alberta. I would like to speak about our ministry's focus this year.

Before I do that, I would like to recognize that my deputy minister's hometown is Humboldt, Saskatchewan, so his parents and family have been feeling this deeply. So I'd like to acknowledge his being here, in particular, today.

Service Alberta connects with Albertans on many different levels and at various stages throughout their lives. If you need to register a vehicle, a marriage, a business, a birth or death, you do it at a registry office which is served by our ministry. We handle land titles and drivers' licences, and we watch out for consumers and protect their hard-earned money when they make some of the most important purchases of their lives.

Our government is focused on the priorities of regular Albertans, like protecting them when they make a purchase. As such, a large part of our ministry's work involves protecting consumers. Last fall we passed a new bill that updated and strengthened consumer protection laws across the province. We're developing rules to ensure consumers have better protections when they take out a loan, when they buy concert tickets, and when they buy cars or have them repaired.

In addition, the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council, known as AMVIC, is transitioning into a public agency, and we are working closely with them to ensure a smooth and successful transition. This move will improve oversight over AMVIC's governance, will better protect the interest of consumers, and will ensure integrity in the automotive industry. As we look ahead to the next fiscal year, I look forward to continuing to build a trusted relationship and a trusted marketplace that will protect consumers while supporting a level playing field for businesses to compete and succeed.

As we look to improve consumer protection across the province, we have also placed a heavy focus on protecting Albertans who are buying condos. Last year we passed new rules for builders and developers, requiring that more information about new condos be provided to owners up front. This year we shift our focus to condo living. We have heard from more than 5,000 Albertans online and in person who gave their input on condo meetings, renting, repairs, and insurance. We will be using this feedback to bring forward new governance rules later this year, and we will continue consulting with Albertans about a dispute resolution tribunal and aim to bring rules covering that topic into effect in the future.

As we continue to look towards 2019 and beyond, we see our world changing rapidly, and it's important that government services evolve to continue meeting the needs of Albertans. As needs evolve, the government needs to make sure our systems and service modernization proceed in the best possible interest of Albertans. We are looking into modernizing some of the services we provide, including our land titles services and our registry services. The Alberta land titles modernization project is currently under way. We're developing a suite of online applications to better serve the needs of Albertans, and we're committed to the integrity of the land titles registry and the data it contains as we look forward to offering more applications and services to Albertans.

But we are modernizing more than just land titles at Service Alberta. In our conversations with Albertans we have heard about the need for expanded and more robust registry services. Because, as I mentioned, registry agents play an important role in delivering a wide range of services to Albertans, our priority is to ensure that regular Albertans can continue to access these services in their communities, and we're exploring ways to modernize the delivery of these services so that they're more affordable and accessible for Albertans. That includes improving and modernizing the delivery of registry services through innovative service delivery methods. We look forward to bringing in new initiatives this year that will help us move towards more modern and innovative service delivery.

9:10

While looking ahead is important, we also need to take stock of our current state. We understand that some Albertans are still unable to access the Internet at a minimum service level. With more and more services moving online, Albertans need access to good-quality broadband connections. Right now service levels vary greatly across the province, and rural Alberta, in particular, can experience great challenges when trying to access a good Internet connection. That's why we are working to help communities address this issue.

We are currently working in partnership with Economic Development and Trade and Indigenous Relations to put together a provincial broadband strategy. We will be engaging with industry, municipal governments, indigenous communities, the small-business community, and academic and not-for-profit organizations to gather information about how better quality Internet service will help rural and indigenous communities promote economic development; create and support good jobs; provide access to education, agriculture, health, and tourism; and improve the lives of Albertans.

While we're talking about connectivity, I also want to update you on the future of SuperNet. SuperNet provides service to our schools, hospitals, libraries, municipalities, indigenous offices, and government offices in more than 400 Alberta communities. Many Alberta municipalities use SuperNet to connect their own cables, radios, and towers to reach their communities and support the need for Internet connectivity. Our current SuperNet contract is expiring in June, and we are in the final stages of awarding a new contract. We know that expectations for access to quality and affordable broadband Internet are growing, especially in rural Alberta, and the new model for SuperNet considers ways to support rural broadband in Alberta within our existing budget.

One area I haven't touched on yet is our commitment to offer a third marker denoting gender on birth certificates, drivers' licences, and identification cards. This was a commitment we made to Albertans in 2016, and we're making great progress in being able to offer a third marker to Albertans. The addition of a third marker will ensure that the people of this province have access to markers that meet their needs. We have taken the time to ensure that a third marker on provincially issued identity documents will align with options provided federally and in other provinces and territories. We are currently developing options to implement this marker and hope to have it available to Albertans later this year.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak about the great milestones Service Alberta has achieved over the last year. We have planned many improvements over the next fiscal year. The estimates we have provided will support us in achieving our goals of providing innovative and modern service to Albertans.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

For the 50 minutes that follow, members of the Official Opposition and the minister may speak. As mentioned, members are asked to advise the chair at the beginning of their rotation if they wish to combine their time with the minister's time, and discussion should flow through the chair at all times regardless of whether or not the speaking time has been combined.

Mr. Cyr, are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Mr. Cyr: If she's willing.

Ms McLean: However you'd like.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Cyr: I'd like to start off this morning by saying thank you to the minister and her staff for being here to address the questions that our constituents expect us to ask when the government seeks to spend their hard-earned tax dollars. I'm hopeful that we can get the answers to some important questions and provide due diligence in the budgetary process.

Just getting started here, I'd like to ask a few general questions about some of the numbers that we see in the budget. Last year we saw \$417 million budgeted for Service Alberta operating expenses. We saw the most recent forecast reflect a larger amount of \$442 million, with a proposed budget of \$469 million for this coming fiscal year. My first question: does the minister have specific plans to restrain unnecessary spending so that she can stay within budget?

Ms McLean: Thank you for the question, Mr. Cyr. We're just flipping to that portion of the estimates.

First, I'd like to speak to the increase. The increase of \$27 million in the 2018-19 estimate from the 2017-18 forecast is a result of \$40 million of increased spending for the enterprise resource planning initiative, \$5.2 million for contractual obligations on long-term contracts, including inflationary adjustments year over year – these contracts provide information technology services for all of government, including data centre operations, software licensing and desktop services, drivers' licences and identification cards, and Internet services across Alberta through SuperNet – a \$1 million adjustment to operations swapped for additional fiscal transactions, expense for postage in 2017-18. The increase is offset by a \$15 million one-time increase in '17-18 for technology and shared services to support other ministries' priorities and a \$4.2 million one-time swap of capital to operating funds for AFRRCS.

To really summarize that, what that means is that initially, when we were planning for the enterprise resource planning initiative, which is ERP, we were uncertain as to whether or not that would be booked as a capital expense or as an operating expense. Working with our tax advisers, it was clear that that would need to be an operating expense, so we had to adjust for that expense. That is a one-time expense that is required, that overall is an investment to save money across government so that we can find additional efficiencies. Additionally, just to provide additional information there, as a result we reduced our capital ask by \$71 million. So while the operating has gone up, we have had the same savings and additional savings found in capital. While you're looking at a particular section of the budget, it's important to take into account the entirety of the budget in order to find things like savings. Unfortunately, the ERP, this one-time expense, is a large expense, but again it's an investment to find overall efficiencies and savings across government ministries.

Much of Service Alberta's budget is service to other ministries. Often we are at the behest of other ministries requesting our services, whether they're IT services or postage. We often charge these things back to other ministries. You'll see in the budget that typically it's a flow through, meaning we get the money back from another ministry.

That being said, we have all been asked to find efficiencies within our budgets. Service Alberta has been no exception to that, which is why you've seen us do things like change our renewal reminder process in order to be able to find efficiencies and savings across government. We've also, as a result of needing to find efficiencies, extended the length of some projects that we had to target to complete a little bit earlier in order to be able to find savings.

The issue with large, sort of across-the-board cuts to a ministry like Service Alberta would mean that other government departments cannot operate in some cases at all in certain areas. When you look at many of our systems, for example the MOVES system – we've talked about that in the past – it's extraordinarily outdated because there's been, essentially, deferred maintenance. Deferred maintenance is a fancy phrase for saying: we didn't spend money so that we could show savings in our line items and show, essentially, a balanced budget. But that deferred maintenance, that occurred back in the early '90s, has caused more than just asbestos in our buildings and crumbling infrastructure. It has also caused things like our software to be extremely old. In many cases a lot of our software is updated only to what you would have found in the 1970s and 1980s because there simply hasn't been a priority on ensuring that spending goes to that kind of thing, for the same reasons that you're expressing.

Mr. Cyr: Sorry, Minister. I don't mean to cut you off, but you actually touched on a topic that I'm curious about, deferred maintenance. Do you know what it's sitting at right now? You said that you have an amount that you're trying to catch up on. What is the deferred maintenance amount that Service Alberta is sitting at right now?

9:20

Ms McLean: In terms of capital?

Mr. Cyr: Of what you're expecting to need to spend in order to bring our systems up to where you feel that our government needs to be at.

Ms McLean: Okay. That's a good question. We don't have that number here. We could do a rough calculation. The problem with giving accurate numbers on these things is that when you go to upgrade these items, often we have to look to third-party service providers, so they would go through an RFP process and give us the bid. We can only give a rough estimate. I am being told it would be tens of millions of dollars.

Mr. Cyr: Tens of millions or tens of billions?

Ms McLean: Tens of millions of dollars. We could get back to you with a very rough estimate for Service Alberta's IT application specifically within our ministry, not within other ministries. Within Service Alberta's ministry, for the IT applications that we're responsible for, we could put together a very rough estimate. Currently we spend \$7 million a year, and we book \$7 million a year towards essentially trying to work towards upgrading these projects on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Cyr: So, Minister, deferred maintenance doesn't sound like it's a huge concern for this ministry at this point.

Ms McLean: It's absolutely a huge concern for every ministry, Mr. Cyr. The issue is that we're doing our very best within our budgets and within the numbers that we have. Every ministry is struggling with these cost savings and the targets, so it's not about just blowing dollars because I'm sure I would hear something different from you should we just bring everything up to today's standards. That is certainly what we would prefer to do, and it would certainly serve Albertans better. However, we are very cognizant of tight fiscal pressures and the income that this province has as a result of not being able to get our product to tidewater.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister.

Can you explain to me, under Revenue on page 135 of the business plan, what interministry consolidations for revenue are? That went from \$1.4 million to \$82 million. That seems to be a large increase.

Ms McLean: You're referring to the business plan?

Mr. Cyr: Yes, please. Sorry; for last year.

Ms McLean: Sorry. Which line were you referring to?

Mr. Cyr: The interministry consolidations.

Ms McLean: Yeah. That's our shared services section. The \$69.5 million is for the following shared services: \$41.2 million for technology services like Microsoft licences and mainframe application hosting; \$28.3 million for business services, which includes \$8.5 million for postage; \$7.5 million for administration services such as mail, printing, forms management; \$10.1 million for vehicle services; and \$2.2 million for financial services.

Mr. Cyr: That seems a lot higher than \$82 million. I apologize.

Ms McLean: Oh, so you weren't looking at the revenue? I thought you were talking about the expense.

Mr. Cyr: I'm looking at the revenue section. What made the big jump in revenue?

Ms McLean: Yeah. That's the \$69.5 million that I just reported.

Mr. Cyr: That's what's budgeted for this year?

Ms McLean: That's right. I just gave you that breakdown.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. That's fine.

Ms McLean: I don't know where you were getting the \$32 million. I'm not seeing that number.

Mr. Cyr: You know what? We'll move on. Thank you.

The Alberta first responder radio communications system, AFRRCS: I didn't see that in last year's budget. Is this something we've moved over from Justice to Service Alberta?

Ms McLean: That is correct. We have moved that over to Service Alberta.

Mr. Cyr: That seems very odd, Minister, that we're moving a clearly first responder type item to our Service Alberta ministry. Was this something that was planned, or was this decision made just in the last year?

Ms McLean: This decision was made, I believe, the year before last, which is why you're seeing it in this budget, because the line item hadn't moved over to Service Alberta yet. The reason that it

was moved into Service Alberta is to allow us to leverage efficiencies and support structures that already exist, being a shared service delivery arm of government.

Mr. Cyr: So are we downloading costs from Justice to Service Alberta because we're making money in this ministry, Minister?

Ms McLean: No. This is about central co-ordination. This is largely a technology-based application. Service Alberta has that expertise, so it makes sense for it to sit over here due to the changes and upgrades that occurred with AFRRCS.

Mr. Cyr: It seems strange, though, that we're moving this away from the ministry that is going to be more or less solely responsible for the use of this system. Or are we adding more groups to this system other than Justice?

Ms McLean: This system is far more than just Justice. It's 54 first responder agencies and municipalities. It includes the city of Edmonton, which is their fire, police, and secondary responders. It includes the Canada Border Services Agency, the city of Grande Prairie, the city of Medicine Hat, RCMP K Division, the city of Lethbridge, the town of High River, Alberta sheriffs. It's not just policing. There are a large number of health providers that take advantage of this as well as the actual municipality services. Part of the logic is that it's not just Justice.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister.

Can the minister please inform us of the total costs, direct and indirect, of the carbon tax that Service Alberta will be bearing in this next fiscal year?

Ms McLean: We'll have to get back to you on that.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. Thank you. Will you be tabling that? How will we be responded to?

Ms McLean: The usual way that we respond to you.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

If we take a look at line 8.3 of the budget, we see that after a budget of just under \$23 million for business services . . .

Ms McLean: Sorry. You're in estimates, or are you in the business plan?

Mr. Cyr: I'm in the budget, please.

Ms McLean: Okay. Estimates.

Mr. Cyr: After under \$23 million for business services systems in the last two years, there's been nearly a 300 per cent increase in the amount budgeted for the coming fiscal year. What is the cause of this substantial increase, and does the ministry anticipate it to be temporary or long-term, or is this a structural operating increase?

9:30

Ms McLean: This is the enterprise resource planning system that we spoke about already, so it is not ongoing.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. That's kind of what I thought it was, but thank you for confirming that.

Again on the capital budget, looking at line 9.4, we can see that after relatively consistent spending on One Information Management and Technology, there has been a nearly 200 per cent increase. Is this the result of the unanticipated capital requirement or planning issues?

Ms McLean: Okay. This reflects the consolidation of IMT services from other government departments into a sector model which will allow the implementation of government-wide common and integrated information management and technology systems needed to support services being delivered to Albertans.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

If you take a look at page 242 of the budget, item 2 is in regard to the specialty licence plates. This has been . . .

Ms McLean: Sorry; I'm just flipping to the same page as you. If I can just take a second to be on the same page: 242, you said?

Mr. Cyr: Yes, Minister.

Ms McLean: Okay.

Mr. Cyr: This has been a great, self-funded program that has allowed Alberta motorists to show their support for good causes, particularly supporting veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Currently, however, the Support Our Troops licence plates are not available for Alberta motorcyclists. Does the ministry have a plan to change this so that more Albertans are able to express their thanks and support for our brave men and women in uniform?

Ms McLean: If I'm recalling correctly the details, we looked into the possibility of doing this, and there is a cost associated with ensuring the design for that size of licence plate because it's a different-sized licence plate entirely. We can't just slap the larger plate onto motorcycles. So at this time due to restraint measures we are unable to move forward with it although it's something that we would like to be able to do in the future.

Mr. Cyr: So you've done a financial analysis of this, and it came out that this was going to be too costly? Is that what I'm hearing from the minister?

Ms McLean: We did an analysis, and at this time, in these estimates, we will not be able to move forward with it, but it's something that we'll certainly keep in mind for the future.

Mr. Cyr: Would you be able to provide that analysis?

Ms McLean: We can check and get back to you.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

On the same page, under item 5, we find services to ministries, which mentions administrative services, technology services, contact centres, and fleet administration. Of the \$51 million that's allocated here, could you detail how much goes towards each one of these services?

Ms McLean: Sorry. You said on the same page, 242?

Mr. Cyr: Yes, 242.

Ms McLean: And you're referring to the \$50,935,000?

Mr. Cyr: Yes, yes I am.

Ms McLean: Okay. Sorry. You said \$51 million.

Mr. Cyr: It was approximately.

Ms McLean: Okay.

Mr. Cyr: I apologize for not being more specific.

Ms McLean: This line item: it varies over the year how much is spent in each line item, so we won't actually know how much goes to each one until the end of the year. It's based on the need from other ministries, so as they need these services, we provide them. So yeah, unfortunately.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. Do you have the breakdown from the prior year, then, that you could provide to us?

Ms McLean: We can get back to you with that.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

Could you please further break down the costs of the fleet administration to those for ministers and deputy ministers?

Ms McLean: So you're looking for estimates specific to the fleet vehicles?

Mr. Cyr: Yeah, the cost of the fleet administration.

Ms McLean: Okay. I think we have separate numbers for that. I'm just checking.

Mr. Cyr: This is specific to the ministers and deputy ministers, Minister.

Ms McLean: I guess we don't have that in the binder either. Yeah. We'll have to get back to you. You want last year's?

Mr. Cyr: Please, Minister. Thank you. On that same related topic, can we also get what the costs of maintenance are on those same vehicles?

Ms McLean: We will endeavour to get you as much info as we can from last year.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

Further down on page 242 of the budget there is a financial transaction in the amount of \$8.5 million for crossgovernment mail services. Given that in the past two years the government has needed supplementary funding for mail services, is there a plan to ensure accurate budgeting on mail services this year and going forward?

Ms McLean: Again, this one is difficult for us to predict. We make a prediction, but, again, we're subject to the demands of other ministries.

Mr. Cyr: Okay.

Minister, we had stopped mailing out registration of vehicles for the potential of saving on mail. It doesn't seem like we're saving any costs there. Can you show me where or how much we've saved by not mailing out registration?

Ms McLean: Since we switched to paperless renewal reminders in April 2016 – sorry; I'm just confirming. The goal was to save taxpayers \$3 million annually. We're near that target. However, in order to help seniors with this transition, Albertans aged 70 years and older continue to receive the renewal reminders. We are phasing that out year by year so that folks won't age into it. The folks that were 70 years of age and older as of April 2016 will continue to receive that for the duration of their driving life in Alberta. We will hit the target of \$3 million annually when all of those are phased out. We're somewhere in the ballpark of \$3 million, but we'll have to get you the exact number. It's just under \$3 million, though, because the large proportion of Alberta drivers

are not in that age 70-and-older category. We also continue to send them out to those who hold disabled parking placards.

Mr. Cyr: Minister, can you tell me what postage was for the last three years?

Ms McLean: I'm sorry. What?

Mr. Cyr: Can you tell me what postage was for the last three years?

Ms McLean: I'm just flipping through the binder. Do you happen to know which line item you're referring to in the estimates?

Mr. Cyr: I'm not sure where postage is here – I'm sorry – which is why I'm asking, Minister.

Ms McLean: The estimates for this year have it at \$8.5 million for postage.

Mr. Cyr: And what were the actuals for the last three?

Ms McLean: We don't bring that with us because these are the estimates for this year.

Mr. Cyr: So we don't know if we're better or worse?

Ms McLean: We don't bring that breakdown because these are the estimates for this year.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. Thank you, Minister.

Ms McLean: And the year-end financials aren't complete yet either, which is part of the reason that we don't bring that.

Mr. Cyr: I agree with you. I just thought if you had it, that would be great. If you don't, that's fine.

Ms McLean: Okay.

9:40

Mr. Cyr: On page 245 of the budget we see that the ministry revenues are expected to be down nearly \$8 million from the most recent forecast from the last fiscal year. This mostly appears to be accounted for under other revenue. Can the ministry explain the primary causes for this expected revenue decrease?

Ms McLean: I'm sorry; I'm having trouble hearing you with all the page flipping here. You're speaking quite low. I'm sorry, Mr. Cyr. These don't amplify.

Mr. Cyr: On page 245 of the budget we see that the ministry revenues are expected to be down nearly \$8 million from the most recent forecast from the last fiscal year. This mostly appears to be accounted for under other revenue. Can the ministry explain the primary causes for this expected revenue decrease?

Is my volume good enough now?

Ms McLean: It was about the same, but it appears to me that other people were able to hear you, so I'm relying on them.

Okay. I'm going to ask our financial officer to answer that question for you.

Mr. Dancause: Sure. The majority of that other revenue is services collected from other government departments. We're anticipating a bit less of that, especially with the consolidation of IT, as an example. We've taken on IT for four departments. We won't be charging them back, so it doesn't exist as revenue on our side.

The Chair: I'd just like to remind ministry officials to introduce yourself prior to speaking.

Mr. Dancause: Sorry. Darrell Dancause.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you.

Moving on to the business plan, on page 129, under strategic context, it states that part of Service Alberta's role is to "foster the effective and efficient delivery of government programs, services and information." Given the particularly strained financial position that this government finds itself in, can the ministry point to specific efficiencies of significant magnitude that Service Alberta has played a role in finding?

Ms McLean: Absolutely. One of the best examples that I can think of for you is our investment in the enterprise resource planning initiative. Once that is under way, we anticipate millions of dollars of crossgovernment savings. I'll see if my deputy minister wants to supplement.

Okay. As well, the consolidation of IMT data centres, largely, is our first portion of that plan. We have already realized \$1 million of savings due to consolidation of those data centres. We continue to consolidate and modernize our corporate services in order to find cost savings and efficiencies. Overall, we're changing how we deliver corporate services in the government of Alberta to provide better services. This incorporates changing organizational structures like consolidating the data centres. We are consolidating and modernizing corporate services such as our communication, our IT, our finance, and human resources so that they're more effective and deliver high levels of services.

We also look at opportunities to contract in services that we need where efficiencies can be achieved. This helps us take advantage of savings from economies of scale. It's that sort of bulk-buy concept, a Costco concept, I guess, when you talk about IT services. So the more that one department is doing that purchasing, the more savings that can be achieved over time.

We anticipate that further savings will be realized as these changes take hold, and that's once we've fully implemented the delivery changes and also have our new enterprise resource planning system in place, which I mentioned. The service modernization is closely tied to the implementation of the new enterprise resource planning system, and that's expected to be implemented in phases over a three-year period, starting in the spring.

It's too early to identify other savings that we hope to realize, but once this work is completed, we expect savings to be in the tens of millions of dollars. This is an overall change that we've started since about 2015-2016 in order to be more efficient and realize savings. In the prior model services were largely desegregated and purchased by individual departments or taken care of by individual departments, so we weren't able to realize cost savings crossgovernment. We weren't operating as one government in that respect. This is a change that we think is badly needed and shows some of the prior lack of attention to these types of areas in the past.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister.

Given that the government is on track to put Albertans at almost a hundred billion in debt, will the ministry place additional focus on finding efficiencies in government, on finding meaningful ways to fulfill the stated role of finding some sort of an ability to be able to reduce that? Now, I hear your ERP, and you're talking tens of millions. We're talking billions and billions. It seems unlikely, from what you're telling me, that ERP is the magic bullet to solve all our

problems. I guess my question is: are there other things that you're looking at doing, other than ERP, to bring down this significant amount of deficit that we're sitting at right now?

Ms McLean: Mr. Cyr, I would suggest that if you're looking for one magic bullet in government, you will not find it. The answer to these problems cannot simply be to take a one-brush approach across government, and it cannot be to simply say: find these savings. Unfortunately, if we do things like stop providing IT services, if we decide to no longer spend money on postage, overall we will end up in a situation where government ends up costing Albertans a lot more. It's sort of that old adage: you have to sometimes spend money to make money.

The ERP is an example of that. It's an investment in the future and in cost savings. Many drops in a bucket fill a bucket, so our tens of millions of dollars in savings that we anticipate from the ERP is doing our part. Every year we're asked to find cost savings, and we do that, and we find them within our budget. We project back to TBF where we're able to find those savings, and we inform them of the implications of certain amounts of savings that we could potentially realize.

When asked to find savings, it impacts every single item in the line and all the support that we provide to Albertans. For example, if we cut 4 per cent to registry services, Albertans simply would not have a number of registry services or would be paying out of pocket more for things like their licence plate. They would be paying out of pocket more to register their vehicle. Somebody has to cover that cost, ultimately, because these are essential services to Albertans.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

I'd like to move on to something that I am very passionate about here, freedom of information. Again, I'd like to ask some questions on page 131 of the business plan. Outcome 2 talks about making sure that the government is transparent and secure. Setting aside the FOIP aspect of this just for a minute, does the ministry believe that the government is doing enough to facilitate and ensure public access to information by default? I can see targets that are being set for data sets and publications available online. Are these targets ambitious enough, Minister? Do we feel we can do better? That is what I'm asking.

9:50

Ms McLean: Well, you know, I take the perspective that there's always room to do better. As things evolve, as government evolves, as information and the way that we can provide and display information to individuals evolves, we too need to evolve. Once upon a time you couldn't provide data sets on the Internet, so obviously we had to evolve to be able to provide things more efficiently and effectively. We absolutely are constantly making efforts to be able to provide new and innovative ways of accessing information for the public. I would suggest that we put in targets that are realistic and that also make steps towards improvement. The point in a business plan, when you set targets, is not to set unrealistic targets that you couldn't meet in a short period of time.

Certainly, if Service Alberta's budget were increased dramatically, I'm sure we could have additional FTEs and meet other goals of innovation that, you know, potentially could be quite exciting, but we are not in that fiscal reality, Mr. Cyr.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. Thank you.

Now, moving directly towards FOIP, the ministry has stated a target for this year of having more than 95 per cent of FOIP requests be completed in 60 days or less. Given that currently it is only sitting at 78 per cent of the requests meeting this standard, how does

the government intend to achieve this significant improvement over the next year?

Ms McLean: That last actual is reported for '16-17, and that is, unfortunately, because we are a year behind in crunching that data, essentially, and being able to report it. When I came into office, we were multiple years behind, so we've been playing catch-up. We are now only one year behind, which has been a vast improvement from what we picked up when we took government. We're happy to be able to report for '16-17 but, unfortunately, not able to report the most up-to-date numbers.

We do have the target of 95 per cent, so I'm assuming you're referring to performance measure 2(a) and not 2(b) given that you talked about 78 per cent. Is that correct, Mr. Cyr?

Mr. Cyr: That is correct. Thank you, Minister.

Ms McLean: I can provide you more information if you'd like.

Mr. Cyr: Well, I think you're going to see that my next question is going to be where you're probably going to come up with your next answer.

On the matter of access to information and government transparency, when it comes to FOIPs, has the ministry recently looked at the systems employed by other jurisdictions such as the federal access to information program in order to try and improve our own processes and increase accessibility for Albertans?

Ms McLean: We constantly work crossjurisdictionally with other departments across Canada, and we also look internationally for best practices. We are currently working on the replacement of our FOIP net system, which is our system for tracking and managing FOIP requests, which, I assume, is what you're looking to hear about given that you're talking about the government of Canada's online tracking system.

This is ongoing, and it's planned for implementation in early 2019. It will assist with managing FOIP requests and performance tracking. We have crossgovernment FOIP working groups that are working on refining processes, and in the meantime we are making more information readily available in real time through the open government portal, which is an area where Alberta is actually the lead in this, so other jurisdictions are looking to us with respect to how we operate in that space.

Mr. Cyr: It's good to hear that we are looking at improving our system, Minister. Thank you for that.

Moving on to market regulations, Service Alberta progressively expands the level and scope of our market regulations. Does the ministry have a process to review its existing areas of regulations in order to find unnecessary red tape and reduce barriers for Alberta businesses?

Ms McLean: In our consumer programs division – and I'm just turning to that – we are constantly focused on making life better for consumers and helping businesses succeed. This is an area where you need to ensure that you strike a balance. If it's the Wild West, as it were, then you create an opportunity for scammers and those who are interested in committing criminal activity to take advantage of Albertans, in particular vulnerable Albertans. Whenever we bring in changes to our consumer protection laws, we consult heavily with businesses as well as consumers and take every opportunity to amend that legislation to make things easier for business as well while we have the opportunity to open it up. We heard from businesses that they were tired, really, of trying to compete with those who were operating in a grey space, that space

of scamming individuals, and that they want us to essentially play a role in ensuring that there's increased consumer confidence. We were happy to do that with the changes that we made to the legislation, to what was the Fair Trading Act and is now the Consumer Protection Act.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. Minister, you did put a lot – and I wholeheartedly agree that I don't want a Wild West happening out there, where people are being cheated. Do you have a process in place to review existing regulations to find if there's red tape or not?

Ms McLean: We constantly review existing regulations. Most of the regulations have expiry dates, so at the point that those expiry dates are coming up, our government reviews all of those regulations. We typically engage in a consultation, and we ask the stakeholders what it is that they're looking for.

Mr. Cyr: So we only review regulation that has a sunset clause?

Ms McLean: No. Sometimes of our own volition or because stakeholders have requested a review, we engage in that review. It's a mixture of things. But I'm just letting you know that there's a general process in place by which regulations come up for review.

Mr. Cyr: Is that publicly available, that process, or is that something that's internal?

Ms McLean: It's publicly available, the expiry dates.

Mr. Cyr: Well, the expiry dates, the sunset clauses: you can correct me, but do all regulations have sunset clauses?

Ms McLean: Not all of them, no.

Mr. Cyr: So there are some regulations that we're not ever planning on reviewing?

Ms McLean: That's not what I said.

Mr. Cyr: Okay. So how do we identify the ones that do not have sunset clauses? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, Minister.

Ms McLean: Okay.

Mr. Cyr: The ones that do not have sunset clauses: how do we identify them to see if they're problematic? I heard that you said: if stakeholders come forward, that is one route. Is there any other way that we can identify regulations that could be problematic and we're just not aware of it?

Ms McLean: Absolutely. We have a call centre. Individuals can call us. People write in to us. People e-mail us, average Albertans. MLAs certainly play a role in this respect. That's part of the MLA's role as well, to speak for their constituents. When you take into account all of the MLAs in the province, we all contain both businesses and consumers in our constituencies, so we all hear from them. I hear from your offices, certainly. There's a whole patchwork of ways that we hear from Albertans and hear from the province. As that information comes in, we have a tracking system across government that tracks the connections that are made. We also plan internal reviews of regulations, and we track how often we hear from individuals on them.

10:00

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Minister.

On page 131 of the business plan key strategy 1.3 refers to the efforts to strengthen protections within Alberta's condominium industry. In the development of the recent and forthcoming condo regulations Alberta condo owners have expressed concerns that government consultations do not effectively engage regular condo owners and place their entire focus on specific stakeholder groups. Has the ministry heard these concerns, and does it have a plan to ensure that everyday Albertan condo owners are more engaged in consultation processes moving forward?

Ms McLean: Now, I'm not sure why you would be hearing that, frankly, because this is one of the largest and most fulsome consultations that Service Alberta has historically engaged in. In the summer and fall of 2017 we conducted numerous consultations through stakeholder meetings, open houses, and online surveys. Consultations on regulations covering condominium governance and dispute resolution took place over that time period of summer and fall of 2017. This included open houses in July and August. We supplemented this by an online survey that ran from October 12 until November 10. About 1,100 people attended the open houses, and more than 5,400 people participated in the online survey. Additionally, we held meetings in January and February 2018 with key stakeholders, comprised of owners, owners' groups, lawyers, developers, the Real Estate Council of Alberta, condominium managers, insurance representatives, real estate agents, and, you know, a variety of other stakeholders, to provide input on the topics and discussions. We have provided a multitude of opportunities. Additionally, every time someone writes in to Service Alberta with suggestions or recommendations with respect to the regulations around the Condominium Property Act, we add them to an e-mail mailing list.

The Chair: Thank you. The time for this portion has expired.

I would now like to invite Mr. Westhead to introduce himself for the record.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you very much. Good morning, everybody. Cameron Westhead, MLA for Banff-Cochrane. I'm here substituting for MLA Barb Miller.

The Chair: Thank you.

For the next 20 minutes I would like to invite Mr. Clark from the third-party opposition as well as the minister to speak. Mr. Clark, are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Mr. Clark: I would like very much to combine my time with the minister if I may, if that's all right with you, Madam Minister.

Ms McLean: Whatever you like.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: And if you would also like to fully introduce yourself for the record.

Mr. Clark: Yes. Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow.

The Chair: Thank you. Go ahead.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Minister. It's great to be here, and thanks to you and to your staff for being here. I'll dive right in.

Key strategy 1.3, strengthening protections within the condominium industry: I'm curious what the status of that work is. A lot of my questions are going to revolve around I guess I'd call it the "How do we know?" kinds of questions, some of the data-type questions.

Do you have data on things like how many condo boards would not be considered to be governed well, do not have adequate reserve funds or adequate insurance, those sorts of things? Do we have that kind of data available to us?

Ms McLean: I'm just going to confer.

Okay. Thank you for allowing me to confer with our subject experts. In this particular area it's important to remember that these are self-governing bodies. The bylaws for each individual condominium can be different. We provide overall guidance with respect to bylaws like model bylaws, for example, that can be adopted or, if they don't have their own bylaws, ones that are default government. The vast, vast majority of condominium corporations have their own bylaws and are self-governed. So we take the approach that where there is a flag that's raised, we would then look into it.

For example, if someone wrote in to us with concerns about the reserve fund not being compliant, then we would have our department officials work with them to look into the matter and essentially conduct an investigation, but it is not our legislative role to police it, as it were, or to require reporting from these self-governing bodies to Service Alberta, so we don't collect that information.

Mr. Clark: From the perspective of consumer protection, which is a welcome shift and, I know, a focus of yours as minister and your ministry, and I think that's a very important one. I guess I see it in a similar frame. It's an area I'll admit I'm not an expert in, so I can't sort of suggest very specifically what, perhaps, legislative changes would maybe be required but even just increasing consumers' potential awareness of the risks specifically related to condos to maybe head off some of the challenges. You know, these are stories that we as MLAs deal with on a fairly regular basis, especially in the cities, concerns from residents. Now that we're moving into cannabis legalization, it's already caused some challenges for some of the constituents in Calgary-Elbow. Those are the things, I suspect, that are going to become even more acute issues.

Ms McLean: As we're developing the regulations for the Condominium Property Act, many of these matters and issues that have come forward over the years are part of the considerations in the development of those regulations.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

Ms McLean: We've heard a number of consumer protection issues from Albertans, so with our first set of regulations that came in, that was largely focused on the developer and the purchasing portion of condo life. We've provided the tools for us to conduct investigations and audits, which was something that we did not have the ability to do before. That came in as a result of these regulatory changes.

The next phase that we're working on is with respect to condo governance, and a number of consumer issues around transparency have been flagged, et cetera, so we're currently developing those regulations with very much that consumer protection lens. Also, we engage in education initiatives across Service Alberta, so we have tipsheets for condo owners. We have a team that also engages with the public, so if they have questions. We also go to a number of trade fairs and have representatives with booths, and they take questions around all kinds of consumer issues, including condominiums.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much.

Speaking of consumer protection, performance measure 1(a), number of new or expanded consumer protection initiatives: those are, I guess, what I'd consider an input measure. We're doing a certain number of things, but you don't seem to be measuring the outcomes or outputs of that. Have you got any measures that would – and I would actually ask a similar question around the in-person and the web educational initiatives, which you've just referred to. Don't let me suggest for one second that they're not effective. I'm not suggesting they aren't. But I'd like to know how effective. To me, it would be – I don't know – a reduced number of cyber scams or a reduced number of the senior CRA tax scams, whatever it happens to be, or paradoxically maybe even an increased number of reports of those things because people maybe don't know that they should be reporting these things, that kind of thing. Do you have outcome measures that would go along with this, and if not, would you consider baking some into next year's budget?

10:10

Ms McLean: In some ways I feel like you've answered your own question, Mr. Clark. The reason is that you've outlined the paradox, the exact issue that exists. This is the kind of area where the more you educate people on these issues, the more we hear from them. We, unfortunately, cannot control many of the scam artists and don't have the ability to – we don't even have a tool box that is available to us. Many of these scams, the CRA scam, for example, that you're talking about, are being conducted by overseas individuals. The Internet scams that you referred to: those are being done by overseas individuals.

The federal government also has a role to play in terms of consumer protection. They have an arm that deals with fraud. We do our part with respect to Albertans. Insofar as businesses are operating in Alberta, we have those tools to be able to control that business activity.

We have a number of methods in place that can help individuals when they've been the victim of a scam. Our investigative unit will attempt to track these down and find remedies for those individuals.

We do a lot of education pieces, and we go around to trade shows and seniors' homes, for example, and provide education to these folks.

I see success in complaints coming forward, but it also makes it difficult to be able to track that in terms of . . .

Mr. Clark: I appreciate that. We can talk about this for an hour.

Ms McLean: Probably.

Mr. Clark: It's an important area.

But, again, as much as it is challenging – and the data may be upside down in terms of actual success. There may actually be more reports. It probably is. I know, from a business plan perspective, that that could cause the opposition to wag a finger and say: "How dare you? It looks like reports are going up." But I think you could easily explain that.

We're in limited time here. I apologize. If you don't mind, I'll just move on to my next question.

Ms McLean: Yeah.

Mr. Clark: Page 131 of the business plan, outcome 2: "Government is transparent and information is secure." I'm going to focus on that "information is secure" part here for the next few questions. Where are we with tamper-resistant documents, health care cards, birth certificates? My health care card is hanging on by a thread, and that may be, I acknowledge, the Ministry of Health, but I'm just curious if your ministry has done any work with Health

or other areas to work on really important things like health care cards.

Ms McLean: When it comes to the validity of identification, we work across the country with partners to ensure that documentation cannot be used fraudulently. I had the opportunity to go to our security unit, where they show us how our drivers' licences and ID cards, for example, have the highest security measures available and how we are leaders in the country with respect to our identification validity.

So where there are attempts with respect to fraudulent activity of our documents, we monitor this very closely. We have very interesting tools available in our special investigative unit, that engages in things like facial recognition and works crossgovernment, so with other jurisdictions like B.C., for example, to flag fraudulent use of identification. We take that very seriously.

It's not always just about the actual physical document; it's also about tracking its use. We engage in that very diligently and have a very high success rate of ensuring that our documents continue to be – and being able to catch people when they do use those documents in a fraudulent way.

Mr. Clark: Thank you. I apologize. I'm just going to move on to a couple more questions here.

FOIP. Last year the FOIP commissioner found significant issues with Justice and Solicitor General's delayed responses to access requests and issues with cabinet and PAB's delayed responses. What processes has your ministry initiated across other ministries to address the FOIP commissioner's recommendations? Where are we on that work, and what work remains to be done?

Ms McLean: We are taking a number of steps. First of all – and we did this before the last estimates – in Justice we increased the number of FOIP officers to deal with the large number of requests that were coming in, and Exec Council also had two staff seconded from other departments to deal with the backup there. We are also streamlining the FOIP process. We launched an online system to make it easier to file FOIP requests and are bringing departments together to reduce processing times. We're also actively disclosing more information. Each week we're feeding the open government portal with new data that Albertans would not have had access to previously without filing a FOIP request so that when Albertans want information, they don't necessarily have to put in a FOIP request. That deals with efficiency on our end.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Thank you.

Back to the security question, then. Disaster recovery plans, hacking: I guess I'll just ask about hacking. Has Service Alberta ever paid bitcoin or any other cryptocurrency as a result of a hack?

Ms McLean: I don't believe we have. No, we have not.

Mr. Clark: Does Service Alberta own any cryptocurrency, bitcoin, or anything else just in case?

Ms McLean: No. Are you suggesting that we invest in bitcoin?

Mr. Clark: I thought it was a good question.

I'm just curious. Has Service Alberta done any work, even preliminary work, to investigate the potential that blockchain offers in terms of managing and authenticating financial and other transactions, records, approvals, that sort of stuff? Are we anywhere down the road on blockchain?

Ms McLean: I'm going to ask my ADM, Mark Brisson, to respond.

Mr. Brisson: Mark Brisson, Service Alberta, assistant deputy minister of service modernization. We've done some strategic planning and some research into blockchain and some of the benefits and some of the areas where it's not a fully proven methodology in some of the processes that we put forward in the government of Alberta. As with all of the leading practices around digital transformation, we're looking at blockchain. We're looking at artificial intelligence opportunities as well as the Internet of things. We have many opportunities out there. It's part of our ongoing strategic planning and business planning processes.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. I appreciate that answer.

The land titles spatial information system, or SPIN: that was the system that had the outage this year. Is that right?

Ms McLean: Yes, there was. It went down for over a 48-hour period.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. That was not ideal. I guess IT systems are complex. I acknowledge that. I know these outages, obviously, are unplanned. I'll ask about that in a moment. What I'm curious about, though: are there any plans at all to make SPIN 2 available 24/7 instead of just on set hours?

Ms McLean: Yes. We're working with the Alberta Real Estate Association to expand access, particularly in off hours, on weekends. Essentially, we expect that to be available very soon. The full 24/7 access won't be realized until the modernization project is fully delivered in spring 2019. We're working to expand the SPIN 2 access on weekends right now to be available earlier than that, possibly an additional nine hours of availability on Saturday and Sunday.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much.

Now to the Auditor General's report of October 2017. There's an outstanding recommendation that as far as I know is not even ready yet for follow-up audits. "IT disaster recovery program: improve recovery of critical information technology applications." It was a recommendation made originally in October 2014 on page 45 of that report. I guess I'm curious if there's a connection, then, between SPIN being down for the period of time it was and the lack of action on this Auditor General's recommendation.

10:20

Ms McLean: No. The SPIN going down was essentially human error. My understanding is that we attempted to push an update at the time that SPIN does its backup. That's a fair description of that?

Mr. Brisson: Excellent.

Ms McLean: Okay. Thank you.

So pushing the update at the time that it did the backup caused it to – I don't know – freak out.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. No, I understand that.

Dr. Starke: That's a technical term.

Ms McLean: There you go.

Mr. Clark: My technology background is only slightly better than that.

But it does feel like that identifies a single point of failure potentially. In any update you should have a complete ability to roll over something as critical as SPIN, and I recognize that. You know, it seems that perhaps there may be some connection between this

recommendation and that. I'm sure that there's a lot of work going on to learn lessons as a result of what happened there.

I just want to move on to SuperNet and the RFP, that I understand continues to wind its way through the process. Do you have any update on the RFP for SuperNet, where that stands, and on when we can perhaps hear an outcome?

Ms McLean: Almost done. Very soon.

Mr. Clark: In the fullness of time?

Ms McLean: No. Very soon. That's totally different than the fullness of time.

Mr. Clark: Good. I'm going to say on the record that that's two ministers now that have identified the difference between the fullness of time, being quite a way in the future, and very soon.

Ms McLean: Oh, I'm glad. Yeah. Fullness of time means that it could be any time.

Mr. Clark: The Minister of Advanced Education is going to be thrilled to hear that.

Ms McLean: Any time. Fullness of time is any time.

Mr. Clark: Good.

Just in my last minute here I want to talk about open data. I'm a huge advocate of it. I don't want to spend too much time praising the government, but I think that you've done quite a good job on open data, and I think your department deserves some credit for that. I do think you are, in fact, a leader in the country. The fact that all these budget documents are available as Excel spreadsheets makes data nerds like myself incredibly happy.

Ms McLean: Glad we could make your job easier.

Mr. Clark: I don't know. That may be Treasury Board. I don't know if that's something you have something to do with as well, but it's noteworthy, and you deserve thanks.

Having said that, if we look at performance measure 2(c) in your business plan, the number available online, you're increasing that on a set amount. Are you working with ABCs? You know, those are significant numbers of open data sets, but what percentage? I mean, how far along are we in terms of what's left to do? What percentage does this data represent?

Ms McLean: I'm going to ask Mark Brisson to speak to that.

Mr. Clark: Thank you.

Mr. Brisson: I guess the way I'd answer that is that we're constantly looking for opportunities in how we can place more of our data online. As we are moving across government on improving an information-sharing framework, we're able to kind of . . .

The Chair: I hesitate to interrupt; however, the time has expired for this part of the rotation.

I would now like to invite Dr. Starke and the minister to speak for the next 20 minutes. Dr. Starke, are you wanting to combine your time with the minister's?

Dr. Starke: Yes, please.

The Chair: Go ahead, please.

Dr. Starke: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, for being here today. Just a couple of brief comments to Deputy

Minister Morhart. My condolences to your community. I'm very familiar with Humboldt, having travelled there on a number of occasions. I know the veterinarians Dr. Sawatzky and Dr. Althouse and Dr. Poulsen very well, and I have even gone up to your Oktoberfest to polka with the Little German Band. It's certainly been something that has really struck us.

Minister, thanks for your comments with regard to rural connectivity. I'm really glad that that's something that is on your radar screen, clearly with regard to the renewal of the SuperNet contract. I guess my question is: Minister, are you familiar with this document, the Rural Economic Development Action Plan?

Ms McLean: Our department, I believe, has seen that and contributed.

Dr. Starke: Okay. Great. The reason I raise it is because you mentioned that you're going to embark on, you know, sort of a consultation process with regard to let's call it rural Internet enhancement. I'm going to suggest to by all means go ahead and do that, but a lot of that work has been done. A lot of that work was done in 2014 as part of this process. At virtually every engagement session – and there were a number of them around the province – rural Albertans identified Internet access as being a concern. The phrase we heard again and again was: Alberta's is the best in the country, and it's nowhere near good enough.

Ms McLean: Yeah.

Dr. Starke: That's a place to build from. I'd really recommend strongly that you discuss it with people in the agriculture department that would still be familiar with this report. Specifically, I'm going to reference page 14, where under the actions of strategy 4.2 it talks about dealing specifically with Service Alberta on the renegotiation of the SuperNet contract.

Ms McLean: If I can assist, we contributed to that. You may have misheard. I did not say that we were engaging on a consultation on this.

Dr. Starke: Oh, okay. I guess, you know, if you're not already familiar with it, the O-Net that they've got in Olds?

Ms McLean: We are very familiar with that.

Dr. Starke: Good. I would think that it's a model as far as rural broadband.

On the topic of rural broadband, rural Albertans, you've correctly identified that access to the Internet is really variable, really spotty. I guess that one of the concerns that I get in my office quite often is about Internet service providers that charge extremely high overage fees when data limits are exceeded. I'm just wondering, first of all: is Service Alberta tracking complaints on that? Is it something that you hear about as well? Secondly, is there any action being planned on some of that? I think it's an area of consumer protection that really hasn't been dealt with yet, but it's becoming more and more of an issue.

Ms McLean: Yeah. There are a number of things that feed into this. First of all, questions about what we hear: absolutely, we hear this kind of thing from Albertans all the time. We hear this from their representatives as well at RMA and AUMA, so this is not news to us by any means. That being said, we work with ISPs and communities in order to try and get more connectivity and service to them that is affordable. Much of the reason that we've heard from ISPs as to why these overages are expensive and why

overall service is more expensive in rural communities is due to the low population. They don't have the same market population that drives the cost down in larger population centres. We agree that these costs are unreasonable and do not match with the expectations that modern folks have today regardless of where they live.

Part of the problem is who is regulating that ISP. For a lot of them, it's regulated by the CRTC, so the CRTC has a major role to play. They recently came out and set standards for connectivity, but we have yet to see the federal government in a meaningful way back that up with appropriate investment.

Dr. Starke: Right. Well, in rural Alberta I'm sure that you've heard this phrase used as well, "the digital divide." It is an issue. Especially Service Alberta and not just Service Alberta but government and not just government but businesses have moved towards a situation where if you're not on the Internet, if you don't have solid Internet access, really you become – it's maybe an overused term – a second-class citizen. It's certainly a concern. In some cases, sparsity of population notwithstanding, that's something that's not going to change in a real big way. Certainly, these ISPs have got to recognize that.

My second area that I wanted to talk about a little bit is on page 133 of the business plan, dealing with the MyAlberta digital e-services and the MyAlberta digital identity account. Now, I dug out last year's business plan and looked at the target numbers going forward, and I compared them to this year. I noticed that the target numbers have been significantly downgraded in both 4(c) and 4(e). Last year your target, for example, for 2018-19 under 4(c) was 300,000 Albertans registered with MyAlberta digital identity accounts. That's down to 100,000. Last year for 2019-20 it was 500,000. Now that's down to 250,000. For the number of transactions completed through MyAlberta – I guess the two are related, certainly – the target for 2018-19 this year is 680,000. Well, last year that number was 1.3 million. The number for '19-20 this year is 750,000. Last year that number was 1.5 million. Why have the numbers been reduced so dramatically?

10:30

Ms McLean: I'll ask my ADM Mark Brisson to contribute.

Mr. Brisson: Mark Brisson, Service Alberta. Over the last year we've been looking at replatforming and establishing some of our technologies on digital ID. For the most part, we have a digital ID product. We've been actually spending the majority of our time on a verify service so that we could verify the service online. As we are moving forward with that technology upgrade, we are working with each of the ministries at the same time to look at opportunities on how a digital ID can help leverage their services into a digital age, and that's an ongoing process. We have discussions ongoing with Health, with some of the social services ministries as well as into the environment and resources ministries to see where they already have a digital presence with Albertans. How can we bring that into having kind of a one-enterprise view of that? We're in ongoing discussions.

Over the last year, at the same time, we've been working on how digital ID can be implemented in part of our disaster recovery services or if we have any evacuations or emergency services that are needed. We spent the majority of our time I wouldn't call it drumming up work but actually working with the ministries to say what makes sense, where we can have the right investments on these digital transformations.

Ms McLean: So you're saying that the feedback that we've received from them indicated that there would be lower uptake than we had originally anticipated?

Mr. Brisson: Yeah. We had anticipated that we would be moving a lot quicker with a lot of the ministries. As a result of anywhere from budget to resources or just the fact of when is the right time to move these together online in an integrated way, once we have the verify process fully implemented across government, I think we'll be able to increase those uptake numbers.

Dr. Starke: Okay. So to borrow a horse-racing analogy, we were in the gate, we got out of the gate, we stumbled a little or we were a little slower getting out of the gate – I shouldn't say stumbled – but we're still in the race, and we're going to pass everyone on the backstretch and still reach our goals.

Ms McLean: Maybe some of the gates didn't open. One of the horses is, like, out almost to the finish line, and then another horse is, like, not out of the gate yet.

Dr. Starke: I've seen that. It's not good.

Ms McLean: And the coach is, like: come on.

Dr. Starke: Okay. That's fair enough.

I want to move on to another sort of target or strategic outcome, and that's a performance measure on the middle of page 132. Now, Minister, I think I heard you say a little while ago that you always want to do better and that that's one of your goals and that, you know, with whatever level you've achieved, you want to see improvement. So I guess I'm puzzled by performance measure 3(b), the percentage of internal clients that are satisfied with services received from Service Alberta. Now, the actual in '16-17 was 83 per cent. That in my math is 5 out of 6 and is pretty good. But I notice that the targets for the next three years are a flat line at 80 per cent, which, in fact, has already been achieved. You're already there. I guess I'm just wondering why the goals are I'm going to use the word "tepid."

Ms McLean: You know, obviously, we take pride in the work that we do to support client ministries, and we continually look for ways to improve service delivery. As you've noted, one of the ways that we do this is to gauge the performance through client satisfaction. The results for this measure were historically in the mid to high 70s. However, in 2016-17 the department worked to refine the way that clients were identified to more accurately reflect the client base of some of the services, marking an instant, one, where the results were over 80 per cent. As we move forward, we'll continue to monitor the trend of this measure and make appropriate adjustments to the target.

Dr. Starke: Okay. Great. Thanks. I mean, I think that's appropriate, and I certainly agree with the statement you made about always trying. You know, continuous quality improvement I think is something that we should all be striving for.

Again looking back at last year's strategic plan and comparing, you know, relatively marginal changes from last year to this year, one thing that really stuck out to me is that last year one of the identified risks to achieving outcomes was succession planning. I won't read the whole succession planning paragraph, but it was on page 131 of last year's business plan. I looked for that same thing, succession planning, because it talked a lot about baby boomers going into retirement and job creation through economic diversification and matching skill sets. I said: gee, this is all really appropriate stuff, and it's exactly the kind of risks that very much are strategic risks. In 2018 this is nowhere to be seen. I'm just

wondering: has that risk been mitigated, has it been eliminated, is it just an oversight, or why are we not finding succession planning anymore as a strategic risk?

Ms McLean: So you're saying that you'd hoped to see carry-through. This risk portion of the business plan is a new requirement of TBF, so I would suggest that we just don't, you know, have our reviews, really, completed with respect to how we should probably carry risks forward. We gave you some new stuff, but perhaps there should be consideration overall for GOA to carry forward.

Dr. Starke: Okay. I mean, I had to write these business plans or help prepare these business plans as well, Minister. I do think, though, that the risk analysis part of it is important. That's part of a good strategic planning process, to identify, you know, what the risks are that you have out there to not achieving your goals. I would certainly agree that succession planning is one of them.

Ms McLean: Yeah. This is only the second year of those risks.

Dr. Starke: Fair enough.

Ms McLean: We have processes to refine it.

Dr. Starke: Great. Okay.

Then I want to move on to another area, and that is with regard to consumer protection. Now, earlier, in your opening remarks, you talked about having a trusted relationship in a trusted marketplace, and I certainly agree with that. I think that during the course of debate on the consumer protection bill last year I certainly mentioned that as well. I'm curious, Minister. As you know, I had some difficulties with the veterinary provisions under the consumer protection bill. Minister, clearly, your ministry or you personally identified the veterinary profession as being something that needed to be looked at. So I'm curious to know: since Bill 31 was passed last December, how many complaints has Service Alberta received with regard to veterinarians?

Ms McLean: This is now under the purview of Labour.

Dr. Starke: The regulations development, correct?

Ms McLean: Yes.

Dr. Starke: Okay.

Ms McLean: But also, overall, when there are complaints with respect to vets, they get routed to Labour.

Dr. Starke: Okay. That's puzzling to me given that you're responsible for consumer protection. Okay. Well, that's fine. Do you have any information with regard to how many calls, then, have been redirected to Labour since the bill was passed? Having taken sort of the lead on this role back when you drafted and brought forward Bill 31, I would have expected the general public to, say, identify Service Alberta as being the appropriate agency within government to call.

Ms McLean: We can get you the statistics that we have available. I don't have them in front of me, but, yeah, I'd be happy to follow up.

Dr. Starke: Okay. I appreciate knowing that. I mean, I will say that I checked with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, and the information they passed to me is that no one has called the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association since December having identified that they were referred from any agency of the Alberta government

to go talk to them about a veterinary complaint. I bring again to question with regard to just how big a problem this was.

I do want to ask, then, about something else. You mentioned when we debated Bill 31 – and this all goes back to your opening remarks about consumer protection – that one of your goals was to deal with what you said were people operating on the fringes – I think that was the term you used – in terms of, you know, that we have very reputable car dealers, but then we have some ones that operate on the fringe, that we have reputable ticket sellers, but then we have folks that are ticket scalpers. You know, I think you're right. There are always people on the edges of any reputable operation. We have those in veterinary medicine, too. We have folks that will claim that they'll cure your animal with things like flashing lights, with mysterious potions and remedies, and my own personal favourite is pet seances.

Ms McLean: Oh, dear.

Dr. Starke: You can't make this stuff up. They charge people for this, they claim to bring about benefit to the animals using this, and people pay a lot of money for this. These folks are clearly operating on the fringes of veterinary medicine. They are not licensed by the veterinary association. They are not subject to any sort of disciplinary procedures through the veterinary profession. I'm just wondering: is your department doing anything to take a look at the operations of these folks that are essentially practising veterinary medicine but clearly are not qualified to do so?

10:40

Ms McLean: I think that we have those same issues with respect to humans as well. I would suggest that it's not limited to animals. There is certainly a range, you know, where government action may be necessary or required.

I will say that with respect to the veterinary changes around advertising, I personally went and attended the chamber consultations, and there was one veterinary representative at one of the chamber meetings that specifically asked me to change the rules to allow for posting of fees as it's a mobile veterinary service. I have not had anyone ask me or had any letters come across my desk with respect to this issue, but I always welcome hearing from Albertans.

Dr. Starke: Okay. Well, you know, I will tell you that if the concern – and I think it is a legitimate concern – is to protect Albertans against those that are operating on the fringes and potentially taking advantage of the general public, there are folks out there that, in my view, are operating and are purportedly practising veterinary medicine without a licence or without any training to do so. They are there.

Ms McLean: I agree, and I think that if the association wants tools to be able to deal with that section, the Minister of Labour would be open to hearing that. But, additionally, in any area of business practice, regardless of whether it's something that we specifically regulate, we do have tools legislatively to deal with unfair practices, misrepresentation.

For example, there were a number of complaints that came to us around matchmaking services, where this woman would be set up with someone who appeared to be homeless and didn't have any teeth. I believe that was the report. The matchmaking service just guaranteed the number of matches but not quality, so we have engaged in investigations on that.

Dr. Starke: Minister, it's an interesting segue from veterinary seances to matchmaking services, but I think we're going down a bit of a rabbit hole.

Ms McLean: It's just sort of an example of where we investigate, you know, any sort of misrepresentations.

Dr. Starke: Perfect. We'll pass those along.

Finally, on page 130 of the business plan, where you're again talking about identified challenges in the marketplace for the consumer, one of the challenges you list on that page is "information overload" and that there is an overabundance of consumer information. Minister, Albertans are currently accessing current and upcoming government services via new technology. What specifically are the strategies for addressing this very real problem with regard to information overload?

I'm relatively confident in saying that the amount of information that consumers are bombarded with is not going to decrease, and it's in fact going to increase. I think that if there's one challenge that we have, it's determining the alacrity of that information, and in many cases that information – I mean, if all of that was right, I'd be a Nigerian billionaire right now. But, you know, I think we know that a lot of the stuff that is on there is just simply not trustworthy. How is your ministry helping consumers to sort through all that?

Ms McLean: As one of my elementary teachers used to say, the Internet is a garbage can in which you might find some jewellery.

Dr. Starke: I love that.

The Chair: Thank you.

For the remainder of this meeting I would like to call upon Mr. Hinkley from the government caucus and the minister to speak. Are you wanting to combine your time with the minister?

Mr. Hinkley: Yes. We'll go back and forth, and I will also share with my colleague MLA McKittrick.

The Chair: Perfect. Go ahead.

Mr. Hinkley: Okay. We have very little time, so, Minister, thank you very much. Actually, a lot of the questions have already been asked by Mr. Cyr and Mr. Clark and you've answered, so thank you to them.

As a result, I want to jump to my very last question, which is on page 130 of the business plan, strategy 1.1, because I had a private member's bill on consumer protection. You are talking about improving consumer protections, and it references implementation of the Consumer Protection Act as an example. I'm just going to ask: can you provide some further detail on how this act will protect consumers, and what kind of financial savings can we expect as well?

Ms McLean: Okay. To further strategy 1.1, last fall, as you've referenced, we brought in changes to the consumer protection laws to make them stronger in a number of areas that both businesses and consumers identified as a priority, resulting in increased fairness between consumers and businesses. The changes help explain the intention and purpose of the act and also help the courts, as necessary, to interpret any potentially unclear sections of the act that could cause some confusion. The new act provides authority to make publicly available a consumer bill of rights. Through policy a consumer bill of rights will be established as a general guideline to recognize and protect consumer rights and to help consumers understand their rights and make well-informed decisions. As we look towards 2018-19, many of these new protections will come into place in the areas of ticket sales, for example, high-cost credit, motor vehicles. The regulations are currently in development.

We are working on a number of initiatives that will overall protect consumers and will help to save money directly for the consumer.

This is not a strategy that is specifically focused on saving money for government, though it could. As consumers become more educated, know their rights, and are able to assert that themselves, they'll have less need, we hope, to turn to our consumer investigative unit. We won't have to spend as much employee time investigating issues if there are no issues to investigate. We want to ensure that, you know, businesses are not acting in an untoward way towards consumers but also that consumers know the right questions to ask and have the tools to be able to protect themselves as well.

Overall, that would certainly save money for the consumer in the sense that they wouldn't be taken for a ride in terms of costs. I think of our ban on door-to-door sales, for example, and the furnaces that were being sold by some companies that were going door to door and how people were on the hook for a payment plan that meant that their furnace was, you know, more than double the cost of the value. So by having many of these tools in place, our goal is to ensure that consumers are not duped, that they're armed with information, and that there's less opportunity to take advantage of them so that they then feel confident to go into the marketplace as a consumer, make purchases, and have that be an appropriate amount to pay for those services.

Mr. Hinkley: So they'll get protection and save money?

Ms McLean: Right.

Mr. Hinkley: A good policy there. Yeah.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you. Minister, I'm always impressed with the diversity of things that you have to deal with within Service Alberta. I had no idea about things like cemeteries and not-for-profit registration and all the consumer advocacy that your ministry is doing, so I wanted to thank you for it.

Earlier on you talked about page 130 of your business plan, population diversity, and you discussed the whole issue of nonbinary identification. I wanted to ask you a question around if there were any plans within the ministry to have the drivers' licences software changed so that accents and other non-English symbols can be used for names. This affects me, and it affects a lot of our indigenous communities and so on.

Ms McLean: Yes. Thank you for bringing this up. Member, I know that you have actually been instrumental in flagging this for our department as an issue given your work with the francophone community, for example, and bringing to our attention that this is an issue. We're always looking for ways to be able to make life better for regular Albertans. It's these kinds of little things that can make a huge difference yet, you know, can be done with little to no cost to government. I know that we're working on system upgrades to our MOVES program to be able to bring in these kinds of changes. Right now that program is severely outdated and has very limited capability for being able to make these kinds of changes. Once those upgrades are in place, we're absolutely happy to be working on that issue.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you. You know, thank you for your work, for just recognizing the diversity. I know that in your other portfolio you're working a lot on gender issues, and I really appreciate it.

One of your key strategies, 3.4 of the business plan, states that the government will "leverage government buying power to deliver best value in the procurement of goods and services while promoting innovation and fair treatment of Alberta businesses and workers." I was wondering how the government was achieving its best value. It's something that I often hear a lot as an Industrial Heartland MLA. How can we ensure the procurement of government goods

and services and others that are used, not only local Albertan, the whole issue of fair wages?

10:50

Ms McLean: Yeah. As you've identified, there are a number of fronts on which we're leveraging government buying power. One of the biggest areas that we're doing this in is with respect to innovation. We are inventing new supply chain functionality. I mentioned the ERP. This will result from the ERP solution project to capitalize on leading procurement practices GOA-wide and to capture annual savings and efficiencies.

We're also implementing a government-wide category management approach, which is innovative, for the procurement of services commonly required across the enterprise, like that used successfully for mobile devices. I mean, when you talk to the LAO, for example, about how much they pay for our data plan, it's amazing. It's only, like, \$10 a month, and it's unlimited data. Nobody can access that. It has to do with our buying power being combined for those contract services. So when you combine that buying power, you can realize those kinds of amazing efficiencies and savings.

Category management is essentially a managed procurement strategy. This can typically result in savings of 5 to 15 per cent. It utilizes aggregation of enterprise volumes. It has a higher degree of standardization. It groups also goods and services in a way that checks vendor sales statistics and profit strategies and has an ongoing focus on vendor management to extract value for the organization throughout the term of the GOA contracts.

We're also working on expanding the use of innovative procurement methodologies and techniques such as using a negotiated request for proposal as opposed to a typical RFP, which allows us to have more information from the bidders before landing on the successful bidder, allowing us to score with more information. It helps us to successfully manage large, complex procurements and achieve more specific strategies as well for our government outcomes.

There are other areas, but I think that's probably our largest focus.

Ms McKittrick: Okay. Can you just maybe comment a little bit on how this process is providing fairer treatment to Alberta businesses and workers? I think it's something where we're all aware of the need, and your approach is really innovative in that area.

Ms McLean: We're working with Economic Development and Trade and also the Department of Infrastructure on reviewing our procurement strategy. As a result of some of the work that we've done, we've been able to direct departments to take advantage of many of the trade exceptions that other jurisdictions are taking advantage of but that Alberta never had done before we came into office. We've been able to, for example, in the Fort McMurray fires work with indigenous communities to be able to offer a specific indigenous contract around some of the services that we needed during the fires very quickly.

We also are using the flexibility in the trade agreements to work towards a clear Alberta preference policy for goods and services procurement, as that's not subject to trade agreement obligations, where there is capability and sufficient competition. First of all, we need to be able to have the companies in Alberta that can meet the demand of GOA, which is sometimes very large, so it can be difficult to find a provider in Alberta or even multiple providers if you break the contract down.

Those are things that we've looked at. As a result, we've also expanded our ability – and this is more on the infrastructure side – to use our buying power to ensure that there is better training for

apprentices and more apprentices being hired to work on Alberta job sites.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you. I really appreciate the work of yourself and your ministry staff around this area.

The one area which we all get a lot of questions on as MLAs is this whole issue around consumer protection. Again, you know, in the business plan the first outcome is: consumers are protected. I understand there are going to be a lot more education and awareness initiatives from the ministry, and I think that's great. I was wondering if you could share some of those new initiatives or some of these current initiatives around consumer education and awareness.

Ms McLean: We've got a number of ways that we provide a number of educational resources. First of all, we provide a number of tipsheets online. Service Alberta goes to trade fairs regularly and has a booth. Sometimes it's specific to a department sector. The Utilities Consumer Advocate is a section of Service Alberta. They will often be at a number of community engagement sessions as well with tipsheets around utility purchasing, and that's a huge advantage for us to be able to provide information.

The Real Estate Council of Alberta is also regulated by Service Alberta, and they also go to a number of various engagement sessions.

We do stakeholder presentations, like I said, with tipsheets. We have website publications as well. We also do investigations through our consumer investigative unit, and we also have Consumer Protection Alberta on Facebook, that puts out infographics and that kind of thing to let people know sometimes about emerging scams. I've seen emerging scams be reported through Consumer Protection Alberta, and our Twitter account as well engages with the public to let them know.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you very much.

I think that as an MLA I should make sure that I'm very good about retweeting all this information and in the Facebook post because it's an issue that Albertans are very concerned about these days.

Thank you. I really appreciate the work.

Ms McLean: Thank you.

Mr. Hinkley: With the two minutes left I'd like to look on page 129 of the business plan under Strategic Context. In that section it states: "The ministry is also supporting Alberta's economic recovery by ensuring the marketplace is open, fair and competitive." Would you mind elaborating on how the ministry is supporting Alberta's economic recovery?

Ms McLean: Absolutely. I have some notes, so if you'll just give me a moment. We have a number of transformation initiatives that I've spoken about in some detail and the enterprise resource planning initiative that we're currently procuring but is not in effect yet.

In addition, we are working on streamlining our FOIP processes to be able to bring down costs and FTE resources. I could speak in more detail about the transformation initiatives or the ERP, that I think are ...

The Chair: I apologize for the interruption, but I must advise the committee that the time allotted for this item of business has concluded.

I would like to remind committee members that we are scheduled to meet next on Monday, April 16, 2018, at 7 p.m. to consider the estimates for the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Thank you, everyone. This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 11 a.m.]

