



**2022/2023 SESSION**  
of the  
**BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**3 MARCH 2023**

*Sitting number 10 of the 2022/2023 Session*  
(pages 655–752)

**Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., JP, MP**  
**Speaker**

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3 MARCH 2023  
10:02 AM**

*Sitting Number 10 of the 2022/2023 Session*

*[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]*

Minister.

**The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.  
Ms. Beale will lead us in prayer.

**ECONOMIC INVESTMENT RESIDENTIAL  
CERTIFICATE POLICY**

**PRAYERS**

*[Prayers read by Ms. Kara Beale, Assistant Clerk]*

**The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.  
The House is now in session.

**Hon. Jason Hayward:** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Economic Investment Residential Certificate Policy, pursuant to section 32(5) of the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act 1956.

*[Gavel]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

*[Minutes of 27 February and 1 March 2023]*

**The Speaker:** Members, the Minutes from the 27<sup>th</sup> of February as well as the Minutes from the 1<sup>st</sup> of March have been circulated.

Are there any amendments required?

There are none.

The Minutes will be confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 27 February and 1 March 2023 confirmed]*

**PETITIONS**

**The Speaker:** There are none.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND  
JUNIOR MINISTERS**

**The Speaker:** This morning we have three Statements. The first is in the name of the Minister of Works.

Minister.

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

**The Speaker:** There are none.

**Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER  
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

**APOLOGIES**

**The Speaker:** This morning I have received notification of Members who will be absent today, and they are the following Members: the Premier, MP Lister and MP De Silva. Just those three today.

**UPDATE ON THE SALVATION ARMY SHELTER**

**Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch:** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Honourable House today to say simply our homeless people deserve shelter, and this Government, with the able assistance of the [Salvation Army](#), is doing its part in providing quality transitional housing and support programmes for the most vulnerable in our society.

**MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE**

**The Speaker:** There are none.

Mr. Speaker, as Members may recall, in December of last year I, along with the Honourable Member from constituency 4, the Minister of Social Development and Seniors, the Honourable Tinee Furbert, had the privilege of announcing the opening of the new accommodation at the Salvation Army Emergency Shelter on North Street in Hamilton. There I had the chance to tour these two new facilities that helped usher a rejuvenation in the partnership between the Government and the Salvation Army not

**PAPERS AND OTHER  
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

**The Speaker:** There is one paper this morning, in the name of the Minister of Economy and Labour.

only to ensure that our most vulnerable are protected, but to demonstrate that this Government leads by example in the fight for a more equitable society. Today, the two new buildings now under Salvation Army management are suitable for housing 14 persons [at a time] in each facility, bringing the total available new beds to 28.

Mr. Speaker, this commitment to support not only the Salvation Army, but other charitable organisations as well, should and must transcend partisan politics.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative actually commenced in 2019 upon my first meeting with the former Divisional Commander, Major Sandra Stokes. In this meeting it was detailed that the shelter on North Street was in need of urgent repairs and upgrades. At that time it was acknowledged that successive governments have not always supported the work of the [Salvation] Army both financially and with repairs to the site. I hope all can admit this had to be changed. Thus, in October 2019 civil engineers within the Ministry carried out a structural assessment of the buildings and agreed that only a few needed to be demolished and replaced, while others required some upgrading.

Mr. Speaker, the first phase of refurbishment of this project was spearheaded by two local philanthropists, Mr. Jim Butterfield and Mr. Kirk Kitson, who through their effort and contribution to this worthy cause made those works possible. The Government of Bermuda, through the Bermuda Housing Corporation [BHC], engaged in a public-private partnership with the aforementioned philanthropists to rehabilitate and refurbish the shelter buildings. It was agreed that the government would match the funding that was raised by them to upgrade the facility. Therefore, Mr. Speaker in April 2020, a \$1 million grant was allocated for the upgrading of the Salvation Army shelter in the 2020/21 budget, whilst the total estimated price for this project was \$1,912,000.

Mr. Speaker, a methodical approach was undertaken to repair the salvageable buildings one at a time, while the buildings that were beyond repair were to be demolished. Simultaneously, while building works were in progress, consideration was given on what style of replacement building would be ideal for the site. Many transitional housing options were considered. The Salvation Army and BHC agreed on what the replacement buildings would be—the new container building design.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, along with the two new builds as mentioned before, the overall initiative saw two residential buildings housing the men and women of the shelter being remodelled whilst the central building housing the administration staff, common areas and the kitchen were repaired. Once these retrofits were complete, attention was then turned to the new builds, but as we all remember, the COVID-19 pandemic came upon our shores and progress was slowed for a year during shelter in place and lock-

downs. Work progressed, albeit sluggishly, with plans being drawn; sourcing of containers completed; surveying of the property; demolition of the old units; consultation with the departments of Planning, Health and Environment, and the Fire Service finalised; building supplies sourced; piling engineering preparation; and finally construction beginning in September 2021.

Mr. Speaker, with the completion of the project in December 2022, the total amount the Government actually committed for this initiative was \$1,820,000 over the three-year period. Yes, over budget, and this is attributed to the material rate increases of 50 [per cent] to 150 per cent in 2021/22, and greater than 150 per cent in early 2022. The specific breakdown of costs is as follows:

- labour and engineering—\$636,960.17;
- pile foundations—\$551,580.75;
- local materials—\$372,633.00; and
- overseas materials/shipping—\$258,826.08.

Mr. Speaker, the myriad of challenges that were encountered over the course of the project that derived from COVID-19 and global supply chain included increased costs for paint, steel, lumber, plumbing, electrical, door hardware, adhesives, et cetera. Delivery times were stretched beyond anticipation due to the high demand for materials. Additionally, local labour resources were already stretched as contractors were busy on various sites throughout the Island. However, Mr. Speaker, through all of this, our commitment remained steadfast in ensuring that our most vulnerable are protected by providing quality transitional housing and support programmes for our people.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, the project was completed late and over budget as explained. But it is still a cause for celebration. The work is done to an outstanding quality and raises the bar for the way we cater to those in need of shelter. I am particularly delighted that we have been able to deliver on our commitment to the Salvation Army and those in need.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all those involved in the construction of this project, but particularly BHC Project Manager, Mr. Keino Furbert-Jacobs for all the work he has done on this project over the last three years, from researching the replacement buildings, securing planning approvals, organising the bidding for the work, managing contractors, dealing with supply chain issues and all the other things that crop up during a project such as this.

Mr. Speaker, we have set the standard for the type of cooperation that should exist between the Salvation Army and the Government of Bermuda, which every Government going forward should honour.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Members, the second Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of Tourism.

Minister.

## TOURISM 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise to share with my honourable colleagues the incremental gains achieved, and the challenges faced [in tourism over the past year](#). The Bermuda Tourism Authority has worked with the Bermuda Government and the stakeholder community to implement the strategic recovery plan developed to restore the Island's vital economic pillar. While international business is an essential generator of foreign direct investment for the economy, the tourism sector is the largest employer in Bermuda, and its success has a tremendous impact on a broad cross-section of this country.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Bermuda are aware of the pandemic's lingering impact on the community and economy, and like many places around the world, this Government has worked hard to safely return our industry to a sense of normalcy. The Government was committed to protecting Bermuda's residents and visitors from the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the health care system and the economy.

Mr. Speaker, while visitor surveys hailed us as one of the safest vacation destinations in our target markets in 2021, by early 2022 COVID-19 fatigue hit vacation-deprived travellers and they sought to catch up on vacation time in earnest. Through content partnerships and public relations campaigns, the BTA [Bermuda Tourism Authority] engaged journalists from various media platforms to remind consumers that Bermuda was open for business.

Mr. Speaker, while Bermuda has not yet returned to 2019 visitor volumes, moderate increases were seen in 2022 and year-end statistics underscore that more work remains to be done before reaching the baseline numbers of 2019.

Mr. Speaker, in 2022 total visitor arrivals, including air, cruise and yacht visitors, recovered to 68 per cent of 2019—specifically, air arrivals at 54 per cent of 2019, cruise arrivals at 75 per cent of 2019 and yacht arrivals at 143 per cent of 2019. There continue to be areas of success, and the sales and marketing teams remain focused on finding creative ways to strategically position Bermuda as a premier tourist destination for all travellers. They are committed to telling our story and securing new business in key markets. This has led to leisure air arrivals recovering to 52 per cent of 2019 levels. The highest numbers of visitor arrivals have been sourced from the US markets, which nonetheless still have a way to go to reach our pre-pandemic levels.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda is reliant on air service to connect us with our target markets, and the BTA team has worked with our airline stakeholder partners to help restore the Island's air capacity for visitors, business travellers and residents. The volume of seats available for travellers to reach Bermuda is re-

ferred to as *air capacity*, and last year we saw it grow to 61 per cent of 2019 levels. We expect continued growth in air capacity for 2023. Meanwhile, hotel inventory recovered to approximately 73 per cent of 2019 levels.

Mr. Speaker, the average visitor spend per air visitor rose to \$1,852 per person, up 24.8 per cent from 2019. Total air visitor spending reached \$270.1 million in 2022 (68.0 per cent of 2019). Similarly, we saw growth in the average spend per cruise visitor, which rose to \$255 per person, up 13.0 per cent from 2019. Total cruise visitor spending reached \$102.7 million in 2022 (91.0 per cent of 2019). While the length of stay of air visitors was higher in 2022 compared to 2019, the average spend per day also increased from \$277 to \$310. The vacation rentals sector, where there are currently 324 licensed vacation rental units, continued to perform well with results exceeding the 2019 occupancy levels by 10.0 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, as the Island's destination marketing organisation, the BTA is committed to driving short-, medium- and long-term growth through targeted marketing and comprehensive sales strategies in key cities. The team collaborated with our international partners to deliver a fresh and exciting marketing campaign, *Lost Yet Found*, which launched in September 2022. The campaign that celebrates the authentic Bermuda and features local talent in front of and behind the camera has earned numerous international accolades and has played a key role in driving visitation with enticing coverage across hundreds of premier media platforms.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited about the approach that the Bermuda Tourism Authority has employed to raise awareness and track conversion in our key markets. State-of-the-art tracking tools continue to be used to identify how digital advertising directly translates into travel to Bermuda. This means the BTA can monitor the performance of its campaigns and adjust in real time to garner the highest return on investment [ROI].

Additionally, the *Lost Yet Found* activations and outdoor advertising campaigns connect directly with potential visitors in our focus markets in unexpected ways. A ground breaking 3-D billboard captured the attention of millions of people travelling through Times Square and, with the goal of driving year-round travel, showcased Bermuda's most exciting spring season experiences. The Bermuda Tourism Authority also made a splash in New York, Boston, Miami and other key cities with immersive consumer experiences highlighting Bermuda's beauty, unexpected experiences and locals with in-person support from Bermuda's artists, culinary stars and local mixologists.

Mr. Speaker, some have expressed concern as to why we would advertise in markets without direct service in 2022, such as Boston—that is, apart from the fact that it is one of our key gateway cities. The

reality is that we need to seed long-term demand in those markets, readying those travellers for the return of service and creating a reason for our airline partners to resume and maintain service to Bermuda. The advertising strategy was built in concert with aggressive public relations initiatives and content partnerships. Tactical outreach on both sides of the Atlantic generated invaluable media mentions, feature stories and social media engagement. These initiatives earned Bermuda \$10.2 million worth of media coverage (the value of the coverage if it had been purchased as advertising) in the US alone, with additional PR exposure and social engagement in our Canada and United Kingdom markets.

Mr. Speaker, the sales division is a critical engine for tourism growth. Sports tourism continued to be a strong performer for Bermuda's tourism recovery in 2022, which aligns with the targets identified in the National Tourism Plan. In 2022, we welcomed for the first time the USATF Bermuda Games, our first foray into the upper echelons of professional track and field. We welcomed 217 international visitors comprising professional athletes and their guests, along with agents and media representatives. The event itself generated approximately \$427,000 in direct spending on the Island. Media platforms produced over 300 stories with a combined audience of 639 million, valued at \$1.2 million in advertising placement equivalents. Bermuda sold event organisers on establishing our Island as the first non-US meeting venue for the tour—a major achievement for Bermuda.

In 2022, the Butterfield Bermuda Championship returned to Bermuda's world-renowned public golf course at Port Royal. A staple in the tourism event calendar, with no COVID-19 restrictions in place, the 2022 PGA event saw a return to normalcy. This event worked well in the Island's favour, with significant media value and economic impact for the Island, and reports of on Island properties reporting sold-out nights during the period of the event. An official report is being compiled and will be released to the public to identify the value of the multi-year investment as the BTA has done each year for this prestigious event.

The World Triathlon Series was postponed in 2021 due to a local COVID-19 surge. We were therefore thrilled to welcome the world-class triathlon event back to Bermuda in 2022. Of course, Bermuda's very own Dame Flora Duffy was a major draw for the event, which welcomed top-tier athletes from around the world. The streets were lined with throngs of visitors and locals who were jubilantly cheering for the competitors in this high-adrenaline experience. The triathlon event again served as a platform to showcase our Island to the world, with major international coverage amplifying the efforts of the BTA and the local organising committee.

Mr. Speaker, the number of Bermuda-bound yachts exceeded figures from the past few years. The

restoration of this segment can be partially attributed to the welcome return of sailing competitions, including the long-standing Newport to Bermuda race. The Island should hail the growth of the Island's superyacht category in 2022, which increased superyacht calls by 84 per cent and injected a much-needed boost to the economy, driving past 2021 performance by 147 per cent, with \$3.4 million in economic impact for Bermuda. We predict continued growth in this segment for 2023 as our teams have enlisted international and local partnerships to lure the jet-setting crowd for superyacht travel to Bermuda.

Bermuda's maritime heritage was on display for the SailGP event in the spring, supported by on Island experiences such as the SailGP Street Festival that enhanced the on Island experience for the pinnacle event. According to the PwC report on its impact, SailGP earned Bermuda \$11.4 million in global media coverage, or advertising equivalent [value], which is again what the cost would have been had we purchased it. We look forward to its return in 2024.

Bermuda welcomed the Clipper Round, the World Race sailors, to its shores as the host port. This event attracted incredible media coverage of the [Go-ToBermuda.com](https://www.go-tobermuda.com) crew, which earned a top spot in the competition on the Bermuda-bound leg of the race. More than just a marketing opportunity, the partnership provided a Bermudian youth sailor, Matt Stephens, with an opportunity to sail on the journey, showing off Bermuda's sailing pedigree on the Seattle to Panama leg before joining his crew in Bermuda. Additionally, the sailors contributed to the replenishment of our natural resources with a crew of participants helping to restore Bermuda's critical mangrove population.

Mr. Speaker, the Forbes Under 30 residency at the Hamilton Princess was another standout success story. A contingent of young entrepreneurs whose game-changing impact in their various fields elevated them to the prestigious Forbes listing landed in Bermuda for a 30-day residency at the Hamilton Princess. Their stay helped boost our numbers for February 2022 and provided additional business for tourism vendors and attractions.

The BTA worked with the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation and other local entrepreneur hubs to connect local entrepreneurs with volunteers from the Forbes cohort. Each week the BTA hosted a networking session for the locals and their Forbes Under 30 under 30 mentors to help grow their businesses and refine their strategies throughout the month-long initiative. To broaden participation in this initiative, it was not exclusive to local entrepreneurs under the age of 30, with many participants over 30 years old.

Mr. Speaker, while the marketing and sales divisions are vital drivers of our visitor arrivals, we rely heavily on the quality of hospitality standards to help ensure a positive Bermuda experience and increase

the likelihood of our visitors recommending the Island to others and becoming repeat visitors themselves. Throughout 2022 the tourism standards and training division worked on the development of a new tourism service standards accreditation, Anchor Bermuda, and a learning management system, BTA+. The team at the BTA collaborated with education, training and service providers to create a portal for users to enhance their professional skill set and deliver improved service levels in Bermuda. I encourage the community to explore exciting professional development opportunities for tourism veterans and those looking to make their entry into the industry. They can sign up for BTA+ on the [GoToBermuda.com](https://www.gotobermuda.com) corporate website.

Mr. Speaker, exit surveys show what many of us already know—visitors to Bermuda are looking for a range of experiences whilst on Island. We know that some of the experiences on offer have historically waned in the winter and early spring months. The BTA is charged with broadening and improving visitor experiences that help increase visitor on Island spend, reduce seasonality and promote Bermuda's cultural capital. [The BTA] have partnered with Bermuda's tourism entrepreneurs and innovative operators to help generate fresh, engaging and authentic experiences through the Tourism Experience Investment Programme that has provided over \$4 million in funding since its inception in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, in collaboration with the Government of Bermuda, the BTA produced and executed a summer-into-fall entertainment strategy to revitalise the tourism sector to get local entertainers back to work in 2022. They cultivated festive experiences for visitors and locals alike. In 2022, they supported the promotion of entertainment, culinary and tour experiences including the successful Great Sound Entertainment Series that stimulated the entertainment sector. The Government-supported initiative came after more than two years of pandemic-related disruptions to Bermuda's entertainers, party planners and promoters.

As the pace of tourism's recovery enjoyed an upsurge, the Island's growing visitor numbers created a demand for entertainment and memorable Bermudian experiences. The experiences division leveraged data from entertainment research findings to identify the type of entertainment experiences for which today's Bermuda visitor is looking. Homegrown entertainment that was low-key, serendipitous and authentically local emerged as factors most likely to enhance their on Island experience.

The team partnered with local promoters and venues to help promote weekly live performances at outdoor locations, local bars and restaurants, and on-the-water experiences. Additionally, the BTA supported expansion of the City of Hamilton busking programme. The series delivered many musical experiences for visitors and locals. Highlights of the series included the inaugural Bermuda Swizzle and Seafood

Festivals which fused Bermuda's food and cocktail culture with live performances.

Mr. Speaker, the tourism sector has faced an array of challenges ranging from limited air capacity, the lack of a major convention facility and reduced hotel inventory. The BTA has worked tirelessly alongside the Ministry of Transport, the Bermuda Airport Authority and Skyport to strengthen relationships with airline partners and continues to work to rebuild airline schedules to drive demand and more capacity. Hotel inventory, group sales growth, accommodation costs and air capacity are interconnected, and the return of hotel inventory is likely to influence the airline carrier scheduled flights to Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, 2022 saw increased cruise business that began to close the gap on pre-pandemic call volumes. As you would have heard from my honourable colleague in the Ministry of Transport, this year we are expecting to see unprecedented numbers of cruise arrivals year-round in 2023, which is fantastic news for Bermuda as well as the business operators who depend on the revenue generated from cruise travel. Current projections for 2023 show approximately 622,000 cruise visitors and 216 calls, compared to the previous record high (which would still be the record) in 2019 of 535,000 passengers and 181 calls.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that in the past nine months, the BTA, in spite of our still having a ways to go, has demonstrated impressive performance with swift organisational restructuring, the launch of the Lost Yet Found campaign and a solid forward momentum layered upon a data-driven strategy targeting growth in our key markets. The team is energised and producing results. The BTA has strengthened stakeholder partnerships, resurrected the Tourism Summit and returned to stability following a tumultuous time in global tourism.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, allow me to acknowledge the leadership team of the Bermuda Tourism Authority for their dedicated service to the country in spite of the challenges outlined previously. They led a restructuring of the organisation, ensuring a qualified team was in place to execute the strategic recovery plan. They have been supported by a corps of talented and committed men and women who have employed innovative marketing, delivered strong sports sales performance, worked to support tourism stakeholders, and introduced new and exciting events to the tourism calendar. Similarly, I would like to acknowledge the constellation of tourism partners, whose work in Bermuda and abroad has shored up our ability to stimulate visitation and deliver the phenomenal hospitality for which Bermuda is so well known.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Members, the next Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of Education.

Minister, would you like to present your Statement?

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to update this House and the listening public on essential but difficult decisions that have been made to advance the Government's commitment to reforming Bermuda's public education system.

Mr. Speaker, as you, the Members and the listening public are aware, the Government's education reform mandate involves restructuring the Bermuda public school system by phasing out middle schools, introducing signature schools at the senior level and creating parish primary schools with one primary school in each parish and two in Pembroke.

Mr. Speaker, this Ministerial Statement will be fundamentally different from those ones I have delivered in the past 36 months. Previous Statements have afforded us the opportunity to celebrate milestones and achievements as we progress our education reform agenda. Today, Mr. Speaker, however, I am here to update the listening public and Members of this House on two significant decisions that have been made—that is, to close Clearwater Middle School and Heron Bay Primary at the end of June 2023.

Mr. Speaker, I know that individuals in the respective communities are still processing the information shared with them this week. Much work is required to enact these changes, but it is essential that all of Bermuda is informed of the factors that have been considered as the rationale for the decision to [close these two schools](#).

Mr. Speaker, let me take each school in turn. For Clearwater Middle School:

- Enrolment is low and over time will continue to decline. As of February 1, Clearwater had 71 students compared to the average of 225 students at other middle schools.
- There is ample space at other middle schools to accommodate the students of Clearwater.
- As Clearwater has been earmarked as the site of a signature school, it is more practical to address the infrastructure issues with an empty school.

For Heron Bay Primary School:

- Again, enrolment is low, and as of February 1, Heron Bay had a total of 59 students enrolled.
- There is ample space to accommodate the students in other primary schools.
- We are currently considering options for expanding our alternative programmes to include girls. Currently, the Heron Bay campus already houses only one alternative education programme.

Mr. Speaker, this decision will be difficult for many, and we know there will be questions and concerns. This week, I and others from the Ministry and Department of Education met with key stakeholders. We want to ensure that they are informed of these decisions, the plans for enacting them and the support structures that will be in place to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible. The transition plan focuses on the following:

- student enrolment, transition and integration into other schools;
- uniforms;
- transportation;
- staffing options for permanent staff, work permit holders and yearly contract workers; and importantly,
- the process for students, parents and staff engagement as the decision will be enacted over the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise and apologise in advance for the inconvenience caused to our teachers, students and their families by this announcement. With regard to each student and staff transition, the Commissioner of Education and her Department of Education colleagues will engage in personalised one-to-one processes with each permanent staff member to hear their preferences regarding their redeployment. Rest assured, we have sufficient positions within the Bermuda public school system to accommodate all permanent Clearwater Middle School and Heron Bay Primary staff, and there are enough places to accommodate the students in other schools.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Clearwater and Heron Bay are unique school communities and important to the larger St. David's and Southampton communities. Losing a significant fixture in each of these communities will be difficult. Through our History and Legacy Committee, we will ensure that the memories of Clearwater Middle School and Heron Bay Primary are cherished and that their histories and legacy are recognised and honoured.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate, we commit to providing regular updates to those impacted and commit to being available to answer any questions that may arise through our various communication channels.

Mr. Speaker, this week has been a difficult one for our Clearwater Middle School and Heron Bay Primary School families. We appreciate their support and understanding as we navigate this transition while we undergo this process as part of our commitment to transforming public education in Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Members, this brings us to a close of Statements for today.

We will now move on.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker:** Members, we do not have any written questions this morning, so all of the questions today will come from the Statements.

And, Minister of Works, you have no questions this morning. So we will move on to the Minister of Tourism, and I will start the clock now.

Minister of Tourism, you have a question from MP Pearman.

MP Pearman.

### QUESTION 1: TOURISM 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Honourable Minister.

Minister, in your Statement provided to the House today, at the bottom of page 7, you identified three hurdles that you are facing, one of them being airlift and the second being the absence of a convention centre. Then you had a third.

Could you please inform this Honourable House greater details both of how and what is being done in terms of the struggling airlift and indeed the convention centre, and what plans you have afoot to get an active convention centre on the Island?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** Yes. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** The BTA is working closely with the Minister of Transport with a focused marketing effort in our core target markets to increase the airlift. We are all aware of the Fairmont Southampton project that brings with it a tremendous amount of convention space and caters to the group business. So that is already out in the public domain. This will be the main needle-mover in that space of the convention business. But as people may or may not know, that business is booked as far as two years out. So whilst the development is going on, the development of that business, or the redevelopment of that business can be taking place.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

## SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you. Supplementary, first supplementary.

Thank you, Minister.

We heard from the Minister of Transport, who informed this Honourable House that Delta (I believe it is Delta; it may be JetBlue, one of the two) will be flying to Boston, but unfortunately not until November. Are there any plans to increase airlift between now and November that you are aware of? I appreciate that you may not be able to give specifics. But will we see more flights for the tourist season?

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** Can the Honourable Member repeat his question, please?

**The Speaker:** I was trying to fit it in because it is more of a transportation response than tourism.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Yes. But, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has just said that they have been working together with Transport to provide this project and plan.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Okay. Go ahead.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** I mean, if the Minister chooses to not answer it, that is up to him.

**The Speaker:** His comment led you into it then, as they have been working with Transport, so, yes.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** What I mean by working together, Mr. Speaker, is that the marketing efforts will be focused more so than in the past in those areas that we need to improve airlift. So that is in conjunction with the efforts of the Ministry of Transport in meeting with airline carriers in those markets. So, it is not to say that those markets were not covered in the past. But they will get extra special attention in this coming year.

**The Speaker:** Second supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Yes. Second supplementary.

Turning from airlift to the convention centre, given as you have just told this Honourable House correctly that these things are booked two years out, where would you see as the best opportunity for Bermuda to have an active convention centre in the immediate future?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** I would like to remind Members that we do have a hotel that can cater to certain sized groups, and that is the Hamilton Princess. So it is not like we do not have any group business. But the really large groups, the only property on Island that we had in the past and hopefully will have in 2024 is the Fairmont Southampton. But the Hamilton Princess does have the capability of holding group business. And I am not sure of the capacity, but it would be con-

sidered in the medium range of group business as far as levels.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
Second question?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you. Third, I think, supplementary.

**The Speaker:** No, second question.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Oh, second question?

**The Speaker:** You have done your two supplementaries.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** You are keeping an eye on me, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Yes.

#### QUESTION 2: TOURISM 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you.

I want to stick with the convention centre with capacity.

You have identified how the existing Hamilton Princess Hotel is in the middle, the medium size. In terms of the large size, where do you see that developing if at all?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** Mr. Speaker, I thought I answered that by saying that, as it stands now, the only [large capacity centre] on the Island would be the Fairmont Southampton, once [revamping is complete].

**The Speaker:** Okay.  
Supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Yes.

#### SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** If that is plan A, the Fairmont Southampton for large-sized conventions, is there a plan B?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** Mr. Speaker, we know there are other hotel properties that are closed. We are constantly looking to support any interest in those properties to reopening. We have discussions with potential developers, and we discuss their plans and what they see fit. We will continue to encourage invest-

tors in our tourism product. At the end of the day, it is the developers' concept of what works best for them. Our main focus at this stage is to get properties reopened, get more beds available to the industry. And right now as it stands—I cannot foretell the future—the only property that we have that can cater to the large-group business is the Fairmont Southampton.

Should we sit before an investor who has a plan to develop a second [property], we will work with that developer and encourage that development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Second supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Yes. Second supplementary. Still on that point. Thank you, Minister, for your helpful answer.

When you contact these investors, when you sit before these investors as you have just said, what is the reluctance that they are identifying to make the investment for a large convention centre in Bermuda?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is inappropriate to discuss the content of my meetings with private investors, specific content.

**The Speaker:** Third question?

#### QUESTION 3: TOURISM 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you. This is my third question, but it's still the same area.

I am not asking the Minister for specifics. I am not asking for any confidences to be breached or even to name parties he is talking to. I am just wondering, in terms of policy and development and solutions, what are the concerns being expressed?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** There are a number of concerns around sensitivity to the local environment and the impact that it would have on the surrounding areas. But again, the driving factor is whether or not they can marry those factors in with running an operation that will be profitable and bring a return on their investment.

Now I do not know what else to say beyond that, Mr. Speaker, because when you get in business one of the primary factors is profitability. So if a large-scale—if a developer who sits before us says a large-scale development will work within their model and bring profitability as well as address other local issues, then we will work with them. But until we have that materialise, you know, we will just continue to sit with investors with the plan that they bring to the table, help them in any way that we see fit that it could be

modified to both benefit the developer and Bermuda as a whole. We will continue to do that.

**The Speaker:** First supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Supplementary, thank you.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you, Honourable Minister.

In addition to the concerns of return on investment and profit that you have just identified, are you hearing that there are concerns on delay in delivery?

**Hon. Vance Campbell:** We have not received those concerns.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
Second supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** No, I am done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Honourable Minister.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
Minister, those are all of the questions for you this morning.

We will now move on to the next Statement.

Minister of Education, there are quite a few Members who have indicated they would like to put questions to you this morning. The first one is MP Wade.

MP Wade, would you like to put your question? MP Wade, MP Wade.

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** Oh, well—

**The Speaker:** No, not Simmons-Wade. MP Wade.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Jason Wade:** You are absolutely right. Ladies first. MP Simmons-Wade, go right ahead.

**The Speaker:** No, no, no. You were called first.

**Mr. Jason Wade:** All right. I will revert to the Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Yes.

### QUESTION 1: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Jason Wade:** My first question is, How many students are currently at Heron Bay and Clearwater, Minister?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** There are currently 71 students at Clearwater, and taking away M3, we will have to place 21 M2s and 26 M3s. And currently there are . . . (I am trying to remember) 58—

**The Speaker:** Fifty-nine by the Statement.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Fifty-nine, fifty-nine. And there will be 61 students whom we will have to place because there will be nine P6s moving on.

**The Speaker:** Okay.  
Supplementary?

### SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Mr. Jason Wade:** Yes, one supplementary.  
So what does that average out for each year level in the primary schools, Minister?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Just over 10, just about 10. Because we have a few under P5 and 51 students, so that would be 10.

**The Speaker:** Second supplementary?

**Mr. Jason Wade:** Supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Second supplementary, yes.

**Mr. Jason Wade:** What is the maximum number that we can have in classrooms right now, Minister?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** The maximum number varies. It actually is decided on on a year-by-year basis by the Minister. And we have not decided what our maximum numbers will be this upcoming year. For the year that we are in now, from P1 through P3 it is (going from memory, I believe it is) 16. And from P4 through P6 it is around 26, between 26 and 28.

**The Speaker:** Second question?

### QUESTION 2: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Jason Wade:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This closure of these schools is obviously going to impact students, staff and the parents in various ways, Minister. What has been set up to support the emotional well-being of said students, staff and parents?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Thank you.

As part of the implementation plan, the Commissioner and her team have worked directly with school leaders to determine how we can move forward. We have had meetings with both schools' PTAs

and staff this week. And the final implementation of the plan will depend on the feedback that we get from parents along the lines of what their particular needs for those students are and what schools they [desire to transfer] to. And with the teachers, it is discussing with them, what are their preferred schools to be transferred to? What are their preferred subjects? And those types of things will happen.

But because of the number of staff and children that we are talking about, the intention is that there will be individualised meetings with each and every one of them, the students and their parents, to have those discussions.

**The Speaker:** First supplementary?

**Mr. Jason Wade:** No, no. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Thank you.

Minister, you have other Members.

MP Adams. Not in?

MP Simmons-Wade.

#### QUESTION 1: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** My first question is, I understand that quite a few parents already have purchased their uniforms for the next school year, and they were not aware of the fact that the school is closing. So what is the Ministry doing to assist families who have already done that, especially for the parents at the very successful Success Academy?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, we have already initiated a school voucher programme that will be in place. The final amounts will not be determined until we have the conversations with the parents and determine exactly where each of those children will land. But the intention is to soften the blow of having to purchase any new uniforms with uniform vouchers.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** No, my second question.

**The Speaker:** Second question. Go ahead.

#### QUESTION 2: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** Yes.

In your Statement you reported that the Clearwater site is going to be used for [a] signature school. Can you elaborate on that and give me some additional information, please?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

In the conversation with the Clearwater staff and parents, and it was identified in the Statement, it is intended to use Clearwater as a signature school in the east. So the understanding is that it will be easier for us to do the necessary things that have to be done at the site with it cleared out. So as Members would know, as well as the listening public, the Government's reform plan was to introduce up to five signature schools. And so with the already-made announcement that we will be introducing a signature school at Sandys Secondary Middle School in September 2024, this is just another movement forward in where the next signature school will be. And the one that we want at the east will happen at Clearwater Middle School, the Clearwater Middle School site.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

#### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** Yes.

Are there any specific details as to what will be in that particular signature school, if you know yet?

**The Speaker:** Ah, ah, ah! When the other Member is on his feet, you need to sit down, please. Take your seat.

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** Oh, me?

**The Speaker:** Yes. Yes.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** I do. We do know what is going to be down there. It is—and now you have really got me. I will commit to get that exact, the name of it. But it will be the school that deals with climate, climate issues, as well as social issues. And one of the reasons for picking Clearwater is its proximity to BIOS [Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences] and BAMZ [Bermuda Aquarium, Museum & Zoo], for which we already have

memorandums of understanding in terms of developing our signature programmes. And the proximity of that school to those locations bodes well for actually having it there.

There is also a programme between the Arizona State University and BIOS that we have had conversations with Arizona State University over the last couple of years on how we can integrate some of the things that they are doing along with BIOS into what the new signature would be.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Second question?

**Mrs. Ianthia Simmons-Wade:** That sounds exciting. Thank you very much, Minister.

**The Speaker:** Okay.  
Supplementary? MP Jackson.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to ask the Minister if there is any timeline on when he believes that the Clearwater signature school would open?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Thank you, and that is a very topical question. We are in the process of completing what we are calling the master plan. And we anticipate—I set what I consider an unrealistic date for the team to have it ready, by the end of February. But they have done an extremely good bit of work on that, and we are in the process of dealing with the necessary things of actually presenting it to Cabinet. And then shortly it will be shortly presented to the general public and obviously presented here.

But there will be a master plan that talks about when schools will phase out, when schools will phase in and the like. Ideally, we are looking at about two years for that school to come into play.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary? Oh, you are good? Good? Okay.

MP Famous, you are down to ask questions. Do you want to put your question now?

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

### QUESTION 1: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Good morning, colleagues, and good morning, Bermuda.

Minister, are all of these school closures really about saving money or what? What really is going on there?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Yes, Member, that is a question that does come up. As colleagues would know, and we are in budget session, so that is actually quite topical, about 90 per cent of the budget that goes to schools is salary. So for the regular thought process that closing a school will save money is not along the lines of what we would traditionally think, as we would not be spending those monies out, because

none of these teachers will be made redundant. They will be re-integrated back into the system.

But where the savings comes is we are making better use of the funding that we have. So where we would have a case of, at one school we would have a class of nine or ten children per class, and at another school we would have a class of eight children per class, we can combine those classes to make a normal-sized class. And now that leaves us with human resources that are able to be put back into the system to fill gaps that we were unable to fill because we simply do not have the funding for it.

But this is where we are. This is where the savings comes in. We are able to take what we are spending and spend it much more efficiently and in places where we can assist our children so they can do the things that need to be done within the school system.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Yes. Minister, thank you for that.

In talking about that, so if we are saving on infrastructure, what is the savings by closing a school? In other words, cutting out the electricity bill, cutting down?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** And that is a good question. So for Clearwater, as I said, about 90 per cent of the money is for staff. We will retain the staff. So a typical electricity bill for Clearwater would be in the region of about \$350,000 per year. Other things that we would save on are repairs. Clearwater is an ageing facility, and I believe over the last couple of years we have spent maybe close to about—just over \$1 million in doing little fixes here and there. And so having it emptied would be something that we can definitely move forward with.

Just as an example of the necessary expenditure for a school regardless of the number of students in it, because especially at the middle school level there is a requirement to provide the middle school curriculum. So whether there is one person in the class or there are 30 people in the class, you still have to provide a teacher for that. So Clearwater, with its 71 students, actually represents a cost to the Bermuda taxpayer of \$39,500 per student.

**The Speaker:** Second supplementary?

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** May I ask a point of clarification?

**The Speaker:** Oh, you can put that as a supplementary to him. You can do a supplementary. You can do a supplementary off of [MP Famous] question.

### SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Okay.

I just wanted to ask, Did the Minister say that at Clearwater 90 per cent of the staff would be retained there?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** And thank you for that point of clarification. What I did say was that all permanent staff will be retained. But there will be discussions as the public system operates, persons on work permits that are expiring, they can apply for positions. And if there is not a Bermudian, then typically that position is reallocated to them. So all teachers who are on permanent contracts will be retained. Teachers who may have expiring work permits this academic year will be invited to apply for positions. And they will be processed the same way they are normally processed from year to year.

We also have other staff who are on year-to-year contracts because of the type of work that they do. And those staff will be evaluated as they are evaluated on year to year.

But all staff who have permanent contracts will be retained.

**The Speaker:** You have a supplementary to that? Yes, put your supplementary.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you.

I just want to make absolutely clear. So when you are saying "retained," it is retained within the whole, wide education system in Bermuda versus being retained at Clearwater for those teachers?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Well, they cannot be retained at Clearwater because Clearwater is closing. They will be retained inside the system, and they will be reallocated. And in the Ministerial Statement, I did speak to the process that the Department of Education will have of one-on-one meetings with all of the permanent employees, as well as the work permit [holders] and all of the employees to have a conversation about what is their desired location, where they would like to be within the system, to hopefully accommodate them as much as possible.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Famous, do you have a supplementary to your original or a new question?

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** A new question.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Go on to your new question.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** I most likely will have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

### QUESTION 2: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Could the Minister tell us (I may have missed it), at Clearwater and at Heron Bay, what was the average size of each class?

**The Speaker:** He just answered that. But go ahead.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** The average size at Heron Bay is around 10 per class. And it is a little bit more difficult to calculate the average size of class at middle school because it is a different type of schooling system. And so you may have the M3 class, but some of them may be in one course while some of them are in a different course. So it is not particular. But what I can say is that Clearwater Middle School has 71 students, and 71 students, [compare that] with all of the other middle schools averaging 225 students.

As an aside, the maximum enrolment in any of our middle schools is 300 if you want to make that sort of comparison.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I do not ask questions randomly.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** Speak to the Chair, speak to the Chair.

### SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

So there has been this growing trend since I went to school that smaller classes are better, fewer students, more attention that the teacher can spend on each child. So why is it that we already have these classes that are small, but when you are combining, moving these children to other schools, you are going to make these classes bigger? Is that not reversing the trend that we want?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, as our schools, as our population has shrunk and people have had fewer children, I believe the birth rate has been in decline since the mid-1970s in Bermuda. People do not realise that. People do not realise that it has been in decline since the mid-1970s and we have been going in the opposite direction.

Mr. Speaker, to speak very candidly—

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** In 1988, and trust me, I am losing my mind reading all these data all the time. In 1988 we had nearly 8,000 students within our student population. In 2023 we have just over 4,000. Interestingly, in 2023 we have more buildings and more educators than we had in 1988. But I think what has happened is that persons have become accustomed to smaller classes. And there is this growing trend that says, *The smaller the class, the better outcomes for the students*. But, Mr. Speaker, there are virtually no data that support that [saying].

What data do support is that the best outcomes for students within the school system is (1) the quality of teaching; and (2) the quality of the parental involvement. And when we have those two clicking over, you look at any of our schools that people consider doing (quote—unquote) *well*, you will see that this combination is really working well.

So when we talk about the number of students within classroom periods, there is what the OECD calls *sweet spots*. But having nine and ten in a class is far below what that sweet spot is. And so sweet spots are determined by age. In certain ages more socialisation is needed than actual academic work. And as they get older, the academic work becomes more important than the actual number [of students] in the class. But you are able to have more children within a class as they get older because they are more independent and they require less attention.

So the idea that the smaller the class automatically equals better outcomes is a misnomer. All data show that this is not the case.

**The Speaker:** Your second supplementary on the second question, or your third question?

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Second and last supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Sorry. I have a supplementary on the first.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Do you not see me standing, man?

**The Speaker:** One second.  
You have a supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** I have a supplementary, yes.

**The Speaker:** On the response?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Yes, before we move on.

**The Speaker:** Member, because his supplementary is related to the response.

Put your supplementary.

## SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you.

Minister, when answering that question you indicated that student numbers had fallen to just above 4,000. I assume that this is [for] government schools. If it is, if that assumption is correct, do you know what the private school number is? Has that gone up or down?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, it is quoted from the data from 1988 to 2023. In fact, the Member is right. The numbers in private schools have declined as well. It has not declined as much as public schools, but there is a decline in both sides. We attribute that to the lowering birth rate. There is attrition between public and private. And of course, when I talk to my private counterparts, what they are finding is that their students are being sent overseas to boarding schools a lot earlier than they normally would in their process, for whatever reason.

**The Speaker:** Member.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Yes. Back to my question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us, is there a maximum number of students that should be in a class?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, I did answer that earlier on. The maximum number is set by the Minister every year. Currently right now in the lower primaries it is, I said I believe it was around 16 or 17. And in the upper primaries it is about between 25 and 28.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Supplementary, anyone?

No.

Government Whip, would you still like to put your question?

## QUESTION 1: SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues.

Minister, I have heard on the news and several others have who have called me say that there is no space at Whitney and Dellwood, meaning that Clearwater students would have to go to Sandys. Can you elaborate on that, please?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, could he please repeat the question? I am sorry. I was distracted.

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** This happens. I understand. Minister, as I said, I have heard and several others who have called me say that there is no space at Whitney and Dellwood, meaning that Clearwater students will have to go to Sandys. Is that correct? Or can you elaborate?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, the maximum enrolment at middle school is 100 per year, 100 per year. Currently at Clearwater we have 21 M1 students and 26 M2 students who will need to be transferred because the M3 students will be going off into signature school. At Whitney currently, in M1 there are about 77 M1s and 82 M2s. Now, I am leaving space there. And at Dellwood, both cohorts are actually in the middle-60s. So there is space at both schools to accommodate the children from Clearwater.

**The Speaker:** Does that answer your question? Because I think you asked something about students going to Sandys.

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** Yes, Minister, that was part of it.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Yes. And so—and I have read that in the paper as well. Someone had called the news and said that they had heard that *Whitney and Dellwood were full and my child would have to go to Sandys, and how is my child going to go to Sandys while staying in St. George's?* So there is space at Whitney and there is space at Dellwood to accommodate—I believe [there is space] at both schools to accommodate all of the students if that is where they wish to go. But we anticipate Whitney would be the preferred location unless there is an issue with Whitney.

And we did have that. One parent said that they do not want their children to go to Whitney; they preferred Dellwood, when we met with them. So there will be some persons going to Dellwood, it looks like.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** No, Mr. Speaker. But thanks for the clarification, Minister.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** I have a supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Put your supplementary.

## SUPPLEMENTARY

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** My question is, the M1 students who are at Clearwater, is that the projected enrolment into M1, number of children? Because we have got three, M1, M2 and M3, right? So M3 is going to go to a signature school. So the M2 children, they definitely have to find another middle school because they have to go, right? But the M1 children will be the incoming population from the area primary schools. And you have already projected that to be the 60 or whatever it is, right?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Okay.

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Thank you.

The projected . . . as Francis Patton is becoming a parish primary school, which is one of the feeders into Clearwater, there will be no students from Francis Patton going to Clearwater. That leaves St. David's, East End and Prep [St. George's Preparatory School]. Between St. David's, East End and Prep, in Ps, the total number of P6 students, if my memory serves me correctly, there are 18 at Prep, there are 7 at St. David's and maybe 9 at East End. The predicted total of students coming out of those schools in St. George's who will enter into public middle school is estimated to be around 18.

**The Speaker:** No, supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Yes, I have a supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

## SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** You had answered the question from MP Tyrrell about the people who are moving who are the M1 now, M2 now and the incoming. And you had indicated Dellwood and Whitney. Will there be choice given to those parents . . . You have answered the question on space. Will they be able to choose between Whitney and Dellwood? Or will that be decided?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Interesting that you said that. And that is one of the reasons why someone complained about Sandys. Because when we met with them they said they will have a choice between Whitney, Dellwood or Sandys, if they wanted to go to Sandys for whatever reason. So the choice is theirs.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** It is interesting that in the data that we looked at, one of student's address was an SN, which means Sandys, I mean Southampton . . . So we just figured if that is where they actually do live, they may want to go up there. But what we do recognise is the numbers that I gave you, there may be a situation where if all of them want to go to Whitney, they may not all fit. So there will have to be accommodations along those lines.

But the choice is going to be theirs, and we are going to try and accommodate them and accommodate everyone's first choice as much as we can.

As I said, it was very interesting to watch and listen to a parent say, *Absolutely not Whitney for my child. I want to go to Dellwood* in the meeting with the parents. So obviously parents have some idea of what it is their children want or need.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** I think I have a second supplementary. Is that correct?

**The Speaker:** Yes, you have a second supplementary.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you.

So just to that answer and the point you gave about, if everybody wanted to go to Whitney, not everybody would necessarily have space, and some might have to go to Dellwood. So in that sort of circumstance, is a preference of priority going to be given to locational requests? So for example, if someone is in St. David's, are they going to have preference over Whitney than someone who is further west?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** That is a very good question, and it is something that we will have to factor into how this happens. We are hoping that we will have a smooth transition because there are sufficient spaces between the two schools. Some people—you know, there are different reasons. Some people say, *I work in town. I'd rather go to Dellwood because it's right there*. One of the reasons of Clearwater being the way it is is a lot of parents from St. George's, particularly the St. George's area, put their children in Whitney and not Clearwater because it is on their travels to town.

So there are lots of reasons around why parents want to make the decisions that they make. But our intent on this is to give them as many options as we can possibly give them so it is as smooth a transition for their children as it is for them.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

MP Jackson, do you still want to put your questions? I know you have asked a lot of supplementaries.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I am done. I have asked my questions.

**The Speaker:** Oh, okay.

Members, Minister, this brings us to an end of questions for Statements this morning.

We can now move on.

## CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

**The Speaker:** Does anyone wish to make a contribution? Let me clear and reset the clock.

MP Swan, I see you on your feet.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Would you like to make a contribution at this time?

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to my feet to send condolences, and I may be associating because I have been away for quite some time. But again I was talking to one of my dear friends, and we were chuckling about someone. He said, *Oh, you know they are gone?* I said, *Gone where?* Well, Mr. Speaker, I stand to my feet to give condolences to [the family of] my dear friend, the late Albert "Pioneer" Francis from St. George's. And I wish to be associated, Mr. Speaker, because sadly I did not know Pioneer had passed.

And he was one of the first characters I got to know when I actually came to work in St. George's proper when we took a trip together with a group of golfers in 1987, two days after or the day after Hurricane Emily hit. And we went to Cape Cod on a contingent with the Bermuda versus the New England PGA group. And stories from that trip go on today. His family, he had two sisters who married Whale Bay fellows. One is still living in there, married a Lambert. And Noel Van Putten was his brother-in-law. I knew his brother Bobcat. I knew his late brother Bobcat and his late brother Kingsley Francis. His two sisters I have mentioned as well, and his family, his grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am very sad to have learned this way that my good friend Pioneer had passed away. When he was St. George's go-to fellow for trucking. And he came with any number of stories, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been done, but not done by me because this is my dear friend whom I am associating my comments with. And I am giving him due respect because I got to know him very well. He was part of my family, part of my life and very much a part of my St. George's connection.

And I want his family to know how much I will miss him, how much I will miss connecting with him down on the bridge, in the square, talking about our times and travels and the like, Mr. Speaker. And I

thank my good friend, Brutus, for sharing with me that he had passed, this morning when I gave him a call to say hello.

And all I would say in closing to my condolences associated with Pioneer, Albert Pioneer Francis, is, *Goody-goody*.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution?

MP Caines.

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge some birthdays in my constituency. Ms. Gloria Greene, she is 86 years old, Mr. Speaker. Juliette Spence, she just celebrated her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mr. George Hayward, Albert “Soda” Greene, Elaine Smith, John Hodson, Sandy Tucker-Scott, Morris Rogers, Vera Mills, Mr. Speaker. Joan Hodgkins, Rosalie Robinson, Valerie Richmond, Charles Dill, Keijon Goins, Diane Philpott, Eleanor Brown (she is 93 years old, Mr. Speaker), Aqueelah Simmons, Donna-Mae Gomes, Cora Wilson, Denton Scraders and Derrick Wilson. Those are the last two weeks’ birthdays for constituency 14.

Thank you for allowing me to acknowledge the great people in constituency 14, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to . . .

MP Jackson.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to send condolences to the family of Vernon “Vernal” Davis. He was a great tennis player, a great sportsman. And certainly my introduction to Mr. Davis was . . . And there are Members here who would like to be associated, so I am going to go with the whole House would like to send condolences and our sympathy to the family of Vernal Davis.

**The Speaker:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** I first met him when I got married. I happened to have married a tennis player. And so my entire social life was built around weekend tennis tournaments, practicing throughout the week and very close-knit tennis community at that time. And I believe that the tennis community remains a tight-knit community.

But Vernal was always the feature. He had a wonderful personality, and he always had a smile. Very good-natured, and certainly he had his signature style on the tennis court as well. And so he certainly did provide and set himself up as a legacy within the community.

One of the pieces about Vernal Davis—and I knew this in my heart when I was reading the article in

today’s paper. But I noticed that his daughter had made mention of this as well. And I would like to just put this out there, that one of Vernal’s pieces was that if he had just had the resources, if somebody had just invested in him that he would have loved to have seen the professional circuit in tennis. And so even if one day in the distant future it becomes his legacy that we are able to put an investment into those people, those athletes who really take tennis as a lifestyle, and certainly Vernal walked around in his tennis shorts until he was in his retirement years. Like he just did not give it up. And if we could find an opportunity to support our young people so that maybe one or two might reach that professional level, and he would be able to see his goal achieved from heaven, I believe that this would certainly sit well with Mr. Davis.

And so with that, I would like to take my seat. But again, my deepest sympathy and condolences to the family.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other Member?

MP Famous, you have your three minutes.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off with some condolences to the family of Mr. Llewellyn Eugene O’Neill Hackett of Collector’s Hill. He was one of my constituents. His daughters, Ulys Burch and Dionne Hackett and a few others.

Also, Ms. Beatrice Elizabeth Palmer-Hodgson, commonly known as “Betty.” She was and will always be a Devonshire person. Born on Jubilee Road, lived on Green Acres and now resides at Christ Church, Devonshire. Mr. Speaker, her service was uplifting, and it had a true turnout of all of the Devonshire families. Her daughters, Claudette and Amy, were there and much of her extended family, Christ Church family, some of the Hodgsons. You know, they took some of our people.

Mr. Speaker, moving to a different tune, I would like to congratulate Ministers, Lt. Col. Burch, the Attorney General, Minister Tinee Furbert and Minister Vance Campbell for the vision in transforming what some people know as police barracks down the east. Some call it the garrison. Yesterday the Ministry of Works and Engineering, Department of Child and Family Services and quango Bermuda Housing Corporation were present when there was an opening for what we call now the Independent Living Centre. What it is, Mr. Speaker, in one minute or less, is as our children who were in the foster system aged out, they often had nowhere to turn to. And some went in ways that they should not have gone to.

This Government in the 2020 pledge to give a home to some of these children—there are now 12 units down there for six males and for six females. And I just want to thank the Ministers and all of their departments, especially the Attorney General for her

vision and drive in getting this done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution?

None.

We will move on.

## MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

**The Speaker:** There are two Bills to be introduced this morning. The first is in the name of the Deputy Premier.

Deputy Premier, would you like to introduce your matter?

**Hon. Walter H. Roban:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am actually doing it on behalf of the Premier, as I am actually presenting the Bill.

**The Speaker:** Yes.

## FIRST READING

### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2023

**Hon. Walter H. Roban:** Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the Public Holidays Amendment and Validation Act 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

And the second is in the name of the Minister of Works.

Minister.

## FIRST READING

### MUNICIPALITIES AMENDMENT ACT 2023

**Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the Municipalities Amendment Act 2023.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

We will move on.

## OPPOSITION BILLS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## NOTICE OF MOTIONS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**The Speaker:** Members, and particularly for our listening audience, we are now at that stage again today where we will resume the economic debate on the expenditure of revenue for the coming year. And this morning the first Ministry up will be that of National Security.

And, Members and particularly listening audience again, as you know, there are eight hours set aside each day for these debates. And the first five hours are for the National Security. And the remaining three hours will go to Youth, Culture and Sport.

This morning, as you know, once we go into Committee, the Speaker is out of the Chamber. And the House is turned over into the hands of the Chairman, led by a panel of Chairmen. This morning, MP Pearman will be the first Member of the Panel of Chairs in the Chair, and the House will be under his direction when we get into the first debate, which is National Security.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Walter H. Roban:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the House do now resume in Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2023/24.

**The Speaker:** Are there any objections?

There are none.

Members.

## House in Committee at 11:25 am

[Mr. Scott Pearman, Chairman]

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

#### ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

[Continuation thereof]

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Honourable Members and the listening public. We are now in the Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24.

This is the debate on National Security, and we will be considering Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45, which are all the Heads of the Ministry of National Security. The Honourable Minister Michael Weeks is the Minister in charge.

I call upon you to proceed, Minister. You have the floor. It is a five-hour debate, and it is now 11:25.

### MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I move the following Heads: 83—Ministry of National Security; 6—Ministry of Defence; 7—Police; 12—Customs; 25—Department of Corrections; and 45—Fire Services be now taken under consideration.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, I am pleased to present the current accounts estimate for the Ministry of National Security Headquarters, Head 83, which can be found on pages B-257 through B-260 of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure Book. Mr. Chairman, I will briefly discuss the Ministry as a whole followed by the information for Head 83—Ministry Headquarters, and then in detail for each of the Heads under the Ministry, namely, Head 6—Defence, Head 7—Police, Head 12—Customs, Head 25—Department of Corrections and Head 45—Fire Services.

Mr. Chairman, five hours have been allocated for this Ministry, and I intend to give sufficient time to the Opposition to ask questions or seek clarification on the financial year 2023/24 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

Mr. Chairman, the mission of the Ministry of National Security Headquarters is *Working together to keep you safe*. Mr. Chairman, the mission statements, programmes and budgets within the Ministry are aligned with this overriding mission.

I will briefly set out some of the priorities of the Ministry for the next financial year before moving to the expenditure overview.

#### Priorities

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Violence and antisocial behaviour continue to plague our community. Combating it continues to be a primary focus of this Ministry, and the budget for the departments reflect this focus. This includes the following:

- increased funding for additional officers at Customs and the Coast Guard to tighten our borders to interdict and deter the importation of weapons and drugs;
- increased funding for a refurbished dock scanner to interdict and deter the importation of weapons and drugs;
- increased funding for additional officers at the Bermuda Police Service who will get criminals off the street and deter criminal activity;
- increased funding for the Gang Violence Reduction Team to provide focused programmes for at-risk youth to assist those vulnerable youth with better life choices and options other than gangs, violence and antisocial behaviour; and
- a new Island-wide CCTV system, an upgraded CCTV system that will aid in the identification of suspects in the event of criminal activity, serve as a deterrent to potential criminals and provide increased safety for our community.

Mr. Chairman, this Government recognises the major role that information and communication technology plays both in business and in our personal lives. With that dependency comes risk. To mitigate that risk, I will shortly be tabling cybersecurity and cybercrime legislation. I will speak in more detail on these further on in my presentation.

Mr. Chairman, I would now draw your attention to page B-257 of the Estimates Book where you will note that the Ministry of National Security budget for the financial year 2023/24 is \$131,334,000, an increase of \$6,621,000, or 5 per cent, which will be discussed in more detail in the individual heads. This increase is mainly owing to the funding of vacant and previously unfunded posts, which will be addressed in the respective departments' budget briefs.

Mr. Chairman, page B-257 shows a revenue estimate for the Ministry of \$1,468,000, a \$414,000 increase, or 39 per cent over financial year 2022/23, which will also be discussed in more detail in the individual heads.

Mr. Chairman, page B-257 also details the current account expenditure of the departments that make up the overall budget for the Ministry by Head, as follows:

HEAD	Department	FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24 Estimate
83	Ministry HQ	\$ 2,018,000	\$ 2,683,000
6	Defence	7,857,000	8,558,000
7	Police	62,158,000	62,625,000
12	Customs	16,575,000	17,696,000
25	Corrections	22,893,000	24,892,000
45	Fire Service	13,212,000	14,880,000
	Ministry Total	\$124,713,000	\$131,334,000

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, page B-257 also details a capital budget of \$5,000,815, which I will address in more detail in the respective heads of the budget estimate. Mr. Chairman, we also note on page B-257 that the employee numbers are increasing for 2023/24, from 1,065 to 1,106. This is an increase of 41 funded posts, or 4 per cent. I will address the changes that make up this total in each of the heads' budgets.

### HEAD 83—MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I now turn to the current account estimates for Head 83—Ministry Headquarters, which can be found on page B-258.

Mr. Chairman, the objectives of the Ministry Headquarters are to ensure the Minister's policy objectives are met; to ensure that the Ministry and Departments deliver services effectively and comply with relevant legislation, policies and procedures; to plan, mitigate and respond to threats to security; to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour; and to promote public safety.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of National Security Headquarters' budget allocation of \$2,683,000 for the financial year 2023/24 represents an increase of \$665,000, or a 33 per cent increase, over the 2022/23 budget allocation. This is primarily due to providing a \$325,000 increase to the Gang Violence Reduction Team programmes; \$150,000 to recover the fees for the Liquor Licensing Authority; and \$190,000 for legal fees and incidentals.

#### General Summary

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, on page B-258 of the current account estimates you will note that there are seven business units within the Ministry Headquarters. The estimate for business unit 93000, Administration, is \$1,567,000, an increase of \$360,000, or 30 per cent. This comprises \$150,000 to cover the fees for the Liquor Licensing Authority, \$190,000 for legal fees and incidentals; and \$20,000 for maintenance fees for radio equipment.

Mr. Chairman, the estimates for business units 93002, 93003 and 93004 are for the Parole Board, Treatment of Offenders Board and Police Complaints Authority, respectively, and are unchanged from the original and revised estimates for financial year 2022/23.

Mr. Chairman, all of the costs that make up the \$20,000 associated with [business unit] 93007 have been included in 93000.

Mr. Chairman, business unit 93008 relates to the Gang Violence Reduction programme with an estimate for financial year 2023/24 of \$946,000. This represents a \$325,000 increase, or 52 per cent increase, over financial year 2022/23 in order for the team to expand programmes to tackle the scourge of

gang violence in our community by early intervention with at-risk youth.

Mr. Chairman, the final business unit in the General Summary on page B-258 is for a business unit that is not being funded this year. This is 93997, the National Health Emergency, which was created for COVID-19 response including the Quarantine Hotel costs which are not anticipated in financial year 2023/24.

#### Subjective Analysis

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would now like to address page B-259 of the current account estimates. This page includes the subjective analysis of current account estimates and the employee numbers, or full-time equivalents.

Mr. Chairman, four of the object codes see no change in estimates for financial year 2023/24 over the original budget of 2022/23, and I will therefore limit my comments to the other nine that have been changed. Salaries increased by \$72,000, or 10 per cent, to reflect a regrading of a job description and filling of an administrative post which was previously held by a temporary employee. Training has been decreased by \$16,000, or 44 per cent, to reflect the decreased need for training for national security risks. Further decreases are also reflected in travel, by \$20,000, or 33 per cent, as meetings and training continue to take place remotely.

Increases are reflected in communications by \$15,000, or 63 per cent, for cybersecurity; professional services by \$533,000, or 61 per cent to cover fees for the Liquor Licensing Authority, legal fees and short-term counselling services for victims of gang violence. Repair and maintenance has increased by \$2,000, or 200 per cent, mainly for photocopier maintenance fees. Insurance of \$20,000 is for the radio tower equipment, which was initially allocated to business unit 93007. Material and supplies have increased by \$30,000, or 33 per cent, to support the increase in programmes for the Gang Violence Reduction Team.

There has also been an increase of \$29,000, or 17 per cent, in other expenses primarily for an expansion of cybersecurity capabilities.

Mr. Chairman, in respect of revenue for Head 83, it should be noted that the Liquor Licensing Authority transferred to the Ministry of National Security on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. It is anticipated that the fees will increase to \$450,000 as the country resumes to near-normalcy in the opening of restaurants, bars and special events following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chairman, the employee numbers or full-time equivalents has decreased to seven with the elimination of one post, the personal staff post, in order to make savings.

Mr. Chairman, I will now move to page C-15 for Capital Acquisitions.

### Capital Acquisitions

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for 2023/24 for the Ministry of National Security Headquarters, \$1,310,000, which comprises \$13,000 for computer equipment, a carry-forward of \$1,036,000 for the upgraded Island-wide CCTV system that I spoke to earlier and \$261,000 toward the Cybersecurity Incident Response Team programme.

Mr. Chairman, I will now speak to some of the accomplishments that the Ministry had in 2022/23 followed by the plans for financial year 2023/24 before moving to the other heads under the Ministry.

### Cybersecurity

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, to ensure that Bermuda's critical services such as our energy supply, telecommunications, water infrastructure and government are adequately protected against increasing cyber threats, a Cybersecurity Bill has been drafted and will be shortly tabled in the Honourable House. This Bill will establish the minimum standards for the protection of critical national information infrastructure, a cybersecurity governance board to oversee the protection of these entities and a national cybersecurity incident response to assist government and private sector entities with preparing for and responding to cyber attacks. This Bill will be shortly followed by the tabling of a Cybercrime Bill.

Mr. Chairman, Bermuda currently has at least 13 legislative Acts that speak to cybercrime with the main piece of legislation being the Computer Misuse Act 1996. Yes, Mr. Chairman, 1996. Cybercrime has come a long way since 1996. Each of these Acts requires upgrading and amalgamation to meet the international standards established by the Budapest Convention. The Cybercrime Bill will ensure that Bermuda's legislation meets the requirements of the Budapest Convention. This legislation will provide modern definitions of cybercrimes and will provide an effective foundation for investigating and prosecuting cybercrimes.

Mr. Chairman, we are increasingly dependent on information technology to store sensitive information and support critical services. Cyber texts represents a significant threat to organisations, Bermuda and our economy. We must continue to improve our ability to detect, respond to and recover from cyber attacks. Our cybersecurity strategy provides the appropriate framework for the Government of Bermuda to ensure that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems across all critical segments of our society and economy are designed, implemented, operated and maintained with adequate security.

As we continue to develop our FinTech sector and pursue our digital transformation ambitions, we must continue to implement our national cybersecurity strategy to ensure Bermuda's prosperity and safety.

Mr. Chairman, the cybersecurity key accomplishments during financial year 2022/23 are here included as follows:

- The Ministry of National Security after extensive consultation with Bermuda stakeholders completed a first draft of the new cybersecurity legislation that I just spoke to.
- The Ministry continues to lead the development of a comprehensive information system risk-management programme, working as part of the Cross-Ministry Cyber Risk Management Team that includes the government, IBT Chief Information Officer, Head of the PATI/PIPA Unit, representatives from Libraries and Archives and other key stakeholders.
- The team identifies cyber risks impacting government information and systems and develops strategies, policies and standards to ensure the risks are adequately addressed.
- The security manager during financial year 2022/23 provided cybersecurity guidance and assistance for heads of departments, government staff, vendors and contractors. This also included presentations to heads of organisations, boards and committees within the government and private sector, including the Seaport and Civil Aviation Security Committee.
- National Security also provided support to government departments for securing their IT systems and information; providing guidance for appropriate planning, design, and documentation to comply with approved policies and standards; and meet security requirements and defined security objectives. This included identifying threats to information, IT systems, components and processes; identifying vulnerabilities impacting IT systems, architecture, components and data flows; identifying attack vectors and assessing the likelihood and impact of attacks. This work included providing recommendations for secure design and appropriate administrative, operational and technical safeguards to meet security requirements for protecting information and IT systems and preventing, detecting, responding to and recovering from cybersecurity incidents.
- The Security Manager and representatives from the Bermuda Police Service attended a UK Overseas Territories Cybersecurity Conference in February. The Security Manager gave a presentation at the conference on Cybersecurity Programmes Implementation, which included good cybersecurity governance and management practices. The presentation was well received, with many participants indicating that they found the subject matter and guidance to be very valuable.

- The Ministry held a Cybersecurity Incident Response Capacity-Building Workshop with the International Telecommunications Union and Bermuda critical information infrastructure organisations, that included incident response exercises and training related to best practices.
- The Ministry performed a national cyber risk assessment of Bermuda's critical national infrastructure sector entities in collaboration with an independent international team of cybersecurity experts. This assessment included one-on-one meetings with more than two dozen Bermuda critical information infrastructure organisations. The results of the assessment are being collated now in a report due by month's end and will be used to update the Bermuda cybersecurity strategy and prioritise high-risk areas for protection against cyber threats.

#### Gang Violence Reduction Team

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I made a Statement to this Honourable House on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2022, where I advised my honourable colleagues that since taking up the role of Minister of National Security at the beginning of April 2022, addressing violence in our community has been my highest priority. Not more than 48 hours after my appointment, I found myself performing the grim task of offering condolences to two families who were grieving the loss of their young sons to gun violence. On that occasion, I expressed that the issue of gang violence and antisocial behaviour is one for all of us to tackle. It has been said before, and it warrants repeating: The eradication of violent crime in Bermuda requires us to work together as a community. We will not police our way out of this.

Mr. Chairman, the root causes are a painful reflection of generations of economic and social inequality in Bermuda and the mind-set that it creates. This, combined with a number of other factors, including the breakdown of the family unit, lack of or limited education and employment opportunities make it very difficult to break this cycle and enable meaningful social mobility. However, we can and must address these root causes to stop the cycle of youth turning to gangs.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry Gang Violence Reduction Team [GVRT] led by Bishop Leroy Bean has worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide a number of programmes including the following:

- The Redemption [Farm] Programme, a programme aimed to be socially restorative and discourage this criminal behaviour. The programme includes case management services, educational services and post-training sup-

port. The trainees receive a weekly stipend for their work.

- School Outreach—The team continues to focus resources on school outreach. The schools are a primary recruiting space for gangs and antisocial behaviour. The team provides services and support, including individual student case management, mentoring check-ins, specialised small groups, specialised programmes, mediation and negotiation, and incident management support services. The team also conducts weekly visits to primary and middle schools, daily visits to high schools to be on hand to offer guidance and assist with interventions.
- Workplace and Mentoring programme is a job placement programme that employs and targets at-risk youth who participated in the High School Intervention programmes.
- Early Intervention Programmes include the Hype Kings and I AM programmes, which are delivered at the primary and middle school levels that target at-risk boys and girls. The team has selected six schools by the Ministry of Education. The initiative is designed to reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors and increase participating youth academic motivation and developmental factors.
- Street-level outreach work and case management. The [Gang Violence Reduction] Team continues to lower community tensions by this outreach programme with a focus on prison, in school and at the street level.
- The Coordinated [Crisis] Response Team is available following a crisis or a serious incident to restore peace in the community and assist family members, relatives or witnesses to violent crimes. The community team provide crisis counselling to residents following a violent incident. The team goes door-to-door offering support and offering guidance on services to area-affected residents. There is a hospital team that attend the hospital to support family and friends following a serious violence incident that results in hospitalisation. Both teams not only provide support, but calm tensions to reduce the risk of further violence.
- Mediations and negotiations. The team assists where needed to bridge gaps and foster relationships.
- Community services are available to support young people in obtaining their court-mandated community service hours.

Mr. Chairman, the team also provides non-traditional counselling sessions and family group sessions; monitors court sessions and provides client advocacy support during court; connects clients to various social supports including Financial Assistance, Legal Aid, and food support; provides clients who are

seeking employment with assistance in developing résumés and applying for jobs; and provides conflict resolution services and mediating between clients to prevent further incidents.

Mr. Chairman, in our schools the [Gang Violence Reduction] Team provides incident management support. This includes facilitating multi-agency department meetings to strategise the development of violence mitigation plans where there is high tension or incidents between students. It delivers ongoing mediation sessions, [conducts] daily school lunch visits to our high schools and delivers individual youth sessions.

Mr. Chairman, the Gang Violence Reduction Team's key accomplishments include the following:

The Gang Violence Reduction Case Management and Outreach Services have supported hundreds of young men in our community. Clients are placed with a case manager who assists them with securing housing, food, employment and court support, and in making healthy life choices. The [Gang Violence Reduction] Team operates with client-led, strength-based programmes that meet client's individual needs and provide a sense of belonging, consistency and impartial guidance. The team directly supported over 78 at-risk clients between the ages of 18 and 35 within our Case Management and Outreach Services.

The Gang Violence Reduction Team delivered another successful full Redemption Programme in 2022/23. Some 15 trainees completed the 25-week programme. The programme is a specialised therapeutic, incentivised programme for at-risk trainees aged 18 to 35. The Redemption Programme trainees received a weekly stipend to participate in a training programme that includes Case Management Services, Educational Services and Post Training Support.

The Gang Violence Reduction Team continues to focus resources on School Outreach to prevent gang and antisocial behaviour in school children. (I will use, Mr. Chairman, the "GVRT" for short, going forward.) The GVRT provides a number of services and supports to schools which include individual student case management, mentoring, specialised small-group meetings, specialised programmes, mediation and negotiation, and incident management support services. The GVRT provides post-incident support which includes security meetings, school administration strategy meetings, creation of mitigation plans, and coordinating and leading multi-agency meetings to assess and disseminate information pertaining to gang-related incidents.

The GVRT delivered another successful full Work Placement and Mentoring Programme in fiscal year 2022/23. Fifteen students completed the eight-week training programme. The Work Placement and Mentoring Initiative is a job placement programme that selects and employs targeted at-risk young people

who have participated in our High School Intervention programme and targeted students in alternative education programmes. The programme provides students an eight- to ten-week paid work experience within different local companies, and mentoring support to ensure their success in the workplace. The students are paid \$350 per week.

Mr. Chairman, the work of the team also included the following:

- 50 to 60 mentoring/casework sessions per quarter;
- 20 to 25 family meetings per quarter along with over 60 direct contacts with families;
- The team attended court daily and advocated for between 20 to 25 clients quarterly;
- The team held between 25 to 30 mediations and negotiations quarterly;
- In 2022/23 the team was called out 56 times to various violent incidents in the community;
- The Hospital Team was activated 32 times to provide support to family and provide post-incident support;
- The Community Team was activated 15 times to provide immediate crisis counselling to residents and post-incident door-to-door neighbourhood check-ins to offer affected residents further support;
- The team has delivered 85 individual case management/job coaching sessions with the Redemption Programme trainees;
- The team has also supported trainees through 18 crisis situations;
- The programme delivered 52 sessions covering key areas which include job readiness skills, life skills, career exposure, goal setting and general personal development;
- Three trainees are completing the Redemption Programme;
- 10 trainees were offered a full-time or part-time job during their training placement and have recently transitioned into their new roles;
- Three of our current trainees are actively seeking full-time employment and/or part-time employment. The team is supporting these trainees to prepare résumés and apply to various businesses for jobs;
- 172 young people from various services were directly supported by our services in 2022/23;
- The team quarterly provided 50 to 60 individual and small-group employment support sessions, education sessions, personal development sessions, youth leadership and monthly check-ins;
- 25 to 35 meetings were held quarterly with outside agencies including the Bermuda Police Service, Court Services, Workforce Development, Financial Assistance, Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), legal

support, counselling services, food service support, employers and Immigration;

- On average, 20 family meetings quarterly along with the 30 to 35 contacts with families;
- 15 to 20 mediations and negotiations were held each quarter;
- Each quarter there were 20 to 30 Restorative Circle Groups with young people and parents. Mr. Chairman, of note is the following:
- 100 per cent of students completed the Work Readiness Workshop, and 13 of the 14 students completed the entire six-week programme;
- 9 of the 15 students never missed a scheduled workday;
- Business partners demonstrated their engagement with the programme with 89 per cent completing weekly evaluations and coaching meetings with students;
- A total of 130 job-coaching sessions were held by the programme manager;
- 90 per cent of the business partners have indicated they would participate in the programme again;
- 100 per cent of students would recommend this programme to others;
- 100 per cent of parents saw personal growth in their child over the eight-week period;
- 13 students were offered an additional two weeks of paid work based on their weekly performance reports and supervisor satisfaction;
- Six of the students have subsequently been hired in part-time or full-time positions by the companies;
- The [Gang Violence Reduction] Team made five referrals to additional emotional and social support services and supported students through eight crisis incidents; and
- 100 per cent of students in the programme stayed clear of antisocial behaviour or criminal activity for the length of the programme.

#### Disaster Reduction Risk Management

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in 2018 the Ministry of National Security formed the Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation team (DRRM). (Mr. Chairman, I will be saying “DRRM” to stop myself from getting tongue-tied.) The mission statement of the DRRM team is to build national disaster risk reduction and mitigation capacities with our community, partners and stakeholders by identifying and reducing the underlying drivers of risk to save lives and protect property.

Disasters are the result of natural occurrences, human intent, error or as a result of failed systems. They can be divided into categories such as terrorism, technological hazards, environmental inci-

dents, epidemics and transportation hazards. The DRRM functions as the coordinating body between first responder agencies, governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies and other organisations.

The goal of the team is prevent new and to reduce existing disaster risks through the implementation of integrated and inclusive measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery and thus strengthen resilience.

The DRRM team is responsible for harmonising the national disaster plans and ensuring that all agencies and government departments are aware of, engaged in and fully committed to continuously updating their plans, training their staff in the execution of those plans and ensuring that when the need arises the plans work. Many departments do not have business continuity plans, and the DRRM team is an integral part of the Bermuda Government's commitment to ensuring that there are adequate mitigation measures in place to address identified risk, whether it be man-made or naturally occurring. The DRRM consists of employees who are reassigned from various departments.

The key accomplishments of the DRRM team for this current budget cycle include coordinating the Emergency Measures Organisation (or the EMO) executive meetings for Tropical Storm Alex, Hurricane Earl and Hurricane Fiona. The DRRM team was responsible for the operation of the EMO Operations Centre, which is currently located at the Hamilton Fire Station. This serves as the multi-agency coordinating centre during any major incident.

The DRRM team continues to work with Skyport Corporation on the updating and training required for the airport emergency plan. Small exercise modules are planned each year with a large live exercise every three years, the last being in November 2021. The DRRM team has been assisting the Bermuda Civil Aviation Authority with the civil aviation investigation of air accidents, with incidents regulations enforced in each of the territories. The provision requires, amongst other matters, that there shall be established in the territory a comprehensive system for providing assistance to aircraft, and accident victims and their families. A plan to address the aforementioned requirement is being developed, and all of the supporting agencies have to add additional sections within their plans to facilitate the assistance as required in the event of an aircraft accident.

Some of the requirements of this plan are addressing potential immigration challenges, visa requirements, et cetera; accommodation; transportation; reunification centre location; psychological assistance; disaster victim identification, et cetera.

Hurricane season 2022 saw another active season in which the DRRM team prepared public messaging. The team also stood up the EMO operations centre at the Hamilton Fire Station and part-

nered with the Ministry of Public Works to use a web-based hurricane reporting tool for responding agencies. The team also chaired the monthly supply chain meetings with stakeholders including government departments and the private sector since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The meetings have proven to be very informative and important. The collective data provided an understanding of the global supply chain challenges to local businesses that have impacted prices on imported goods such as shortage of overland trucking and rail in the US, fuel rate increases, climate challenges impacting food supply, importers sourcing items and negotiating prices, local importers competing with larger market and also sourcing alternate supplier, China's zero-COVID-19 policies, Avian bird flu impact on the poultry and egg sectors, regional issues with supply as a result of conflict, availability of 20-foot shipping containers, and microchip shortages impacting vehicle and electronic production. This information enables government to assess the availability of resources, food and other essential items including emergency supplies.

In November, the DRRM team worked with the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources in coordinating a multi-agency tabletop oil pollution exercise which involved 16 local agencies. This will develop into a multi-agency live exercise scheduled for Tobacco Bay in May 2023.

In January a planning conference was held on the memorandum of understanding [MOU] between the UK, the USA and Bermuda for the response to a serious risk to public health or safety. This will lead to a live tabletop exercise in March (this month) to test this MOU.

In February 2023 the emergency broadcast frequency, FM 100.1, was upgraded with a digital component complementing the analogue station for listeners to tune in online. This project has been made possible by collaborating with the Department of Information and Digital Technology and the Department of Communication. The DRRM team was responsible for a radio interoperability presentation and tabletop exercise held in November 2022 for agencies on the Government Public Safety Radio System to be able to communicate with each other when coordinating responses to incidents. The DRRM team is also assisting with the updating of the Government Public Safety Radio System standing operating procedures.

With the BELCO national power outage, which occurred in February 2023, the DRRM team had the emergency broadcast frequency, FM 100.1, live within 40 minutes of the outage at the emergency broadcast facility. Mr. Chairman, 100.1 FM has supported the Chairman for EMO Executive Actions.

In February the DRRM coordinated along with Government House the training of approximately 30 staff from EMO Executive Agencies on a four-day Multi-Agency Gold Commander incident training

course. This training will lay the foundations for the senior commanders to lead major incidents and interact with the many other agencies that it will take to bring a major incident to its best conclusion possible for Bermuda. Incorporated with this training was training for 40 senior leaders within government and from outside agencies who will head up departments that would be responding to major incidents so they will have the knowledge to understand the role of the Gold Commander.

In March 2023 there will be three training sessions held on oil [spill] response training for 70 staff, over two two-day training sessions to train them to level one and level two of the International Maritime Organisation Oil [Spill] Response Training certification, one session to train 35 staff to level three of the International Maritime Organization Oil [Spill] Response Training certification. After each training session, there will be a practical exercise in oil spill training.

Mr. Chairman, the event coordination occurred during this past year for the following events where agency continuous planning was coordinated by the DRRM team:

- SailGP in May;
- Bermuda Day activities in May;
- Queen's Jubilee celebrations in June;
- Heroes weekend held in June;
- Newport to Bermuda race in June;
- Cup Match weekend held in July/August;
- PRIDE events held in August;
- Rugby Classic in October;
- PGA that was held in October;
- International Triathlon held in November; and
- Boat Parade in December.

Mr. Chairman, in keeping with our mission of *working together to keep you safe*, we will for the next financial year . . . (Just give me a second, Mr. Chairman).

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Minister.

And as you find your place, I will just remind the members of the listening public that we are in the Committee of Supply for further consideration of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24.

And you are currently listening to the debate on the Ministry for National Security being presented by the Honourable Minister Michael Weeks. This is a five-hour debate which will conclude at 5:55 pm.

Minister, when you are ready to proceed, please proceed.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some duplicate papers.

Mr. Chairman, the cybersecurity plans for 2023/24, in addition to the legislation already mentioned, will include the following:

National Security will establish the dedicated Cybersecurity Unit. The unit will provide independent assessments, guidance, threat intelligence, threat hunting, IT systems security testing, IT systems monitoring, incident response and investigation to help government ensure that IT staff, vendors and contractors are implementing, operating and maintaining IT systems with adequate security in alignment with industry standards. Having these functions performed independently is a recommended cybersecurity best practice and will help ensure government information and IT systems are protected against both external and internal threat actors.

The Cybersecurity Unit will also establish and operate a National Cybersecurity Incident Response Team in alignment with the recommendations from the International Telecommunications Union. The Cybersecurity Incident Response Team (or CIRT) will work with government and other critical infrastructure entities to help ensure that they are adequately prepared to respond to cybersecurity incidents. CIRT will perform monitoring and threat-hunting within the government IT environment independent of government IT staff, standards and contractors to detect and investigate cyber attacks and breaches by internal and external actors.

To ensure the government has an adequate capability to detect and investigate cyber attacks and breaches of government information in IT systems, the Ministry of National Security will implement, operate and maintain a secure centralised logging and monitoring system. Implementing this capability independent of the IT staff, vendors and contractors who operate and maintain the government IT system is a recommended cybersecurity best practice and necessary to ensure the government is able to detect and investigate cyber attacks and breaches by internal threat actors. The Security Manager working closely with the Chief Information Officer and head of the PATI/PIPA unit improves the government's ability to identify, protect, detect, respond and recover from cyber threats.

National Security will also continue to work with the Cybersecurity Governance Board, supporting the implementation of the Bermuda Cybersecurity Strategy. This will include an updated Bermuda Cybersecurity Strategy to build on the work performed under the Bermuda Cybersecurity Strategy 2018 to 2022. Critical national infrastructure planning for all key locations on the Island will be ongoing with the second national cybersecurity risk assessment to be started at the end of 2023 and completed at the beginning of 2024.

Mr. Chairman, I am about to go into the Gang Violence Reduction Team, and I noticed the time.

**The Chairman:** If that is a convenient place for you to pause, Minister, perhaps the Deputy Premier will be kind enough to take us to lunch.

**Hon. Walter H. Roban:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do move that we adjourn for lunch until 2:00 pm.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

Is there any objection to the motion?

None.

Adjourned.

**Proceedings in Committee suspended at 12:30 pm**

**Proceedings in Committee resumed at 2:00 pm**

*[Ms. Susan E. Jackson, Chairman]*

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

### MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

#### HEAD 83—MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS

*[Continuation thereof]*

**The Chairman:** Good afternoon, Members. We are in Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24. We are presently in heads for National Security, Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45. These will now be debated.

I call on the Minister in charge to proceed.  
Minister, you have the floor.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I am moving on to the Gang Violence Reduction Team.

**The Chairman:** I am sorry, Minister. What head would that be, please, for the listening audience?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Head 83, Ministry Headquarters.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, the mission of the Gang Violence Reduction Team is to

- aid in the transition of at-risk individuals away from delinquent peer groups and toxic environments with the aim of reducing violent crime in Bermuda;
- change the pattern of behaviour of individuals involved in group and gang violence and reintegrate them back into mainstream society;
- to prevent preteens and adolescents from joining gangs and engaging in antisocial be-

haviour by re-establishing positive social bonds;

- create opportunities of employment for young people and individuals who have previously not been employable due to antisocial backgrounds;
- connect at-risk youth, men and women with the necessary helping agencies that will aid in addressing mental and social health issues; and
- place more focus on fostering and sustaining positive interpersonal relationships.

Madam Chairman, it is important to understand that our clients carry life histories marked by poverty, family violence, marginalisation, and inter-generational abuse and neglect. Many have incarceration experiences or have pending charges and cases. The young [people] we support face additional challenges presented by institutionalisation, discrimination, community judgment, major educational gaps, negligible work history, and criminal records or criminal proceedings which preclude even the hope of employment. For many of our clients, substances are a way of coping with the pain of gang involvement, homelessness and mental health issues.

Madam Chairman, the Gang Violence Reduction Team will continue to work in our community to reduce gang tensions and provide a way out of gang life as well as provide children with alternative life choices to gang life. We must give the next generation a viable alternative to gang life.

Madam Chairman, the [Gang Violence Reduction] team will launch the Stop the Violence campaign; launch the specialised counselling support services to the Coordinated Crisis Response Team clients. Following violent incidents such as a shooting or stabbing, there are shock waves sent throughout our community and many different groups experience trauma. Witnesses, family members, community members are all significantly impacted by these violent incidents. Members in need of extra support will be eligible for counselling services. Continued targeted school support services include individual student case management, mentoring check-ins, specialised small groups, specialised programmes, mediation and negotiation, and incident management support services.

The team also will, Madam Chairman, continue to provide the Safe House programme; continue to provide the Redemption programme, a 25-week therapeutic incentivised programme for the next group of 15 trainees; continue the fifth cohort of the Work Placement and Mentoring programme, a structured 10-week paid work experience providing selected, targeted, at-risk young men and women, targeted youth with opportunities for career exploration and skills development, employees who have participated in our High School Intervention programmes.

The team will continue the Hype Kings and the I AM programme for primary and middle school groups around the Island. The programme is built up of a specialised 14-session experiential curriculum which is unique to each 15-student cohort. The initiative was designed to reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors, increase academic motivation and increase developmental factors in the young people participating.

Madam Chairman, despite the stellar work of the Gang Violence Reduction Team, we still are losing lives to violence. Part of the reason for this, Madam Chairman, is quite simply that all violence is not gang related. There are persons in the community who do not come from the seemingly typical deprived backgrounds associated with violence in Bermuda. It is for this reason, in July of 2022, this Ministry hosted a town hall on community violence and antisocial behaviour. We had that town meeting, Madam Chairman, at the Bailey's Bay Cricket Club.

Madam Chairman, people speak through their actions. If they show up, it is an indication of genuine interest and concern. On that day in July 2022, when people were still nervous about coming out in public after COVID-19, the church hall . . . (Actually, it was the second one, Madam Chairman. The second one was out at St. Paul [AME Church] Centennial Hall.) That hall at the time was full. Not only was it full of people, but it was also full of emotion on a topic that people genuinely care about. Members of our community are living in fear of violence. They are frustrated because there seems to be no end in sight to the violence which leaves others feeling hopeless.

At this time, Bermuda has seen more than 88 deaths—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** At this time, Madam Chairman, Bermuda has seen more than 88 deaths due to violence. They were well within their rights to feel as they did.

Madam Chairman, at the same time, I saw glimmers of hope in that room, as members of the public who have been touched by violence showed that they are willing to work on solutions, even if it means doing some of the hard work and heavy lifting themselves. The message that I took away from that town hall meeting, Madam Chairman, was that the Bermudian public wanted something to be done. However, many were unsure of what exactly that something should be. People were looking for action on this topic; however, this is clearly not an issue with a one-size-fits-all or a simple solution.

Violence in Bermuda is complex and has evolved over time. A dynamic, adaptable solution is required that encompasses all aspects of the issue, and that solution could not come from the Ministry of National Security alone. In order to acquire a joined-

up response, we will have to pull from several areas outside of this Ministry. I have said it before, and I will say it again, Madam Chairman, to drill this point home: We cannot and will not police ourselves out of this violence. By the time persons are made known to the police, it is already far too late. Tougher laws have minimal impact, and those kind of knee-jerk responses do nothing to tackle the root of the issue. A fresh approach is required that takes into consideration the full spectrum of service needs and requirements in order to create solutions that have lasting impact on the Island when it comes to the issue of violence.

This is a community issue that needs a community response. And without a joined-up community response, we will see no resolution in the violent acts we as a country have experienced. It is with this understanding, Madam Chairman, that the idea for the Strategic Planning Workshop was originated. Madam Chairman, the fact of the matter is Bermuda needed this workshop for a number of reasons. There are a number of persons who work with young people who have big hearts and do great work. They are to be commended for their efforts.

At the same time, however, their efforts on this particular issue are disjointed. It is through no fault of their own; we are talking about separate entities. Individual private charities, government departments, the many denominations of churches across the Island and sports clubs have their own mandates, their own visions which, while they may pull from the same pool of persons, have different overall aims. It is because these individual aims do not necessarily have the reduction of violence as its core focus that many programmes, services and interventions do not go far enough.

Despite the excellent work of these organisations, the reality is that there were still children who were falling through the cracks. There are children on this Island who need services and programmes, and they are not getting the assistance they need, and we needed to understand why. We needed to look at our services not only to provide assistance to these children specifically, but in order to improve service delivery overall.

Madam Chairman, I want to be clear: I am not finger-pointing. I truly believe that there is always room for improvement, and there were improvements that could be made in service delivery if we chose to focus our efforts on this topic on behalf of our children and young people. And it was with that thought in mind that the purpose of the two-day workshop was set.

Madam Chairman, the two-day workshop on community violence was to bring together as many agencies as possible who work with young people who were involved in or impacted by violence and antisocial behaviour. The aim was to have all of these persons come together to examine services and ser-

vice delivery in this specific area in order to do the following:

1. create a clear picture of what it is that is offered by these agencies to the Bermudian public;
2. provide an assessment of the services and programmes provided;
3. identify any gaps, redundancies and/or overlap in service provision;
4. identify opportunities; and
5. provide a basis for the National Strategic Plan on Community Violence in Bermuda.

Madam Chairman, on the last two days in September of 2022, over 110 persons converged on the Hamilton Princess to do the mental work of finding solutions to this complex issue. Their professional backgrounds were as diverse as the organisations they represented. In the room were staff from expected government departments such as Child and Family Services, Education and Court Services, but also Financial Assistance, Workforce Development and the Bermuda Regiment, as well as several others. We reached out to charitable organisations and were pleased to welcome the Family Centre, Rally to Bermuda, the Transitional Community Services and more. Our reach extended to organisations that saw more than their fair share of violence, such as the sporting clubs.

The representations of X-Roads Warriors and Boulevard Blazers Football Clubs, and Bailey's Bay and North Village Cricket Clubs were greatly appreciated. Clergy were also contacted, and we were happy to have representation from the AME, the Seventh Day Adventists and Muslim faiths. Social activists—individuals who care deeply for their community and want to be a part of positive social change, like Glenn Fubler and Ras Mykkal, who also stepped up. And we welcomed them.

Madam Chairman, we even extended invitations across the political divide.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes, because of the sheer importance of this particular issue to our country. I am grateful to all who attended because we needed all of these persons at the table to identify the solutions that we need.

Of note, Madam Chairman, all invitees were Bermudian or Bermuda-based. This Ministry was not seeking assistance from outside of our shores to provide us with a made-to-fit solution. The time for looking out for solutions has come and gone. It was and is past time to take a hard look at ourselves and find the answers that we seek within. We have capable, intelligent Bermudian professionals who care about the future of this Island who understand how our people work, play and live on this Island. We needed their

homegrown Bermuda-specific solutions for this Bermuda-specific issue.

Madam Chairman, with such a diverse selection of individuals, the expectation is to have diverse thoughts and responses. To aid in that objective, attendees were intentionally seated to ensure that persons from the same organisation were not seated at the same table. The thinking behind this is that the divergence of experience and understanding will inspire new ideas around tackling the issue of violence, as well as create improved understanding of how different organisations function.

Madam Chairman, when discussing the programmes and services that are offered, it is important to deal with these services in context. Earlier I spoke of the spectrum of services required to tackle the issue of violence. I need to dig into that spectrum a bit more. The programmes and services offered by all of the organisations present fell into at least one of three categories of the dimensions of care. Several fell into more than one dimension. The categories, Madam Chairman, are as follows:

1. prevention;
2. intervention; and
3. reintegration.

Prevention are those programmes and services designed to identify potential issues, stop issues from arising or provide skills and knowledge in the hopes that if an individual is presented with a challenging situation, they will have the ability to make positive decisions.

Interventions are those programmes and services that are provided for individuals for whom problematic behaviours have been identified, in an attempt to steer them in a more positive direction and/or resolve the issue that is causing the problematic behaviour.

Reintegration are those programmes that attempt to assist individuals re-enter society after engaging in violent acts that have resulted in their being separated from society through incarceration.

Each area on the dimensions of care has a different objective. And it was important to be able to give that dimension its needed focus. To that end, over the course of the workshop attendees were moved into these groups to be able to complete work in their particular area of focus.

Madam Chairman, the conversations were rich and thought-provoking. Topics discussed were varied and complex. There is much that we as individuals living our day-to-day lives do that contributes to the situation that we find ourselves in currently. Again, this is not about placing blame, but how we as a country can come together to have better results in our community.

The topic of mental health has proven to be a topic of serious concern for Bermuda. Several attendees spoke on how the responses to mental health challenges in the past have led to our challenges in

the present. While as a country we are learning to be more understanding of mental health challenges, the progress in this area is slow. The fear and stigma attached to these challenges were found to be a major roadblock in persons obtaining the help and support needed. It is the untreated trauma, the undiagnosed disorders and denied challenges that may be seen early in life that manifest into the social ills we see today. If we as a nation cannot be understanding, supportive and normalising of mental health challenges, we may doom ourselves to not resolving our community violence issues.

Madam Chairman, today we debate the budget of this Ministry. But there are families and individuals in this country who cannot or do not budget because they do not know how, or their budgets consistently come up short. Financial constraints are known to cause a plethora of social issues and community violence. There is no exception. If young people see their families struggling to make ends meet, if they feel that material possessions determine their self-worth, then it can be understood why some may do all in their power to obtain what they need for their own survival, or hit out against what they may deem to be receiving the short stick in life. Attendees of the workshop all predominantly agreed that the economic constraints exacerbated our issues around violence in our community.

Bermudians as a whole can be some of the sweetest, most caring, giving people. However, Madam Chairman, we can be some of the hardest and unforgiving people as well. If we as a people cannot learn to open ourselves up to forgiveness, if we cannot see a way to provide spaces for those who have done wrong to make amends and re-enter society, we doom them to being on the periphery. We simultaneously doom ourselves, as it is on the periphery that persons who commit acts against the community dwell. Attendees at the workshop showed a great propensity for openness and forgiveness, with their support for restorative justice as a means to allow persons who existed on the periphery, who have committed acts against society to re-enter mainstream Bermudian life as contributing members.

Restorative justice is defined as *a system of criminal justice which focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with the victims and the community at large*. It is far wiser to reconcile and invest in people who have strayed from societal norms than to keep them at arm's length where they have less support and are more likely to re-offend and rebel against society. It is true that prevention is cheaper than reintegration. If we do not invest in the means to keep people on the straight and narrow, we will be forced to deal with the costly consequences.

Madam Chairman, participants did not just look out; they looked within. Participants did not just look without; they looked within. Service delivery was discussed, enabling people to discuss not only how

their organisations worked, but also how they worked or did not work together. A common theme throughout all dimensions across all programmes and services was the need for resources. Whether it was financial resources, human resources or organisational resources, attendees stated more was needed across the board

Having this kind of information is invaluable to the strategic plan going forward because it will be known that these are factors that must be considered when formulating any solution going forward. Additionally, these kinds of objective conversations allow us to identify ways in which we can work better together in the future.

Madam Chairman, what was surprising was the convergence of thought on several topics over the course of those two days. Outside of the need for more resources, data were seen as a much-needed tool that was needed in the arsenal to combat community violence. Not just any data are required. Bermuda-based data are needed. Just as we cannot expect someone to come into our shores and fit a foreign solution to our local problems, we cannot expect foreign data to be completely applicable in the Bermudian context. Bermuda is in its third generation of gangs on Island. And with each generation, the perpetrators change and evolve. As they change and evolve, we too as service providers must do the same in order to be effective in meeting their needs and creating positive change.

Up-to-date data are a requirement needed to ensure that the programmes and services offered truly have the ability to do what is needed in our community. It would make no sense to expend monies on services not knowing if they will have the desired result. What we have recognised coming out of the workshop is that there are data out there held by organisations which need to be shared. However, policies need to be put in place to enable the ability to do so, which is something we are looking to do in the upcoming budget year.

Madam Chairman, just as thoughts managed to converge on what was needed in order to do the necessary work to make our community safe, so was there convergence in thought on the ways in which organisations, public and private, carried out their duties. It was recognised that in most instances, despite organisations working with the same client, working on the same issues, several attendees recognised that they did not work together as partners to provide holistic support for individual clients. This is a situation that needs changing. This silo mentality sees organisations duplicating services or making recommendations that run counter to another organisation. Where holistic service provision is considered best practice and resources are known to be scarce, it is the desire of this Ministry to see these impediments removed in order to make our community safer.

Madam Chairman, this Ministry intends to work in ways that support the strategic aim. In the upcoming budget year, the Ministry will work to create a database of individuals who have identified to have been perpetrators or victims of community violence. We recognise the importance of understanding what has taken place in the past and how it impacts what happens in an individual's future. The answers found in the personal histories of individuals can impact the ways in which programmes and services are selected and delivered. The database will also provide the much-needed Bermuda-based data that are required, as well as shed light on behaviour patterns that are local to Bermuda.

Madam Chairman, as you can see, much came out of those two days. As was promised to the participants then, the work has not stopped. It was after the workshop that the deeper, harder work began. After the workshop was completed, the thoughts, ideas, insights and observations were consolidated into a questionnaire survey on which participants were asked to respond.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes, Madam Chairman. The purpose of the survey was to not only verify the outcomes of the workshop but also prioritise the responses received to aid the more intense work of the strategic planning committees.

The work to create a strategic plan on community violence is now underway, Madam Chairman. Like with the workshop, persons from varied fields in and outside of the government are working together on the national response to the violence in our communities. Also like with the workshop, participants are divided into three groups reflecting the dimensions of care of prevention, intervention and reintegration. While there is overlap between the three, they are working together to ensure that there is a cohesive strategy to a national issue that we all are vested in. I am grateful to their bi-monthly commitment and dedication to best practice in Bermuda.

It is important, Madam Chairman, to not lose hope, to not grow numb to the plight of violence on our Island. For some, when there is quiet between incidents a false sense of security comes like there is no issue, like there is no untoward behaviour taking place. For others, they are waiting for the other shoe to drop. Just as the pain of losing a loved one does not go away, I want the community to remain vigilant on this issue. It is why in the upcoming budget year this Ministry will commence a "Stop the Violence" campaign across the Island. I want to instigate conversations within the community around what this violence is doing to our country. Whether it is in the schools, while you are out and about, or on your devices, I want the end to community violence to be on everyone's mind. And for young people especially I

want them to know that not only is violence not the answer, but it has serious consequences to their lives.

#### Disaster Reduction Risk Management

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, the Disaster Reduction Risk Management [DRRM] team will (1) assist government ministries in developing business continuity policies and plans for implementation post impact of a disaster; and (2) through the Emergency Measures Organisation coordinate the government's response to a disaster (whether natural or man-made) where the local community has been impacted greatly.

This will require the Disaster Reduction Risk Management team to meet with both government ministries and external stakeholders in developing and exercising emergency plans such as the following:

- Hurricane Planning;
- Shelter Planning;
- Cybersecurity Plans;
- Cruise Ship Incident Planning;
- Airport Emergency Plans;
- Marine Contingency Plans for Oil Pollution;
- Major Event Safety and Security Plans;
- Testing Interagency Command, Control and Communications;
- Mass Casualty Plans;
- Chemical Facility Plans;
- Pandemic Plans; and
- Critical National Infrastructure Planning.

Madam Chairman, the DRRM Team (as I will refer to them going forward) will continue to work on the following exercises and planning processes:

Cruise ships planning. With the cruise ship season for 2023 scheduled to be over 220 cruise ship visits, a record for Bermuda, the DRRM Team, in coordination with the port agencies, Marine and Ports, the cruise ship agents and multi-agency stakeholders, will host five multi-agency tabletop exercises with the five regular callers in April and May to test and develop contingency planning.

The suggested scenario for these tabletop exercises will be a *grounding*. As many may or may not be aware, there was a grounding of a cruise ship in the Dominican Republic in March of 2022. That ship was a regular caller in Bermuda previously. The ship took seven hours to re-float. Once it was re-floated and the hull examined, the passengers had to be off-loaded in the Dominican Republic and flown to their respective destinations. This process took three days. What would happen if a similar situation were to occur in Bermuda? What would we do as a country? These are the types of scenarios that the DRRM Team helps to coordinate planning for.

For airport exercise planning, the DRRM Team will assist all of the airport agencies in 2023 and 2024 with tabletop and live modular exercises that are

required by the Bermuda Civil Aviation Authority. Two days of training are scheduled for May 2023. The next large-scale live airport exercise has to be scheduled by November 2024.

The DRRM Team are assisting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources with coordinating a live oil spill exercise in Tobacco Bay scheduled for May 2023.

For tsunami exercising, Bermuda will again participate in this annual event in March of 2024. This exercise is organised by UNESCO under the umbrella of the United Nations and NOAA, and is a regional multi-country tsunami exercise involving approximately 30 countries.

The DRRM Team will hold training for major Incident commanders which may be incorporated into exercises or held separately.

The DRRM Team will liaise with BHB [Bermuda Hospitals Board] to assist in coordinating the multi-agency mass casualty exercise to be held in 2024.

Madam Chairman, the DRRM Team will work with event organisers in developing their event safety plans for large and/or complex local and international spectator events, as follows:

- Agricultural Show in April;
- Bermuda Day and weekend activities in May;
- Heroes or Carnival Weekend events in June;
- Cup Match in St. George's in July;
- Rugby Classic in October;
- PGA Golf in November;
- International Race Weekend in January; and
- International Triathlon scheduled for April 2024.

This involves key stakeholders such as Bermuda Police Service, Bermuda Fire and Rescue Services, medical services such as Bermuda Hospital Board and St. John's Ambulance and, subject to type of event, other government entities meeting with the organisers to ensure that they are in compliance with applicable legislation and regulations.

Madam Chairman, this concludes Ministry Headquarters, and I will now move to Head 6, which is Defence.

**The Chairman:** And while we are giving the Minister just a moment, I would just like to remind the listening public that we are in the Committee of Supply. And we are listening to the Ministry of National Security. This is for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24. We are listening to the Minister of National Security who is giving an overview of his Ministry, which includes Head 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45. He is just about to begin his second Head 6, Ministry of Defence.

Minister, you may proceed.

**HEAD 6—DEFENCE**

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I am pleased to present the estimates of revenue and expenditure for Head 6, Defence, which can be found on pages B-261 through B-265 of the current account estimates book.

General

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, Head 6 comprises the Defence Department and the Royal Bermuda Regiment (or “the Regiment” as we refer to it). The Regiment’s irreplaceable role is to provide operational and surge capacity to support Bermuda, the government and its people in routine matters or in times of emergency.

Mandate

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, under the authority of the Defence Act 1965, the Royal Bermuda Regiment’s mandate is to be a military force maintaining the necessary standards of manpower, training and equipment to enable it to protect Bermuda’s interests at home and overseas. It conducts its training and operations whilst also acting as a centre of excellence for all Bermudians to be able to personally and professionally develop whilst serving their country.

Mission Statement

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, the mission of the Department of Defence is, *The Royal Bermuda Regiment is to provide military resources in order to protect Bermuda’s Interests.*

Madam Chairman, under direction of the Governor as Commander in Chief and in consultation with the Minister of National Security, the Regiment’s finances are used to execute its mission of protecting Bermuda’s interests. It achieves this mission by conducting the following mandated tasks:

- a. Force Protection. These are the means and measures to minimise the vulnerability of people, infrastructure and high-value assets from threats and hazards. This ranges from military security and public order to explosive ordnance disposal.
- b. Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief. This is the organised military response to alleviate the results of a man-made or natural catastrophe, the consequences of which put lives and livelihoods at risk. Ranging from hurricanes to oil spills and fires, the priorities are saving life, relieving suffering, limiting damage, restoring essential service and setting the conditions for recovery.

- c. Ceremonial. The Regiment provides the only local professional standard military band and accompanying troops to conduct national ceremonial and civic events.
- d. International Assistance. Upon request, the Regiment can provide military skills and resources to assist the UN, NATO and regional Peace Support Operations or training which enhances Bermuda’s reputation in the international community.
- e. Enhancing Bermudian Society. Since its inception, the Royal Bermuda Regiment has provided an important role by supporting the integration and development of Bermudian society in the form of the following:
  - a common military experience for volunteers from across Bermuda’s society;
  - the opportunity to enhance life and vocational skills through direct provision of training or providing funding support for specific qualifications;
  - involvement in regimental and wider community sporting and social activities;
  - youth engagement through Junior Leaders, and in partnership with the Bermuda Police Service the facilitation of the Outward Bound Adventure Training Centre.
- f. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard will secure Bermuda’s territorial waters out to 12 nautical miles and defend the exclusive economic zone, the EEZ, (200 nautical miles).

Madam Chairman, the Royal Bermuda Regiment conducts the majority of these tasks in partnership with or in support of other government departments, specifically the Emergency Measures Organisation [EMO], Maritime Operations Centre, Department of Environmental Protection, HM Customs Bermuda, Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation [DRRM] Team, Bermuda Police Service, Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service, and Bermuda Hospitals Board.

Current Account Estimates  
General Summary

Original Estimate 2022/23	\$7,857,000
Estimate 2023/24	\$8,558,000
Increase	\$ 701,000
Percentage change	9 per cent

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, I will now address the individual business units as they appear on page B-263 of the estimates book. The original budget for 2022/23 was \$7,857,000. The budget estimate for 2023/24 is \$8,558,000, which is an increase of \$701,000, or 9 per cent.

Business unit 16000, Finance. Madam Chairman, the Finance business unit covers the Defence Department which holds the civilian full-time staff and the accounting function for the Royal Bermuda Regiment. The 2023/24 budget estimate is \$312,000, which represents no change over fiscal year 2022/23.

Business unit 16005, Recruitment. The Recruitment business unit covers the advertising, promotion and local training expenses. The 2023/24 budget estimate is \$113,000, which is an increase of \$26,000, or 26 per cent increase, over the 2022/23 financial year. The reason for this increase is primarily increased funding for the recruitment team with the focus of attracting more Bermudians into the service.

Business unit 16010. Madam Chairman, the Regimental Headquarters cost centre covers all of the Regiment employees for Defence, Head 6, employee-related expenses, marine fleet, vehicle fleet and insurance. The 2023/24 budget estimate is \$4,135,000 which is an increase of \$349,000, or 9 per cent, over the 2022/23 financial year. This increase is primarily funding for the Coast Guard to its approved employee ceiling of 14 and funding the Quartermaster post.

Business unit 16020. Madam Chairman, the Quartermaster cost centre covers all of the operational and logistical services for the Regiment in relation to facilities for land and sea forces. The 2023/24 budget estimate is \$1,501,000, which is an increase of \$158,000, or 12.0 per cent, over the 2022/23 financial year. This is due to an increase in the part-time wages and operational expenses. It should be noted that wages did not increase with the rest of the civil service back in 2018. Therefore, the increase for part-time wages of 4.5 per cent was not reflected in budget year 2022/23. For this budget year 2023/24, all part-time rates have been updated and the estimate now includes the 4.5 per cent increase in part-time wages which provides a more realistic remuneration for the commitment as well as provides a financial incentive to volunteer.

Business unit 16030. Madam Chairman, the Ceremonial business unit covers the ceremonial and the Humanitarian and Disaster Relief [HADR] training expenses. The 2023/24 budget estimate is \$288,000, which is an increase of \$45,000, or 19 per cent, over the 2022/23 financial year. This increase is again due to the increase in the part-time soldiers' wages.

Business unit 16040. Madam Chairman, the Internal Security business unit covers the training expenses related to internal security and Military Aid to Civil Authority [MACA]. The 2023/24 budget estimate is \$211,000, which is an increase of \$28,000, or 15 per cent, over the 2022/23 financial year. This again is due to an increase in the part-time soldiers' wages.

Business unit 16060. Madam Chairman, the Bermuda Cadet Corp business unit provides for the Junior Leaders programme, training and youth engagement. As part of the curriculum, staff of the Royal Bermuda Regiment facilitate adventure training, drill,

camp craft and similar military activities to young Bermudians below the age of military enlistment. The main aim is to enhance the leadership and decision-making skills of school-age cadets in order to make them better citizens. It also provides a positive experience that will attract some to serve full-time or part-time in the Regiment when they reach the age of majority. The programme runs weekly throughout the school year and incorporates meetings, weekend camps and an annual exercise. Madam Chairman, the 2023/24 budget estimate is \$52,000, which represents no change over the 2022/23 financial year.

Business unit 16075. Madam Chairman, this year the overseas camp will take place in Guyana in July 2023 as part of the multinational Exercise Tradewinds with other Caribbean nations. Since the formation of the unit, the overseas camp has been the culmination of the annual training cycle and remains a mandated requirement by the Governor. The exercise provides tangible evidence that the Regiment is fit for role and able to operate at the scale and intensity required to complete their missions and tasks. The complexity and range of activities conducted on land and at sea are not possible to achieve within Bermuda. It is therefore necessary that the camp is conducted abroad. It is also a primary component that encourages retention of Regiment personnel. Madam Chairman, the 2023/24 budget estimate is \$820,000, a \$26,000, or 3 per cent, increase over the 2022/23. This increase funds more soldiers to attend and benefit from the annual overseas camp.

Business unit 16080. The Training and Validation cost centre covers the expenses related to the training of recruits and promotion courses. To ensure our military personnel are current, qualified and competent it is essential that the selection and training system provides robust development and transparent assessment at all levels and for all trade groups. The Training and Validation budget ensures these courses and qualifications are delivered in the most appropriate and cost-effective way possible, only seeking external instruction when it is not possible through local resources. All routine training exercises subscribe to the UK Armed Forces recognised assurance system, the Defence System Approach to Training, to ensure safety and consistency. Madam Chairman, the 2023/24 budget estimate is \$531,000, which is a decrease of \$7,000, or 1 per cent. Savings are being made through more on Island courses, savings in airfares and other expenses for overseas courses.

Business unit 16085. Madam Chairman, the Marine Operations cost centre covers the costs associated with the Regiment Coast Guard's operating expenses and part-time wages. The unit has eight full-time soldiers and one officer. They are supported by part-time staff who train and operate on weekends and public holidays in order to provide safety and security on and in Bermuda's waters 24 hours a day throughout the year. Madam Chairman, the 2023/24

budget estimate is \$595,000, which is an increase of \$79,000, or 15 per cent, over the 2022/23 financial year. This increase is primarily due to the proposed increasing in the training and increase in the part-time wages for the unit.

#### Subjective Analysis Current Account Estimates

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, I now draw your attention to page B-264 of the current account estimates book. Salaries have increased by \$418,000, or 12 per cent. This increase is attributable to the funding of four full-time staff salaries, and wages saw an increase of \$134,000, or 7 per cent. These two increases will allow the Regiment to fully staff the Coast Guard to its approved manning levels of 14 employees for inshore operations, increase the training periods for all part-time staff, and allow the Regiment to support training and operations in accordance with the Governor's and Commanding Officer's directives.

Travel has seen an increase of \$46,000, or 10 per cent, and this is due to putting back the funding for the aircraft charter of \$300,000, as the Regiment will be participating in Tradewinds 2023 which will be held in Guyana in July 2023.

Repair and Maintenance has increased by \$76,000, or 20 per cent, mainly due to the ageing facility at Warwick Camp, [upgrades to] Scenic House and the new Coast Guard substation that will come online at the old St. David's post office.

Madam Chairman, the decreases in Employer Overhead of \$35,000, or 28 per cent, and Clothing, Uniforms & Laundry by \$20,000, or 9 per cent, are due to a reallocation between the object codes of Salaries and Wages to once again ensure that the Regiment is able to carry out their responsibility as directed by the Commanding Officer.

#### Personnel

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, the Regiment currently employs 39 full-time staff of which 3 are civilian. You will note that the original estimate for the 2022/23 budget year was 44 employees. The 2023/24 estimate will provide for 44 employees including 4 additional Coast Guard employees, which is an addition to the current full-time staff of the Regiment, and a part-time strength of 261.

#### Capital Development

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, I now draw your attention to page C-7, Capital Development. The Regiment has budgeted funds for Capital Development of \$350,000 for the following Defence projects:

- a. Coast Guard Maintenance shed \$50,000. These funds will be used to start the mechanical and engineering support for the new maintenance shed to be built at Scenic House in Dockyard.
- b. Officers Mess Bathroom, \$150,000. Since the start of the Bermuda Regiment, now the Royal Bermuda Regiment, the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess was not designed with females in mind. These funds will be used to carry out the renovation of the male bathrooms in order to provide female senior non-commissioned officers their own shower and toilet facilities.
- c. Coast Guard Unit St. David's, \$150,000. This is to help reduce operational costs for the Coast Guard and to better support the East End mariners. It was prudent that the Coast Guard establish an East End operating location. The cost and the logistics of launching a boat and crew out of Dockyard every day is cost prohibitive, which has worsened due to the increase in fuel and the time required to move boat and crew on and off shift. These funds will be used to renovate the old St. David's Post Office into a serviceable substation for the Coast Guard.

#### Capital Acquisitions

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Madam Chairman, I now draw your attention to page C-15, Capital Acquisitions. The Royal Bermuda Regiment have budgeted funds for Capital Acquisitions of \$191,000 as follows—

*[Mr. Scott Simmons, Chairman]*

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Honourable Minister.

Minister, if you just would not mind pausing just for a second as I take over the Chair of Committee from the Honourable Susan Jackson.

Honourable Members, we are in Committee of the Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24 under Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 23 and 45. I am prepared to take the Honourable Minister of National Security under his Ministry.

And, Honourable Minister, you have the floor. Minister, if you do not mind my mentioning, you have used about two hours of your time. There are a further three hours. I do believe the debate does end at 5:55 pm. Thank you, Minister. Under Capital Expenditure.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome.

Mr. Chairman, I move on to Capital Acquisitions. I now draw your attention to page C-15, which is

Capital Acquisitions. The Royal Bermuda Regiment have budgeted funds for Capital Acquisitions of \$191,000 as follows:

- a. Residential Equipment, \$27,000. These funds will be used to replace a number of failing and end-of-life air conditioners within classrooms as well as barrack room accommodations. These are essential due to year-round training and camps which are part of the Regiment's contemporary training and operations procedures; and
- b. Shelter Systems, \$164,000. It has been over 30 years since the Royal Bermuda Regiment has replaced or upgraded its shelter systems (which are, in effect, military tents). They are beyond their lifespan and are now in disrepair. These funds will be used to replace and upgrade a portion of their shelter systems.

#### Output Measures and Objectives

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to highlight some of the output measures and objectives as found on page B-265 of the estimates book.

**The Chairman:** Yes, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** The Regiment successfully completed its preparations and training for the past hurricane season. In February, the Regiment had a successful Recruit Camp with 19 volunteers. There will be an additional Recruit Camp in September 2023. Although COVID-19 restrictions caused the Regiment to conduct some of its training in Bermuda earlier this financial year, they dispatched training teams to deliver sub-lethal Public Order training to the seven-nation Regional Security Service based in Barbados. The Regiment is also intending to send 120 soldiers to Guyana on overseas camp to develop advanced soldiering and tactical skills.

Mr. Chairman, through a targeted recruitment and retention plan the Regiment has been able to recruit 19 volunteers and in June 2023 is forecasting to retain at least 80 per cent of their long-serving soldiers. Although statistics for soldiers passing Annual Training Tests appears static or as a decline, this is due to an increase in testing standards.

#### Major Achievements for 2022/23

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in addition to its public roles including continued development of the Coast Guard, the Royal Bermuda Regiment has achieved the following:

- a. Actively committed to realising the Government's commitment to Blue Belt/BlueShield. During this financial year the Royal Bermuda Regiment has worked closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the UK Marine Manage-

ment Organisation [MMO] to commence the Blue Belt programme in local waters. Under the remit of the UK Marine Management Organisation, this programme is to be implemented in all of the UK Overseas Territories, and Bermuda is one of the first territories to commit. This programme is committed to assisting Overseas Territories to better control, protect and enforce the laws of its territorial waters. It is also important to note that this programme is fully funded by the UK government and is of no expense to the Bermuda Government.

To date the Royal Bermuda Regiment has been able to receive the following equipment which is moving the programme forward:

- Night vision goggles, \$46,000;
  - Body cameras, IT equipment and software to support operations at Coast Guard Headquarters, \$23,000;
  - IT and furniture for the new East End Coast Guard Substation, \$37,000;
  - 20 new radios, base station and the ancillaries, \$40,000; and
  - Two new outboard engines, \$42,000;
- b. The first tranche of equipment has been received and is now part of daily operations. As the Coast Guard develops capability toward further defending the EEZ, this programme will play a vital role in supporting their role in environmental protection.

The Regiment has also

- a. received a third-party external assurance review of their Coast Guard by a Ministry of Defence maritime evaluation unit. This highlighted current areas of strengths and other areas that require new or enhanced policies and procedures in order to reduce operational and reputational risk;
- b. developed Adventure Training instructors to provide increased capacity to working at heights and conduct cliff rescue as well as engage with Bermuda's youth;
- c. hosted a review by Air Vice-Marshal Smeath, the UK's two-star Defence Attaché to the United States with a portfolio including Bermuda;
- d. deployed two platoons of soldiers to train in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in May;
- e. deployed soldiers to conduct Ceremonial duties at Royal Palaces in London with the Royal Gibraltar Regiment;
- f. implemented a new Annual Training Test for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion;
- g. organised the first Bermuda Overseas Territories Commanding Officers Conference;
- h. delivered Public Order training to forces from St. Vincent and Grenadines, St. Lucia, St. Kitts

and Nevis, Grenada, Dominica, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda;

- i. organised joint training with the Turks and Caicos Islands for Junior Non-Commissioned Officers Leadership Camp.

#### Coast Guard

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to report that as of Monday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2023, the Coast Guard has completed a second successful year of operations. It represents a meaningful commitment by the Government to provide safety and security on and in Bermuda's waters for recreational users and those who depend on our blue economy. During their last 12 months they conducted 1,093 patrols, recorded activity of over 21,145 vessels, conducted 85 search-and-rescue missions and enforced environmental protection laws across the inshore area. These are significant achievements from a relatively small resource. Working with local and international partners, including US Coast Guard, HM Coast Guard and Royal Navy, they continue to provide the following services:

- a. search-and-rescue or recovery;
- b. interdiction of illegal marine operations;
- c. deterring criminal activity on the water;
- d. enforcement of natural resource regulations; and
- e. enforcing regulations in relation to maritime border and port security.

The intention is to increase the scope and breadth of Royal Bermuda Regiment Coast Guard tasks to beyond their current 12 nautical mile remit.

#### Some Plans for 2023/24

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Royal Bermuda Regiment is looking forward to this upcoming year as this is the highest budget that they have received in years outside of the COVID-19 response. This budget reflects the continued investment in the Department of Defence and the Royal Bermuda Regiment since moving from conscription to an all-volunteer Regiment. Some of the key activities that the Royal Bermuda Regiment are looking forward to are as follows:

- a. Increased interoperability with Departments of Environmental and Natural Resources under the Blue Belt/Blue Shield programme. This joint initiative creates the conditions for greater interoperability between US Coast Guard [USCG], UK Marine Management Organisation, DENR [Bermuda Department of Environment and Natural Resources] and the Maritime Operations Centre to coordinate, enforce and monitor Bermuda's EEZ;

- b. Hosting the Commanding Officers of the British Overseas Territories in Bermuda for a conference in May;
- c. Expanding youth engagement initiatives and assisting with the Outward Bound programme;
- d. Hire four new full-time staff into the Royal Bermuda Regiment Coast Guard, which will fulfil the approved manning levels from 2016. This will also allow us to staff the new East End Substation at the former St. David's Post Office and give better coverage and enforcement of the East End of the Island;
- e. Stand up an eastern operations base for the Royal Bermuda Regiment Coast Guard located in St. David's. This initiative will reduce fuel costs from operations and enhance productivity as the transfer of vessels and crew would be reduced to get staff on shift as they will not originate out of the West End facility in Dockyard. This will also allow the Coast Guard and the fisheries wardens, when working on joint operations, to allow for better response time and coordination;
- f. Recruit 50 new soldiers over a series of two recruit camps (September 2023 and February 2024). As the Royal Bermuda Regiment has an official mandate to ensure that it is able to carry out its missions and task, its goal is to return to its operational strength of 360 personnel. Although the retention of current personnel is high, recruiting and retention remain a high priority for the Regiment;
- g. Under the direction of the Minister of National Security, examine options for implementing a national cadet programme to assist in recruiting competent young Bermudians into our uniform services;
- h. Delivery of an annual test for all personnel which includes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion—the only government department to have this as a mandate;
- i. Execute a significant review of unit policies and publications to enhance transparency and treat operational risk;
- j. Deploy on overseas camp (Exercise Tradewinds 2023) with 120 soldiers to Guyana in July 2023. This is anticipated to cost around \$275,000 in charter fees and \$300,000 in troop wages. While in Guyana the soldiers will undertake training in the following areas: Explosive Ordnance Disposal [EOD], Civil Military Coordination, Cybersecurity, Public Relations and Internal Security. The Royal Bermuda Regiment Public Order Training Team will also deliver training to multiple nations. This annual deployment is a key contributor to soldier retention as well as defence engagement with 27 partner nations; and

- k. Develop and mentor potential new Royal Bermuda Regiment full-time staff and officers within the Coast Guard and Regimental Headquarters. This will ensure the continuity of the Royal Bermuda Regiment and its continued investment in its people.

#### Closing Remarks

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in the past year our Regiment has continued to distinguish itself as a professional, dependable and adaptable resource on land and sea in Bermuda and with Caribbean partners. The Regiment has continued to expand the operating capability of the Coast Guard Unit whilst providing significant personal and professional development opportunities for soldiers.

Mr. Chairman, this past year has once again proven that the Royal Bermuda Regiment remains a proud, dependable and professional organisation that continues to provide an essential service to Bermuda in routine matters and during times of emergency, both on land and at sea. Our Regiment continues a 125-year military legacy as a pillar of our community of which we should all be proud.

For those of us who have had the honour to serve in the Regiment, the lessons learned, values instilled and the friendships made will last a lifetime. Mr. Chairman, I can attest to that. I did my three years and two months.

**The Chairman:** Ah! You did well.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Under the auspices of the current Minister of Public Works.

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes.

*[Inaudible interjection and laughter]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I am thankful to the Commanding Officer, the current Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Beasley and the team at the Royal Bermuda Regiment for their commitment and dedication.

Mr. Chairman, I now turn to Head 7, the Bermuda Police Service.

**The Chairman:** Yes, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I am going to take a minute.

**The Chairman:** You may, Minister. You are two and a half, almost two hours and twenty minutes into your brief.

And that is [to say] that we are in Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of

Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24. The Minister has completed Heads 83 and 6, and he is now going on to Head 7. And he then will move on to Heads 12, 25 and 45.

Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

#### HEAD 7—BERMUDA POLICE SERVICE

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Members, I am pleased to present the current account estimate for the Bermuda Police Service, Head 7, which can be found on pages B-266 through B-270 of the estimates of revenue and expenditure book. Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Police Service's mission is *Making Bermuda safer*.

The objectives of the service are to

- maintain the confidence of the community;
- treat all persons fairly, with dignity and respect;
- protect vulnerable victims;
- reduce crime, particularly focusing on serious crime and gang-related criminality;
- reduce anti-social behaviour; and
- enhance road safety.

Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Police Service [BPS] carries out its objectives by aligning its organisational structure to maintain its community safety agenda and the prevention of criminal risk (locally and internationally) through a funded establishment of 492 employees.

Mr. Chairman, the BPS continues to advance its 2021–2026 Strategic and Operational Plan. This budget estimate for financial year 2023/24 will allow a number of key initiatives to progress. They are as follows:

The BPS Gang Targeting Team continues to work with the Ministry of National Security's Gang Violence Reduction Team to reduce the threat in this area and seek to divert persons from gang-related criminality. However, significant risk remains from gun/gang-related violence to which the BPS continues to deter such acts through effective use of intelligence and specialist policing.

Staffing of the previous marine section, on a temporary basis, continues to support the Coast Guard as it journeys toward its full complement of staff.

The BPS continues its work regarding standards of professional behaviour and anti-corruption policy and procedure to which relevant best practice is being utilised by the National Anti-Corruption Committee in support of other government departments and the United Nations Anti-Corruption Self-Assessment for Bermuda.

The BPS also continues its work in support of the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee (NAMLC) to prevent financial crime, money laundering and counter-terrorism funding, with a strategic focus

to maintain its excellent Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) grading.

The BPS further continues its work in support of the National Cybersecurity Governance Board to prevent and respond to cybersecurity matters and maintain Bermuda's reputation as a premier international financial jurisdiction.

The BPS is working to implement a framework for greater multi-agency collaboration on the problem of domestic abuse. We seek to enhance communication and improve training with a view to improving service and reducing victimisation.

#### Expenditure Overview

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would now draw your attention to the current account estimates for Head 7, which can be found on page B-267. A total of \$62,625,000 has been allocated for Head 7 for the financial year 2023/24. This represents an increase of \$467,000, a 1 per cent increase, over the budget for the previous financial year. Mr. Chairman, in order to meet these responsibilities, the Bermuda Police Service operates six programmes:

- Programme 0701—Commissioner's Office;
- Programme 0702—Corporate Services Division;
- Programme 0703—Community Policing Division;
- Programme 0704—Support Services Division;
- Programme 0708—Serious Crime Division; and
- Programme 0710—Bermuda Reserves Police.

Mr. Chairman, I will now address each programme and business unit as set out on page B-267.

**The Chairman:** Go ahead, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Programme 0701, the Commissioner's Office. Mr. Chairman, the Commissioner's Office is in business unit 17000 and has an estimate for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$47,150,000. This represents a decrease of \$272,000, a 1 per cent decrease, from the fiscal year 2022/23. The decrease reflects a planned decrease in overtime by increased recruitment and operational efficiencies.

Programme 0702, Corporate Services Division. Mr. Chairman, the Corporate Services Division has an estimate for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$6,907,000. This represents an increase of \$322,000, a 5 per cent increase, over the fiscal year 2022/23.

In the 2023/24 budget the Professional Conduct Unit has been re-aligned and merged into the Commissioner's Office. Offsetting this re-alignment are increases in the following:

- Business unit 17010, Human Resources, an increase of \$33,000;

- Business unit 17020, Finance and Administration, an increase of \$91,000;
- Business unit 17025, Information Management Services, an increase of \$250,000;
- Business unit 17190, Training and Development, an increase of \$68,000;
- Business unit 17310, Uniform Stores, an increase of \$50,000.

Business unit 17020 funds the cost of repairs and maintenance to the various properties housing policing units. Buildings in Prospect are ageing and in constant need of repair, and it is estimated an additional \$91,000 will be required. The costs of these repairs have drastically increased as a result of inflation, but in particular due to the age of the various properties.

Business unit 17025, an increase of \$250,000. This business unit funds the various technological needs of the BPS. Technology continues to play a vital role in policing. The cost of this technology with respect to computer hardware and software is continually increasing as well as technological needs.

Business unit 17190 funds police training. Owing to the pandemic in 2020, policing has lagged in its training requirements and we are in a period of catch-up. As a result, an additional \$68,000 is budgeted to ensure officers have access to training.

With respect to the \$50,000 increase in business unit 17310, the BPS is updating its uniforms to be more in line with international standards as well as comfort needed for our men and women in uniform.

#### Programme 0703, Community Policing Division

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Community Policing Division has an estimate for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$2,165,000. This represents an increase of \$77,000, a 4 per cent increase, over the fiscal year 2022/23. The increase is mainly due to inflation, additional officers and the various needs required for the three police facilities in Hamilton (17040), the eastern end of the Island (17041) and the western end of the island (17042).

Programme 0704, Support Services Division. Mr. Chairman, the Support Services Division has an estimate for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$3,488,000. This represents an increase of \$60,000, or 2 per cent, from the fiscal year 2022/23. Due to policing priorities, business unit 17055, Tape Transcribing, was merged into business unit 17090, the Court Liaison Unit. This results in a real increase of \$20,000 for the Court Liaison Unit. In addition, business unit 17120, Tactical Operations, was merged with business unit 17105, Police Support Unit. The increase of \$37,000 is solely a result of the merger.

#### Programme 0708, Serious Crime Division

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Serious Crime Division has an estimate for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$2,583,000. This represents an increase of \$280,000, or 12 per cent, from the fiscal year 2022/23. The increase is due to the increasing need for professional investigative services. The increasing need for experts mandates that the Bermuda Police Service obtain some of these services from outside of the BPS, including overseas.

#### Programme 0710, Bermuda Police Reserves

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Police Reserves have an estimate for the fiscal year 2023/24 of \$332,000 and represents no change in the budget over the 2022/23 fiscal year. The Police Reserves support frontline officers on watches, working both full day and full night shifts to support BPS service delivery. They are equipped at the same level as career officers and trained in most aspects of patrol duties. They work alongside career officers in duties including roadside sobriety and speed checks.

#### Subjective Analysis

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would now like to address page B-268 of the current account estimates. This page includes the subjective analysis of current account estimates and revenue summary.

#### Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, 11 of the object codes see no change or a change of less than 5 per cent in the estimates for the financial year 2023/24 over the budget for 2022/23. I will limit my comments to salaries and the five that illustrate material changes. Mr. Chairman, salaries have decreased by \$892,000, or 2 per cent. Salaries includes various benefits and payments mandated under collective bargaining agreements. The most expensive cost item is overtime. The proposed budget reflects the planned reduction in overtime by recruiting additional officers and operational efficiencies.

Mr. Chairman, Other Personnel Costs has a proposed budget of \$2,707,000, an increase of \$227,000, or 9 per cent, to meet the increasing costs of medical benefits for officers. Training costs increased by \$69,000, or 22 per cent, to offset training that was unavailable during the pandemic.

Mr. Chairman, advertising and promotion costs have increased by \$19,000, or 29 per cent. The BPS is seeking innovative ways to enhance service delivery by leveraging the opportunities created by social media and alternative media outlets.

Mr. Chairman, professional services are budgeted to increase by \$578,000, or 23 per cent, owing to the increased need for professional services and increasing litigation. Repairs and maintenance

increases of \$406,000, or 18 per cent, are a result of the ageing BPS properties combined with inflationary pressures in the costs of labour and materials. The proposed increase of \$46,000, or 2 per cent, in Materials and Supplies is to reflect increases in both fuel costs and increasing costs necessary to repair an ageing vehicle fleet.

#### Revenue Summary

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Police Service has estimated to collect \$698,000 in revenue for financial year 2023/24. The revenue is generated from police clearance certificates (background checks), firearms and security guard licences. This represents no change over the current financial year.

#### Employee Numbers (Full-Time Equivalents)

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the funded employee numbers, or full-time equivalents, are being increased by 20 to 492 over the revised estimate for financial year 2022/23. This increase is to ensure the BPS has sufficient funded posts to meet operational needs. Currently, the BPS is staffed by 371 police officers and 68 support staff. Unfortunately, the BPS is 49 police officers below the funded establishment. This shortfall impacts the level of policing activity in response to crime, as well as the welfare of officers who are delivering the service while short staffed. Unfortunately, the current local recruitment drive is only expected to yield about 10 Bermudian officers. In addition to the 10 local officers, 15 trained officers from both the Caribbean and UK will be recruited to augment investigative and firearms capacity.

#### 2022/23 Accomplishments

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I will now speak to some of the accomplishments the Bermuda Police Service had in 2022/23.

#### Operation Vega

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, it is also noted that during the immediate periods preceding curfew compliance the community experienced an increase in road traffic incidents. To calm traffic, deny criminals the use of our roads and encourage better driving choices, the Bermuda Police Service responded with Operation Vega. Since the inception of Operation Vega, over 5,000 traffic tickets and 840 Motorist Advice Notices have been issued. In 2023 alone, 68 traffic tickets have been issued for persons driving more than 70 kilometres per hour. Additionally, the Bermuda Police Service has increased its communications with the public through mainstream media and social media platforms. The department looks forward

to seeing how this level of engagement will positively affect driver behaviour.

#### New Recruit Foundation Course

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, February 2022 saw the start of a police Recruit Foundation Course with 21 new student officers. These officers should take to the streets in earnest this summer, and the new officers will bring welcomed relief to their colleagues and reduce demands on the overtime budget.

Mr. Chairman, I will now provide this Honourable House with some sobering statistics on what the Bermuda Police Service dealt with over the calendar year January to December 2022.

**The Chairman:** Very well, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in making Bermuda safer, between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022, the service responded to 13,305 events or incidents of which 1,480 were Licence Premises COVID-19 compliance checks.

Mr. Chairman, there were 2,451 arrests during the period, which is a 49 per cent increase over the 1,639 arrests in 2021, which was impacted with COVID-19-related restrictions, including curfew, on the community.

Mr. Chairman, in 2022 there were 3,362 crimes recorded and investigated that include nine murders, five of which by a firearm. Of the 23 murders recorded from 2020, ten involved a firearm and nine involved a knife.

Mr. Chairman, the service dealt with 1,268 road traffic collisions, of which 11 were fatalities and 120 involved serious injury. This compares with 17 fatalities and 106 serious injury road traffic collisions in 2021. The long-term context of road safety, which Operation Vega is addressing, is that since 2013 there have been 115 fatal road traffic incidents and 1,032 serious injury road traffic incidents recorded. This high rate of death and injury to Bermudians and visitors means that we are faced with the prospect that every 31 days a person will die on our roads, and that every 3.5 days a person will have a serious road traffic collision.

Mr. Chairman, 9,174 tickets and 1,205 Stop and Search forms were issued that help to change driver behaviour and reduce opportunities for violence. In addition, roadside sobriety opportunities have been used to positively change the culture of drink driving in Bermuda.

Moving to the issue of gang violence, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Minister.

#### Gang Violence

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Police Service is the law enforcement entity responsible for preventing and detecting crime and have adopted a robust approach to tackling gang and gun violence. As early as 2009 the Bermuda Police Service recognised the significant challenge of tackling gangs and guns and that it required high levels of community engagement, as enforcement alone could not address the systemic issues. Mr. Chairman, since 2009 the BPS has made a number of adjustments in response to the gun and gang problem and continue to evolve with a focus on leveraging community support and technology to assist in bringing offenders to justice.

The BPS has implemented a Gang Violence Reduction Strategy with a core focus on partnership. It consists of three pillars;

- Prevention (Education and Awareness);
- Catch and Convict, which is police focused (targeting and suppression); and
- Resettlement and Rehabilitation—that is collaboration.

Mr. Chairman, the strategy of prevent-and-deter is to stop young offenders escalating into prolific offenders and to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in criminality in the first place. The BPS deploys a schools resource officer, primarily to the senior schools, who meets with school guidance counsellors, teachers and students to build relationships and share information that is used to ease tensions. Additionally, opportunities to mediate disputes and model effective problem-solving are implemented. The BPS arrested 22 persons aged between 12 and 15 years in 2022, with the most common reasons for the arrests being violence and/or carrying a bladed article in public. I am going to read that again, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Go ahead, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** The BPS arrested 22 persons aged between 12 and 15 years in 2022, with the most common reasons for the arrests being violence and/or carrying a bladed article in public.

Mr. Chairman, with Catch and Convict, the BPS deploys a Police Support Unit and a Gang Targeting Unit that are primarily focused on disruption and enforcement activity specifically as it relates to those involved with gangs. Further, the approach with our partners is to focus on the same key groups of offenders who are causing the most crime. The BPS chair the inter-agency gang enforcement team that provides an opportunity for information-sharing and joined-up enforcement efforts.

Mr. Chairman, with Rehabilitate and Resettle, the BPS chairs the multi-agency offender management team that provides ongoing assessment and supervision for high-risk offenders in an effort to en-

courage effective rehabilitation and resettlement of persons leaving prison services.

Mr. Speaker, the BPS continues to adapt and evolve in tackling the issues of gangs with the necessary emphasis on an evidence-based approach to policing. This includes the use of information, intelligence and lessons learned. This has resulted in multiple arrests for murder and firearms-related offences, as well as significant seizures of illegal drugs and firearms. Multiple persons have been prosecuted with over 40 men incarcerated, receiving life and/or long-term sentences for murder, attempted murder and firearms-related offences.

#### 2023/24 Plans

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in keeping with our mission statement, *Making Bermuda safer*, the Bermuda Police Service will engage in the following:

#### Policing Issues for 2023/24

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the scourge of gang and gun violence continues to play out in our community. Sadly, more recently we have seen males and females as young as 14 involved in violent exchanges, often using knives to resolve their disputes. The Bermuda Police Service is currently and will continue to temporarily divert resources from community policing to bolster its enforcement efforts to catch and convict those involved in these crimes. However, this cannot be sustained. Until we as a community examine and act on the issues that would cause our young people, some as young as 15, to think that arming themselves, stabbing or shooting another person is an appropriate way to solve a dispute, we will continue to experience tragic and unnecessary violence and death in our community.

Mr. Chairman, the summer months will bring challenges to community safety across the Island as residents and visitors seek to socialise in larger numbers on beaches, on the water and within bars and restaurants. These challenges will include, but are not limited to, increased tensions and risks between gangs, antisocial behaviour, residential and beach parties and drink driving. Additionally, organised events that do take place may present greater policing challenges in comparison to previous years as COVID-19 restrictions continue to be lifted.

#### New Initiatives in the Police Service

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Police Service has a Strategic and Operational Plan for the period 2021–2026 with five key priorities, as follows:

- reducing serious crime;
- protecting vulnerable persons;
- raising confidence in the police;

- reducing harm on our roads; and
- developing digital policing.

Additionally, seven new Strategic Ambitions have been set to support members of the BPS in achieving their full potential and assisting their professional development. The plan will be governed by the Bermuda Police Service Strategic Executive Group and shared with the public.

#### Capital Projects

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I now move to page C-15 and Capital Acquisitions. The budget for 2023/24 is \$1,308,000. This has been allocated as follows: There is funding of \$718,000 to replace the software that the Bermuda Police Service uses to maintain its operational records. The Record Management System [RMS] replacement will serve the country's operational policing platform and partner agency record management system across the criminal justice system board and other BPS partner agencies. This includes Bermuda Customs; Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service; and the Departments of Immigration, Child and Family Services, Court Services and Corrections.

The Record Management System project will maximise the synergy between agencies and enhance BPS efficiency and effectiveness in serving the public and making Bermuda safer. A newly revamped network infrastructure will aid the BPS in protecting Bermuda's international reputation as a sophisticated centre for international business, which is ably supported by BPS's capabilities and capacity. The local community's expectations on standards of BPS customer services will also be met.

Mr. Chairman, there is an increased need to support specialist police units in their day-to-day job, such as the Digital Forensic Unit, Forensics Support Unit, Financial Analyst Unit and Intelligence Department, all with a focus on making the Bermuda Police Service more efficient and effective. The implementation of the RMS will allow BPS to produce digital case files and interface with a multitude of partner agencies, providing real-time intelligence products and analysis of hotspot policing to help deploy operation units in the most efficient and effective way.

In addition, the improvements will support the increased use of body-worn cameras and dash camera footage, with each officer being able to download files in a quicker and more efficient manner. This will better support case file creation and submission. The existing RMS is no longer being developed or supported by the provider and absolutely needs to be replaced. The aim of this project is to replace our ageing Record Management System and to leverage effectiveness and efficiency by moving toward digital case management and including our partner agencies to build capability and capacity.

Mr. Chairman, \$400,000 is being used to replace five marked police vehicles and five unmarked motorcars in addition to a passenger van. The purchases of these vehicles are considered a priority for the police. Including last year's purchases, this will equate to a total of 15 cars, seven motorcycles and a passenger van being replaced. For context, the Bermuda Police Service conducted an audit of their vehicle fleet in early October 2022. The fleet currently has 189 marked and unmarked vehicles in the fleet. This includes 44 marked cars, 34 unmarked cars, 19 motorcycles, 61 scooters, 20 vans, one truck, eight land cruisers and two Public Support Unit [PSU] Sprinter transports.

There are presently 44 marked police cars in the BPS fleet. Sixteen of these vehicles are beyond their serviceable life. Only 32 are actually operable. There are presently 34 unmarked vehicles in the BPS fleet. Of these, 19 vehicles have passed life expectancy. Additionally, it should be noted that a total of 22 marked and 13 unmarked vehicles were disposed of within the last several years and not replaced. In 2017 the average lifespan of a police vehicle was 10 years or 250,000 to 300,000 kilometres. At present many vehicles are exceeding 300,000 kilometres within three to four years because of continuous driving with no rest period and the limited number of vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, this creates challenges in maintaining the number of working vehicles in the Bermuda Police Service fleet and daily impacts on the BPS's ability to carry out operations. The fleet provides 24 hours a day/seven days a week operation throughout the Island. These vehicles experience a tremendous amount of wear and tear in a short span of time. This year's funding will allow for some of the patrol vehicles to be replaced. The Government of Bermuda is committed to ensuring the BPS has the equipment it needs to keep Bermuda safer.

Mr. Chairman, \$189,000 is budgeted to begin to replace various aspects of the Bermuda Police Service's IT hardware, \$40,000 for computers and \$149,000 for network servers. The BPS relies heavily on technology to deliver services to the public and achieve its mission of *Making Bermuda safer*. The network supports over 700 users and over 400 computer systems Island-wide. Unfortunately, most of the critical components of the network are both end-of-life and end-of-support. Daily there are network and server stability issues that impede work, and the systems have been assessed at medium to high risk of failing.

Mr. Chairman, fundamentally the problem is that the switches, firewalls and core servers are all past their usable life, and many are no longer supported by the manufacturer. Some of the equipment is 18 years old or more. This year's capital allocation will enable the replacement process to begin.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Simons and his team at

the Bermuda Police Service for making Bermuda safer.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes the current and capital accounts estimates for Head 7, and I will now move to Head 12, which is Customs.

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much, Minister.

I just want to remind Members that we are in Committee of Supply for the further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures for the year 2023/24.

The Minister has completed Head 83, which was the Ministry Headquarters; Head 6, Defence; and Head 7, which he just completed under Police.

Minister, under Head 12, you have Customs. Honourable Minister, you have the floor. You are three hours into your debate, sir.

## HEAD 12—CUSTOMS

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I will move on to the Customs Department, which is Head 12.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members, I am pleased to present the current account estimate for the Customs Department, Head 12, which can be found on pages B-271 through B-274 of the estimates of revenue and expenditure book.

Mr. Chairman, the Customs Department's mission is *Protecting Bermuda's border and promoting economic development*. The objectives of the department are

- to assess and collect customs duty and fees on imported goods;
- to enforce customs laws and administer other statutes controlling the international movement of goods and people;
- to prevent the smuggling of drugs and other illegal commodities, enforcing international conventions for environmental protection and money laundering, and agency work for Immigration, Health, Transport Control and Environment; and
- to provide information and assistance to the public regarding customs laws and regulations.

Mr. Chairman, the Customs Department's vision is to be a modern, effective and efficient customs administration offering professional service to all stakeholders, using international best practices, maximising revenue collection and protecting the borders of Bermuda. Mr. Chairman, to make this vision a reality, strategic goals have been set for Customs.

Strategic Goal 1: Staffing, Stability and Training

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in order for the Customs Department to carry out its mission, the department will continue to provide an environment

that supports the highest level of integrity. Enhancing the department's integrity as a respected law enforcement arm of the government is vital to performing our enforcement functions and will continue to be improved by ongoing training and officer development.

#### Strategic Goal 2: Legislation and Operational

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, to advance Customs' mandate of facilitating legitimate trade, assessing and collecting the government's revenue and interdicting drugs and other contraband, the department will continue to review existing legislation and propose enhancements that will progress Customs' capability to fulfil its mandate in a rapidly changing environment.

#### Strategic Goal 3: Policy, Procedures and Future

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the department's Policies and Procedures are a vital portion of its foundation, and the consistent programme of updating these will enhance the department's positive work environment. One such example is the revision of the memorandums of understanding with the department's law enforcement counterparts that will enhance the shared understanding of the department's comparable duties, aims and objectives.

#### Expenditure Overview

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would now draw your attention to the current account estimates for Head 12, which can be found on page B-271. A total of \$17,696,000 has been allocated for Head 12 for the financial year 2023/24. This represents an increase of \$1,121,000, or a 7 per cent increase, over the original budget for the financial year 2022/23. Mr. Chairman, the Customs Department operates one programme listed as 1201, General, with seven business units. I will now address the business units as set out on page B-271.

#### Business Unit 22030, Airport Arrivals/Travellers

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Airport Arrivals/Travellers has an estimate of \$4,621,000. This represents an increase of \$225,000, or 5 per cent. The increase is due to planned recruitment, with the most significant driver being salaries.

#### Business Unit 22050, Investigations/Audit

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Investigations/Audit has an estimate of \$923,000. This represents an increase of \$45,000, or 5 per cent. Again, the increase is due to planned recruitment, with the most significant driver being salaries.

#### Business Unit 22070, Hamilton Commercial Operations

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Hamilton Commercial Operations has an estimate of \$1,015,000. This represents an increase of \$36,000, or 4 per cent. Again, the salary increase is as a result of planned recruitment.

#### Business Unit 22080, Administration

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Administration has an estimate of \$5,083,000. This represents an increase of \$484,000, or 11 per cent. The Administration business unit is deemed the headquarters of the department, and a majority of the operational budget is allocated to this unit. For brevity and to avoid repetition, I will elaborate upon all of the notable budget changes during my presentation of page B-272; however, the variances of note are as follows:

- a decrease in salaries of \$51,000;
- an increase in overtime of \$31,000;
- an increase in consultants of \$110,000. This is specifically in connection with the introduction of the export control programme;
- an increase in rent by \$81,000. This is due to the recent occupancy by Customs of the Southside facility;
- an increase in repair and maintenance for equipment by \$102,000, which pertains to increase in maintenance fees for the Hamilton Dock Gantry X-ray scanner;
- an increase in contractors of \$132,000. This is in connection with the increased use of retired customs officers providing immigration primary services at the airport;
- an increase in software maintenance by \$23,000; and
- an increase in electricity by \$31,000.

#### Business Unit 22090, Vessel Clearance

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Vessel Clearance has an estimate of \$1,019,000. This represents an increase of \$78,000, or 8 per cent. The increase is due to an increase in salaries as a result of planned recruitment. The increase is particularly warranted as we anticipate an increased number of cruise ship visitations as well as private yachts during the upcoming season as we recover from the global pandemic. And it is vessel clearance, along with the interdiction unit, which provides the front-line response to these arriving vessels.

#### Business Unit 22100, Interdiction

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Interdiction has an estimate of \$3,994,000. This represents an increase of \$277,000, or 7 per cent. This is also due

to an increase in salaries as a result of planned recruitment.

#### Business Unit 22110, Seaport Enforcement Team

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Seaport Enforcement Team has an estimate of \$1,041,000. This represents a decrease of \$24,000, or 2 per cent. The decrease is connected to an expected reduction of overtime.

#### Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, turning to page B-272, on the table headed Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates, we see how the allocated funds are intended to be spent. A total of 84 per cent of the budget, \$14,847,000, has been allocated to pay for salaries, and a further \$18,000 for wages. The allocation for the salary expense line has increased by \$439,000, or 3 per cent. If we momentarily turn our attention to the table headed Employee Numbers Full-Time Equivalents, we observe no movement in the number of estimated Customs staff from the 2022/23 original of 184 to the 2022/23 estimate. However, it should be noted that only 174 positions had budgetary funding in 2022/23, a difference of 10 FTEs [full-time equivalents].

Mr. Chairman, as of February 2023, the Customs Department had 166 staff members. Owing to retirements and resignations there is a need to recruit additional officers especially as we move further from the height of the pandemic and we see an increase in travellers crossing our borders, which inevitably leads to the increased likelihood of legitimate imports as well as attempted smuggling activity.

Mr. Chairman, of the remaining expense lines the more significant changes are as follows:

Other Personnel Costs are estimated to be \$191,000, an increase of \$177,000, or 1,264 per cent. The Other Personnel Costs in question are primarily allowances provided for customs officers being on-call and called out. As you will be aware, the Customs Department has to be prepared to respond around the clock to provide its border control service. From time to time, unscheduled flights and vessels arrive into Bermuda, and therefore the Customs Department pays an on-call allowance to retain a skeleton crew to respond to emergency out-of-hours calls. For the 2023/24 fiscal year these expenses are expected to increase significantly with the increased arrivals of flights, cruise ship arrivals and private yachts. With an increase in activity, we should expect an increase in delayed and diverted arrivals, and therefore we have budgeted an increased contingency for that purpose.

Travel Costs are estimated to be \$14,000, an increase of \$11,000, or 367 per cent. One of the impacts of the pandemic has been the reduced ability to travel. It is anticipated that [travel costs] will increase

during the upcoming financial year as Bermuda Customs participated in the World Customs Organization and Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council conferences.

Professional Services are estimated to be \$332,000, an increase of \$246,000, or 286 per cent. There are two main drivers of this increase:

- First, Mr. Chairman, a budget of \$110,000 has been set aside to engage a consultant to conduct a scoping study and introductory programme for the export control project. Export control has been identified by the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee as a recommended action to take in response to Bermuda's assessment by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This will help bolster Bermuda's reputation as a premier financial services location, as well as mitigate against the risks of being perceived as a centre for money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It is hoped that these measures will enhance Bermuda as a jurisdiction for future investment. Since Bermuda does not currently have an export control function, it will require the Customs Department making some significant adjustments, and we need to have a clear and specific plan to introduce the programme, which will include adjustments to legislation, adjustments to IT systems, staff training and educating the public as to the nature of the changes and the implications;
- Mr. Chairman, the second main driver of this increase is the increased use of retired customs officers to perform immigration primary functions. These support officers have the training and years of experience but are employed at a reduced cost rate and on a part-time basis. As a result, this allows the department to work more efficiently as it frees full-time customs officers from performing some immigration functions and allows them to focus on the core aspects of the customs officer role.

Mr. Chairman, Rentals are estimated to be \$581,000, an increase of \$83,000, or 17 per cent. This is primarily due to the occupancy of the Building 110 at Southside. Building 110 is a replacement for the training and administration space that Customs formerly occupied within the old airport buildings. At the airport, Customs only paid \$700 per month for a storage room; however, the department was directed to vacate the airport space. Consequently, the Estates Department of Public Works was engaged to find alternative accommodations for Customs. A space was located at Southside which would meet Customs' needs. Estates negotiated the terms of the lease with a rent of approximately \$8,000 per month.

Repair and Maintenance is estimated to be \$1,144,000, an increase of \$146,000, or 15 per cent.

This increase is due to the introduction of the planned overhaul of the Hamilton Dock X-ray scanner. The scanner will have been in operation for 10 years in September and is approaching the end of its expected useful economic life. The overhaul is expected to provide Bermuda with a refurbished scanner.

Energy is estimated to be \$146,000, an increase of \$31,000, or 27 per cent. This is partly due to the rising costs of energy over the past year and partly due to the occupancy of the new Southside facility. When Customs occupied the space at the airport, they received no charge for electricity.

Clothing, Uniforms and Laundry are estimated at \$75,000, a decrease of \$17,000, or 18 per cent. This is due to finding a lower cost supplier of several uniform items including shirts.

Materials and Supplies are estimated at \$214,000, a decrease of \$10,000, or 4 per cent. This category of expense is broad and diverse and includes office supplies, cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, food and supplies for canines, computer supplies, consumables for detection equipment and other miscellaneous items. The estimate is reflective of the actual expenditure in the preceding financial period.

#### Capital Expenditure

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, on page C-15 you will note that 2023/24 Capital Acquisition amount of \$20,000 has been allocated to the Customs Department on line 76328, Customs Development. This is an amount provided to upgrade the hardware for the Global Travel Assessment System. The system plugs Customs into a real-time global database of advanced passenger information and allows the Customs Joint Intelligence Unit to review details about arriving visitors into Bermuda. That information is analysed and has proved highly useful to Customs in border control.

#### 2022/23 Accomplishments

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, during 2022/23, Bermuda has seen an increase in the numbers of travellers crossing our borders both via air and sea as restrictions arising from the pandemic have eased. To illustrate the increase, the Customs Department served 125,000 air travellers during the 2021 calendar year and over 273,000 during the 2022 calendar year, a 118 per cent increase. I am pleased to advise that the Customs Department has responded to this return in fine form. In addition to collecting over \$200 million of revenue, during 2022/23 Customs successfully made five currency seizures totalling \$180,000.

In the year 2022, Customs made a total of 178 drug seizures at our respective border entry points. These seizures ranged from personal use to

commercial importations with intent to supply. While we await analyst certificates from the government analyst with the actual weights and drug identification for most seizures, one seizure alone contained almost 120 pounds of cannabis, which has an estimated street value of \$5 million. That is all for Customs.

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the department also played an important role in assisting with the response to COVID-19. During the 2022/23 year, Customs, by way of its Joint Intelligence Unit, assisted the Health Department's COVID-19 Surveillance Unit with the tracking of travellers on 112 occasions.

Mr. Chairman, protecting our borders requires the Customs Department to work seamlessly with a number of other agencies domestically and internationally. Customs continues to engage in an ad hoc inter-agency working group initiated for the sharing of targeting-and-seizure intelligence data. The working group includes representatives from the US Drug Enforcement Agency [DEA], UK National Crime Agency [NCA], Bermuda Police Service, the Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA], the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP], and Homeland Security Investigations [HSI/ ICE]. This group has further improved the response time for foreign requests received and the sharing of information as it relates to Immediate Outcome number two [IO2].

Mr. Chairman, during the dates May 9 to May 11, the Royal United Services Institute [RUSI] seven-member team visited Bermuda on the invitation of the Customs Department to deliver training. The customised workshop entitled Countering the Financing of Proliferation was presented on May 10 and 11 at the Grotto Bay Hotel and Resort.

The agenda was developed to fit the needs of Bermuda and included the following topics: counter proliferation financing, cyber threats and the use of crypto currencies, designated non-financial business and professions and the exposure to proliferation financing. Also discussed was the role of Customs in counter finance proliferation and export control implementation. A discussion on the proliferation financing national risk assessment, along with an exercise to identify threats, was held. The training was important, as the Financial Action Task Force in October 2020 revised Recommendation 1 to require countries to examine their proliferation financing risks.

Mr. Chairman, the critical subject of maritime sanctions evasion and proliferation financing was discussed, highlighting a nexus to the Bermuda Maritime Registry. Based on the findings, Bermuda Customs initiated a formal introduction between the Royal United Services Institute and the Bermuda Shipping and Maritime Authority. A virtual meeting was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 and mutual interests were shared. Formalised steps have commenced between the

stakeholders for targeted training, which commenced in December 2022.

Mr. Chairman, Customs teams attended a four-day virtual workshop hosted by the Bermuda Drug Information Network in association with the National Criminal Justice Training Centre of Fox Valley Technical College. The workshop focused on drug trends and the new forms of illicit drugs entering the market. The course provided officers with awareness to the changing drug trends, equipment and precursor drugs that persons may attempt to import.

#### Initiatives for 2023/24

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in harmony with the Customs Department's strategic goals, the following initiatives are planned:

With respect to Strategic Goal 1, Staffing, Stability and Training, as mentioned earlier the Customs Department intends to run two recruitment exercises during 2023/24. This will bolster the activities across the department, but with particular focus being placed on enhancing marine and airport operations. The department will continue to utilise the excellent training modules developed by the World Customs Organization, which are provided as part of Bermuda's membership. Additionally, Customs will engage with the UK Home Office for strategic planning and training opportunities.

With respect to Strategic Goal 2, Legislation and Operational, the Bill in relation to Advance Passenger Name Record [PNR] data is a high priority in the importance of cross border movements and security.

**The Chairman:** Yes. Minister, you are on Head 12, Customs, this runs from page B-271 through B-274, I believe.

Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

With respect to Strategic Goal 2, Legislation and Operational, the Bill in relation to Advance Passenger Name Record [PNR] data is a high priority in the importance of cross border movements and security. Work has already started, and progress on drafting instructions will advance in the coming year. Operationally, the department will continue to move toward a *trusted trader* programme, where recurring legitimate importers with a good track record of Customs compliance will benefit from a reduced clearance time following a reduced upfront review which will be substituted with a post-clearance audit.

With respect to Strategic Goal 3, Policy, Procedures and Future, during 2023/24 it is our intention to continue to work to provide support to the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee in its important work of preventing money laundering and terrorist financing. Customs plays a highly important role in this

area as the enforcement body responsible for the cross border movement of cash and goods. As mentioned earlier, it is also our intention to develop an export control process which will further mitigate the risk to our reputation and society arising from money laundering.

Mr. Chairmen, the department will collaborate with Skyport in the redevelopment of the Air Cargo Terminal to ensure that Bermuda has a first-rate, efficient and secure facility to receive air importations.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the Collector of Customs, Ms. Lucinda Pearman, and her team for their continued service to Bermuda in protecting Bermuda's border and promoting economic development.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes the current and capital estimates for Head 12, and I will now move to Head 25, the Department of Corrections.

**The Chairman:** Carry on, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you.

[Pause]

**The Chairman:** Thank you very much, Minister.

This concludes the Heads 83, 6, 7 and 12. As the Minister just takes a brief minute, Head 83 is the Ministry Headquarters; 6 was Defence; 7 was the Police. The Minister just completed Customs. And he is moving into Head 25.

Minister, Head 25, the Department of Corrections. You have the floor, Minister.

There is by my recollection it looks to be one hour and a half, one hour and thirty minutes left to the debate.

Minister.

#### HEAD 25—DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to present fiscal year 2023/24 estimates of expenditure for Head 25—the Department of Corrections, which are found on pages B-275 through B-277 of the Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure book. Mr. Chairman, the Corrections Department's mission is *to protect the public and provide rehabilitative services*. The department objectives are to

- strive to maintain high standards of security, as this is essential to the safe operation of our facilities;
- provide a humane but demanding regime aimed at reducing re-offending by presenting inmates with a range of opportunities in which reward is linked to effort, incentives and earned privileges to prepare for life after release; and

- aim to have robust and disciplined regimes and systems in place in order to achieve operation efficiency at all levels.

The department carries out its objectives by providing rehabilitative services across its three inmate facilities, employing a high level of security to ensure the safety of its staff, inmates and the community.

Mr. Chairman, the current account estimate for Head 25 begins on page B-275. A total of \$24,892,000 has been allocated for Head 25 for fiscal year 2023/24. This represents an increase of \$1,999,000, or 9 per cent, over the original budget for financial year 2022/23.

Mr. Chairman, at present there are 174 full-time staff with an authorised strength of 215 funded posts. The variances are due to retirements, resignations and, sadly, two deaths. In addition to full-time employees, the budget will fund facilitators and teachers for inmate programmes.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Corrections faced many pandemic-related challenges during fiscal year 2022/23. Public health restrictions have required innovation in the delivery of the department's rehabilitative programmes and services. During fiscal year 2022/23, the department's Pandemic Response Team met on a regular basis to ensure the continued safe operation of the facilities. The department's efforts to safeguard staff and inmates have resulted in the performance of over 4,112 COVID-19 tests and the administration of 376 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine over the past 12 months. I am pleased to note that despite the high-risk environment for transmission of the coronavirus, the department's management of its pandemic policy has continued to be successful, with minimal cases and no hospitalisations over the past year.

Mr. Chairman, fiscal year 2022/23 has been a busy year for recruitment and saw the commencement of the recruitment process for the basic officers to fill vacant posts: the education officer; one nursing officer, which will complete the full complement of nursing staff; one psychologist post; facility manager; finance manager; administrative assistant; and principal purchasing officer.

Mr. Chairman, as the Department of Corrections moves toward living with the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been necessary adaptations in the delivery of rehabilitation programmes. The department increased its use of the computer labs at the facilities. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Corrections continues to maintain a high level of security at its facilities. In fiscal year 2022/23, the department completed upgrades to the CCTV systems at the Farm, Westgate and Co-Educational Facilities with funding from capital acquisitions. Razor wire was installed and repaired at Westgate and Co-Ed. Upgrades to the facilities' Black Creek Security System were carried out to ensure that

officers are able to maintain internal communications and operate the internal security system.

Mr. Chairman, there were some operational efficiencies created in fiscal year 2022/23. The Animal and Garden programme at the Farm and Co-Ed facility produced eggs and produce for consumption within the facilities, resulting in a reduction in food purchases.

Mr. Chairman, physical plant upgrades over the 2022/23 fiscal year included refurbishments and repairs to one of the housing units at the Westgate Facility. Also, repairs and replacements have been made to the air-conditioner units at Westgate. Replacement of cell and security doors at the Co-Ed facility has been completed, whilst the replacement of cell and security doors at Westgate is ongoing.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to mention the repurposing of the old Right Living House Facility which was located at the Farm Facility. The building has been renovated and is now used as the department's new training facility, which has been named the Clarence Davis Training Facility in honour of former Assistant Commissioner Clarence Davis (who is deceased).

Mr. Chairman, I would now like to draw your attention to page B-275 of the Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure book, which sets out the current account estimates for 2023/24.

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Here, under the General Summary, you will note that there are 12 business units within the Department of Corrections. With the exception of 35000, 35020 and 35109, nine business units remain unchanged from fiscal year 2022/23. I will address each of the business units in turn.

#### Headquarters and OTS

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35000, Headquarters and OTS, is \$18,831,000, an increase of \$1,887,000, or 11 per cent, over the 2022/23 budget allocation. This business unit is 76 per cent of the department's budget allocation. The allocation will fund salaries and operating expenses for Corrections Headquarters and all custody staff. The major increase in this business unit is attributed to the increase of 168 custody staff for the facilities. Please note, all of the salaries for custody staff were reallocated to this business unit in the fiscal year 2022/23, as the staff can be transferred amongst the facilities at a moment's notice and this reduced the administrative task of changing the business unit with every transfer.

In fiscal year 2022/23, the United Kingdom Ministry of Justice continued to provide training, and more than 163 staff members attended. Training included the following:

- Introduction to Mental Health Awareness;
- Personality Disorders;
- Defensible Decision-Making;
- Investigation;
- Counter Corruption Conditioning and Manipulation;
- First on Scene and Hostage Taking; and
- Introduction to Intelligence.

Mr. Chairman, additional training opportunities saw the following:

- 53 staff members complete CPR training;
- 27 staff members participate in the Emergency Response Training;
- Use of Force was attended by seven staff members;
- Canine Certification was attended by two staff;
- 19 sessions held for the Promotion Qualifying Exam [PQE]; and
- 12 weeks of recruit training was held for eight recruits.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal year 2023/24, the Corrections Senior Management Team will continue to implement a strategic plan aimed at restoring morale throughout the department through clear communication and improved work environments. Staff development will be encouraged and supported as opportunities arise.

#### Farm Facility

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35020, Farm Facility, is \$437,000. This represents a \$3,000, or 1 per cent, decrease when compared to the 2022/23 fiscal budget. This is due to the decrease in the salary scale of the administrative assistant. The substantive administrative assistant retired at a higher scale, and the new administrative assistant will come at the starting scale.

The Farm Facility is an adult male minimum security facility with a capacity to house 90 inmates. Inmates must have completed their core sentence plan requirements and be classified as minimum low risk to be housed at this facility.

[Pause]

**The Chairman:** I note the Members' generosity. Members, we continue in Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24 under Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45. And the Minister is currently on the Department of Corrections under Head 25. He remains on page B-275.

Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, where was I? The Farm Facility is an adult male minimum security facility with a capacity to house 90 inmates. Inmates must have completed their core sentence plan requirements and be classified as minimum low risk to be housed at this facility.

Mr. Chairman, in the fiscal year 2022/23, the Farm Facility gardens got off to a slow start this planting season due to our tractor breaking down. We have finally been able to get the gardens ploughed and have planted corn, beans, pumpkin, butternut squash, lettuce, mustard greens, onions, beets, spinach, Swiss chard and turnips. The Animal Programme was also successful, producing nearly 2,201 eggs for consumption.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal 2022/23, the Work Release programme resumed in May 2022 with four inmates participating. In an effort to minimise COVID-19 risks, inmates are antigen tested twice a week while on work release.

Mr. Chairman, the Farm Facility has received three large pieces of carpentry equipment to be utilised in the inmate workshops. This equipment will provide more opportunities for inmates to learn and hone their woodworking skills in a safe setting. In addition, it will provide options in developing the Inmate Co-Operative.

#### Co-Educational Facility

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35030, Co-Educational Facility, is \$300,000. This represents the same budget as the budget allocation for the fiscal year 2022/23. This facility, with a capacity of 56 cells, has separate and distinct provisions to house 40 adult females and six young male offenders between the ages of 16 to 21. In addition, it houses the department's residential substance abuse treatment programme/therapeutic community, the Right Living House. Educational and vocational programmes are offered based on the needs of the inmates and trainees who are identified through the case management process.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal year 2022/23, the Co-Ed Facility offered carpentry classes to male and female inmates. New carpentry equipment was recently purchased during this fiscal year for the department. This will not only benefit the inmates at the Co-Ed Facility, but it will benefit the Farm Facility and Westgate Facility as well in the instruction of carpentry.

A chicken programme has been established at the Co-Ed Facility. The purpose of this programme is therapy in that the inmates care for the chickens. The Right Living House Residential Substance Abuse Treatment programme continued to provide core treatment interventions/service elements. During the fiscal year 2023/24, the Right Living House will be fully managed by the Department of Corrections, and plans are being made for this transition.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal year 2023/24 the Co-Ed/Right Living House facility would like to initiate the following:

- Fishing Initiative—to have the inmates catch fish, which will reduce/eliminate the amount of fish that is ordered from outside agencies. This will also serve as outside recreation for the inmates.
- Bee Initiative—to have beehives housed at the Co-Educational Facility. This would allow inmates to learn the full process of yielding two products of bee husbandry. As there are limited beekeepers in Bermuda and Bermuda honey is very popular, this could create a viable option for employment upon release for inmates. Also, the wax which is generated could be used to make candles, crayons, hair products, et cetera—

*[Laughter]*

**The Chairman:** Carry on, Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** My Shadow seems very interested.

**The Chairman:** Absolutely!

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes.

**The Chairman:** He is riveted.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes.

- Expand the animal programme at the Co-Educational Facility to include goats animal therapy as well as to breed rabbits with a view to selling rabbit meat.

#### Westgate Correctional Facility

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35060, Westgate Correctional Facility, is \$1,120,000. This represents the same budget as the budget allocation for the fiscal year 2022/23. Westgate Correctional Facility is an adult male establishment with the capacity to house 208 inmates classified as maximum, medium and minimum security, as well as males on court remand. The majority of assessment and treatment programmes for male inmates take place at this facility.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal year 2022/23 it was challenging for the Westgate Facility as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19-related illness and quarantine impacted the facility with varying degrees of staff absences and limited access by the programmes' vendors at various phases of the pandemic which limited both service delivery and the opportunity for inmates to continue their case plan recommendations. Additional COVID-19 measures were put in

place in an effort to minimise the disruptions caused and to normalise activities and services.

Mr. Chairman, in spite of our challenges, the Westgate Facility continues to strive for every opportunity to provide activities and outlets to our clients. The completion of the computer lab allowed inmates to gain access to additional online educational and technological programmes and assisted those inmates who required an alternative style of educational learning to enrol in academia. Also, the lab has expanded its capabilities to offer inmates access to legal statutes and documents that allow the inmates to pursue appeals and their current cases. An organised Fathers Christmas Event was held in the visits area and allowed inmates and their children to have an extended period of time to bond and reflect, as well as the children receiving gifts donated by the Prison Fellowship outreach programme. Fathers and children were able to memorialise the event with pictures taken by staff.

Mr. Chairman, the Culinary Arts programme was reintroduced this fiscal year and was a resounding success. Both staff and inmates received instruction in all aspects of basic commercial kitchen management including maintaining sanitary conditions. Kitchen management is a vital part of the daily regime in the Westgate Facility; hence this programme has assisted with more efficient food preparation and skills gained to prepare varied delectable [treats] that can be created from basic ingredients.

Over the past year, the Westgate Correctional Facility has continued with a weekly antigen testing programme for officers and monthly testing for inmates. This has proven beneficial to maintaining an effective monitoring and identification tool that aids in preventing a large scale of persons becoming infected.

#### Therapeutic Community Centre

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35090, Therapeutic Community Centre, is \$1,036,000, which represents the same budget as the budget allocation for the fiscal year 2022/23. The Therapeutic Community Centre, also known as the Right Living House, is located at the Co-Educational Facility. The Right Living House is a substance abuse rehabilitation programme that is segregated from the remaining prison population. The programme has the capacity to house 18 adult male offenders with a history of substance abuse and associated criminality. The programme aims to transition residents to the broader community with an increased potential for a life free of drug abuse and criminal activity through providing tools and opportunities for change. The budget allocation funds staffing, operational costs and the inmate programmes.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal 2022/23, the Right Living House continued to face some challenges in re-

gard to COVID-19 protocols as we adapt to living with the new normal. Work release restarted for eligible phase 3 members in the fall. The Day Release programme for eligible inmates also resumed in January 2023 with participants following COVID-19 protocols. This is a critical part of the programme that helps the clients transition to the community and prepares them for the aftercare portion of Right Living House.

During Recovery Month in September 2022, a graduation celebration was held for four men who successfully completed the residential and aftercare portions of the programme. Despite challenges and changes during the pandemic, staff and residents have remained committed to the programme philosophy, *To Build a Future Better than the Past*, by living crime- and substance-free lives. Overall, the inmates who participate in this programme continue to benefit tremendously both whilst incarcerated and post-release by way of the aftercare component of the programme.

#### Social Services and Case Management

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35106, Social Services and Case Management, \$553,000. This represents the same budget as the budget allocation for the fiscal year 2022/23. This budget allocation provides for staffing of one social worker and four case managers/assessment officers and contracted specific service providers.

Mr. Chairman, the department's social worker is a member of the Department's Multi-Disciplinary Team and assists inmates and trainees with offence-specific associated problems in order to address behavioural, social and financial problems. The Social Work Team provides a variety of services to the inmates and trainees, including the following:

- Thinking for a Change;
- Parenting Programmes (Fathers/Mothers and Children Together);

Grief Counselling.

#### Health Services

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35107, Health Services, is \$1,469,000. This represents the same budget as the budget allocation for the fiscal year 2022/23. This budget allocation will provide funding for nursing staff and health care services for inmates. When fully staffed, Health Services is managed by a senior nurse and five registered nurses responsible for providing services to the inmate population at all facilities. There is currently one vacant post.

Mr. Chairman, during fiscal 2022/23, Health Services conducted COVID-19 testing for staff and inmates and provided care to COVID-19-positive cases. The Health Services Team also administered COVID-19 vaccinations to staff and inmates. The

team managed all doctors' clinics including dentistry, medical, psychiatric, chiropody and physiotherapy. The team provided health education for inmates on a variety of chronic illnesses and COVID-19. Health Services have commenced working on recommendations provided by an assessment that was conducted by the UK Health Agency in 2022.

Mr. Chairman, in fiscal 2023/24, the Health Services team plans to continue developing an inmate health services handbook and increase inmate health education sessions by 50 per cent. It is anticipated that the increased education will increase participation in flu shot and vaccine clinics. The Health Services team will continue its long-term project of the implementing of an electronic medical records system.

#### Vocational Services

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimate for business unit 35109, Vocational Services, is \$419,000. This represents a \$115,000 increase. This increase in funding will provide for the development of an Inmate Co-operative Programme, a Throne Speech Initiative.

#### Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw your attention to page B-276 of the Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure book, which is the subjective analysis of the current account estimates. I will briefly comment on those items which have a notable variance from the original estimates from the 2022/23 fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, Salaries has increased by \$1,914,000, or 12 per cent. This represents the increase in salaries for 15 prison officers' posts.

Mr. Chairman, Professional Services has increased by \$91,000, or 4 per cent. This represents funding for the service provider who will manage the new Co-Operative Programme for Inmates, as mentioned in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Chairman, Rentals has decreased by \$31,000, or 18 per cent. This represents a decrease in rent, as Corrections Headquarters has now relocated to Westgate and the savings will be used to fund the POA salary review.

Mr. Chairman, Materials and Supplies has increased by \$14,000, or 1 per cent. This increase represents supplies that will be needed for the Throne Speech Initiative regarding the inmate Co-Operative Programme.

Mr. Chairman, the employee number, or full-time equivalents, for 2023/24 is 223, an increase of eight full-time equivalents when compared to 2022/23. Mr. Chairman, these additional eight FTEs represent Prison Officers Association [POA] posts that were previously unfunded. More inclusive, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Um-hmm.

#### Performance Measures

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I would now like to draw your attention to page B-277 which outlines the Performance Measures of the Department of Corrections. The forecast for 2023/24 is as follows:

1. The average daily inmate population is forecasted at 128, with 25 of the admissions estimated to be first-time offenders who received custodial sentences.
2. The number of inmates projected to be released on parole is forecasted to be 10.
3. In the 2021/22 fiscal year 50 per cent of eligible inmates enrolled in development and treatment programmes aimed to address the offending behaviours, address educational and vocational needs and improve skill development. The department has a target enrolment of 51 per cent for 2023/24,
4. The Department of Corrections calculates its recidivism rates according to internationally accepted practices. Based on these standards, the rates include persons who have a conviction for a new offence within one, two and three years of their release. The actual outcome for 2021/22 was 18 per cent.

#### Capital Development and Acquisition

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I will now move to page C-7 and capital development. The Estimate for 2023/24 is \$850,000. The allocation will be used for the continuation of the refurbishment for the inmate housing units at Westgate and the repairs to the facilities as necessary. Page C-15 shows the 2023/24 estimate for capital acquisition is \$367,000. The department will commence procurement for an Inmate Management System (Phase 1), replacement of two ageing vehicles and continued components for upgrades to the CCTV system.

Mr. Chairman, I will briefly set out some of the priorities of the Department of Corrections for fiscal year 2023/24.

- The department will continue with recruitment to fill various vacant posts including civilian and custodial staff.
- The department will work with other uniformed services to revamp recruitment strategies in an effort to recruit suitably qualified candidates and fill the needed vacancies.
- The department will work with management services to develop a new three-year strategic plan.
- As part of a plan to engage the community, the department will partner with community stakeholders to support the successful reintegration of inmates into the community. The

Department of Corrections will also work with community partners to develop projects that can benefit both the inmates and the wider community.

- Finally, the department will continue to work with other government agencies on Criminal Justice related initiatives. Examples include the Child Safeguarding Committee, the Anti-Corruption Committee and the Offender High Risk Management Team.

Mr. Chairman, at this time I would like to thank the Commissioner Joell-Benjamin and her staff who have, throughout the pandemic, provided exemplary service and delivered on their mission to protect the public and provide rehabilitative services.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks on Head 25. I will now move to Head 45, the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service [BFRS].

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Carry on.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I will give you a moment to update the time and—

**The Chairman:** Yes, thank you very much, Minister.

This is the debate on the [budget for] National Security. We are in the Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24. These are Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45. The Minister has completed Heads 83, 6, 7, 12 and 25, and is now going on to Head 45, Fire Service.

Minister, the time left for this particular debate is 55 minutes. It finishes at 5:55, fifty minutes.

Carry on Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** [He's] offering me some milk.

[Laughter]

**The Chairman:** Milk coming from Mr. Dunkley is quite an offer.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Head 45, the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service which can be found on pages B-278 through B-280 of the current account estimates book.

#### HEAD 45—BERMUDA FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the mission of the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service is *To provide fire protection to life and property through the delivery of fire prevention, airport fire rescue, and emergency medical services to the community. We will deliver this through the dedicated and professional service of our*

*uniform and civilian staff in collaboration with our community partners.*

Mr. Chairman, the Service is committed to partnering with the community to provide quality education and fire prevention programmes to identify risks of fire and life safety; and to respond to all emergencies in an effective, efficient, and professional manner.

The department's objectives are to

- continue re-certifications in Aircraft Rescue Firefighting for the Airport Division;
- deliver the 2023/24 foundational recruit course for trainee firefighters.
- continue leadership training courses for middle managers;
- continue succession planning training courses for senior managers;
- continue with the assimilation of the UK National Operational Guidance standard for Professional Firefighting Practice—

*[Mr. W. Lawrence Scott, Chairman]*

**The Chairman:** Mr. Minister, I just wanted to let the audience know that I heard the word "airport" and felt as though I should insert myself into this conversation as the Chairman. You now have roughly about 45 minutes left on your debate.

#### General Summary

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the total budget estimate for the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service for the 2023/24 financial year is \$14,880,000. This reflects an increase of \$1,668,000, or 13 per cent over the 2022/23 financial year. This increase primarily reflects the increased funding required to meet the revised minimum duty strength at airport operations and the need to hire an additional 24 firefighters for the L. F. Wade International Airport.

Mr. Chairman, I will now address the main business units which can be found on page B-278.

#### Business Unit 55060—Central Emergency Fire Service

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** The Central Emergency Fire Service cost centre covers the provision of Fire and Emergency Services from the Hamilton, Eastern, and Western Fire Stations. These stations respond to fires, road traffic accidents, and hazardous material incidents when required.

This business unit has a budget allocation of \$5,993,000, which is a decrease of \$288,000, 5 per cent over the financial year 2022/23. This decrease is attributed mainly to a reduction in the anticipated overtime. These savings will be achieved through the ef-

fective workforce management of operations and personnel leave to reduce overtime costs.

#### Business Unit 55080—Other Services Central

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, Other Services Central, contains the Vehicle Repair services and Maintenance personnel. This unit has a budget estimate of \$817,000, which is an increase of \$263,000, or 47 per cent from the 2022/23 financial year. This increase is mainly attributed to the increasing maintenance costs of an ageing vehicle fleet including the extraordinary inflationary costs owing to supply chain challenges and the increased costs of the manufacture, and logistics of procuring and supply of very specialised vehicle inventory of an older fleet.

#### Business Unit 55090—St. George's Emergency Fire Service

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** The St. George's Emergency Fire Service cost centre covers the provision of Fire and Emergency Services to the eastern end of the Island from the Clearwater Fire Station. This station responds to fires, road traffic accidents, medical emergencies, and hazardous material incidents when required.

This business unit has an estimated budget allocation of \$107,000, which is an increase of \$18,000, or 20 per cent from the 2022/23 financial year. This increase is attributed to the increased cost of electricity, and repair and maintenance of the station.

#### Business Unit 55100—Emergency Medical Services

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Emergency Medical Services business unit is responsible for equipment and supplies associated with the department's Emergency Medical Response throughout the Island. The unit has an estimated budget of \$150,000, which is an increase of \$43,000, or 40 per cent. This increase reflects the increased costs of medical personal protective equipment, medical supplies, and training and certification of Emergency Medical Technicians during the 2023/24 financial year.

#### Business Unit 55110—Eastern Volunteer Division

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** The Eastern Volunteer Division's role was to provide additional support to full-time firefighters during protracted incidents.

This business unit has not received any funding for the 2023/24 financial year, which represents a reduction of \$20,090, or 100 per cent from the 2022/23 financial year. This reduction is part of the organisational redirecting of resources to support the recruitment and training of 24 new Airport Rescue Fire

Fighters. Consequently, funding for the 2023/24 financial year will be targeted to the most critical operations which include the airport and domestic obligations.

The future direction of the Eastern Volunteer Division will be considered by His Majesty's Inspectorate for Police and Fire and Rescue Service who will conduct a comprehensive review of the Fire Service during the 2023/24 financial year.

#### Business Unit 55120—West End Emergency Fire Service

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** The West End Emergency Fire Service cost centre covers the provision of Fire and Emergency Services to the western end of the Island from the Port Royal Station. This station responds to fires, road traffic accidents, medical emergencies, and hazardous material incidents when required.

This business unit has an estimated budget allocation of \$144,000, which is an increase of \$80,000, or 125 per cent from the 2022/23 financial year. This increase is attributed to the estimated cost of minimum overtime as a result of protracted emergencies, and other operational expenses such as fuel, and staff welfare improvements during the 2023/24 financial year. The remaining \$64,000 is allocated for building maintenance and general operational cost.

#### Business Unit 55150—Training

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the responsibility of the Training Section is to provide strategic pathways for initial firefighter qualifications, professional development, and implementation of maintenance of core competencies for firefighters and civilian staff. The Training Section also facilitates all overseas specialised qualifications and mandatory revalidation in line with both local and international requirements.

A budget estimate of \$1,004,000 for this unit reflects an increase of \$832,000, or 484 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, training during the 2022/23 financial year included [the following]:

- national registered emergency medical technicians
- airport firefighters' revalidation
- advance incident command course
- hazardous material and environment specialist certification
- aircraft watch commander certification
- self-contained breathing apparatus repair technician certification
- emergency driving courses
- recertification of certified Fire Inspectors and certified Plans Examiner (NFPA)
- certified emergency vehicle repair technician training (Angloco)

- emergency medical technician instructors certification
- emergency medical technician allied health recertification
- CPR recertification

The increased funding for the 2023/24 financial year will support the services' operational preparedness and succession planning through the acquisition of professional qualifications obtained locally and overseas. Fire officers will complete the following courses during the 2023/24 financial year:

- Foundation Recruit Course
- Emergency Medical Technician Course
- CPR Recertification
- Middle Managers Course
- Senior Management Course
- Airport Rescue Fire Fighters revalidation
- Allied Health Continuing Education Units (CEU)

A more detailed explanation of this increase in funding will be discussed in the Subjective Analysis.

#### Business Unit 55170—General Administration

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the General Administration cost centre is responsible for the funding and support services of the administration section of the department. The budget estimate for this unit is \$3,125,000, which is a modest decrease of \$1,000, or 1 per cent from the financial year 2022/23.

#### Business Unit 55190—Emergency Dispatch

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the Emergency Dispatch cost centre has an establishment of 14 full-time equivalents. The Fire Dispatch is responsible for answering both fire and medical 911 calls from the community and dispatch of the appropriate fire and medical resources.

The budget estimate for this business unit is \$970,000. This increase of \$105,000, or 12 per cent is attributed to an additional \$100,000 allocated for overtime cost that is anticipated due to staffing shortage. The emergency dispatch is currently operating with 9 of the 14 established full-time equivalents. The overtime estimation provides a more accurate reflection of the budgetary requirements for efficient operation of this business unit.

Mr. Chairman, a recruitment drive to fill the staffing shortage is ongoing in collaboration with the Department of Employee and Organisational Development.

Mr. Chairman, during the 2022/23 financial year, the emergency dispatch answered approximately 9,429 calls for service. This represents an increase of 2,017, or 27 per cent from the 2021/22 financial year.

Mr. Chairman, emergency medical dispatchers coordinate resources required for firefighting operations and provide life-saving medical instructions to the community during a 911 call. The emergency dispatch is operated by a team of highly skilled emergency medical dispatchers who provide a reassuring first link to a person who is experiencing an extreme event.

#### Business Unit 55200—Airport Fire Rescue

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, this business unit provides Aircraft Emergency Rescue and Fire Fighting Services at the L. F. Wade International Airport, as prescribed by the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements (OTAR) part 140. The L. F. Wade International Airport operates as a Category 9 airport. The category of an airport determines the maximum size of aircraft that can land at the airport, the manpower and equipment requirements, and the extinguishing medium.

Mr. Chairman, the budget estimate for this unit is \$2,548,000, an increase of \$627,000, or 33 per cent. This increase is attributable to the funding required to increase the number of full-time equivalents to meet the Bermuda Civil Aviation Authority regulatory requirements for fire protection of the L. F. Wade International Airport. These requirements were amended after the January 2022 Skyport audit of the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service airport operations.

Mr. Chairman, the audit was conducted by a UK-based aviation expert who determined that the current establishment of 23 firefighters was insufficient. Consequently, it has been determined that 48 will be required to safeguard airport operations in alignment with the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements (OTAR). Mr. Chairman, you will recall that I have provided Ministerial Statements to this Honourable House on this revised requirement and the reason for the surge in firefighters at the airport.

Mr. Chairman, at the time of the audit completion, there were only 13 full-time firefighters at the airport station. Coverage was managed through significant use of overtime hours. In order to immediately bolster staff and keep the airport open to international flights, the BFRS contracted 25 overseas firefighters trained in airport rescue and fire-fighting. Funding for the contract was sourced from the realignment of the existing BFRS budget and supplementary request. To date, the service has spent \$1,117,495 on contracted firefighters to meet the staffing requirements. In the 2023/24 financial year, the BFRS intends to cease all contracts with overseas fire-fighters and substantively fill the necessary posts.

The increased funding for the airport fire rescue reflects the cost of recruitment, mandatory initial certifications, and provisioning of 24 additional full-time equivalents, and the annual revalidation of all tenured Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighters. This funding will

also support the organisational maintenance of professional competency scheme in alignment with the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements (OTAR).

Mr. Chairman, I now draw your attention to page B-279 of the current account estimates book, Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates.

#### Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I will now speak to the subjective analysis of current account estimates and those object codes that show substantial changes over the 2022/23 financial year found on page B-279.

The funding allocation for salaries for the financial year 2023/24 is \$11,436,000. This is an increase of \$391,000, or 4 per cent from the financial year 2022/23. This increase is attributed to funding of additional full-time equivalents that will be assigned to provide fire protection at the L. F. Wade International Airport, training, and procurement of personal protective equipment.

Training allocation of \$989,000 represents an increase of \$831,000, or 526 per cent. This increase is attributed to new regulatory requirements that raised the manning level for fire fighters required to protect the L. F. Wade International Airport following the 2022 Skyport audit of BFRS Airport Operations. The audit findings determined a new minimum staffing level that required a 108 per cent increase from a total of 23 firefighters to 48 firefighters. The increased funding reflects the cost of recruitment, mandatory initial certifications, and provisioning of 24 additional full-time equivalents, and the annual revalidation of all tenured Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighters. This funding will also support the organisational maintenance of professional competency scheme in alignment with the Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements (OTAR). An additional \$11,500 has been allocated for local training at the Bermuda College and private sector institutions.

Travel allocation for the 2023/24 financial year is \$74,000. This supports the increased travel requirements for fire officers to undertake specialised training and recertifications.

Communications allocation of \$294,000 is a decrease of \$52,000, or 15 per cent. This decrease reflects savings and efficiencies as a result of the Government's purchase of its own radio system, which has eliminated rental fees during the 2023/24 financial year.

Repair and maintenance allocation for the 2023/24 financial year is \$629,000. This is an increase of \$252,000, or 67 per cent. The increase reflects maintenance of ageing vehicles, supply chain challenges and the extraordinary inflationary cost due to the manufacture and logistics of procuring specialised vehicle inventory.

Energy allocation for the 2023/24 financial year is \$429,000. This represents an increase of \$25,000, or 6 per cent. The increase is attributed to the increase in energy usage at the Clearwater Station. The Clearwater Station houses both the Structural Fire Fighters and the Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighters. It is anticipated that the increase activity that will result from increasing the mandatory number of Airport Rescue Firefighters from 23 to 48, or 108 per cent, will increase overall energy usage at the Clearwater Station for the 2023/24 financial year.

Clothing, uniforms and laundry allocation for the 2023/24 financial year is \$173,000, an increase of 175 per cent. The increase reflects the procurement of work uniforms and heat-resistant personal protective clothing for the 24 new firefighters that will make up the expanded workforce required for the Airport Operations.

Materials and Supplies allocation of \$333,000 is an increase of \$78,000, or 31 per cent. The increase reflects the procurement of medical supplies, firefighting tools, and equipment. This allocation will also support the Home Safety Fire Programme. Members of the community can request fire officers to visit homes to conduct a fire safety inspection. During their visit, officers will install free smoke detectors inside the home if required. This initiative will increase community fire safety awareness and reduce the risk in homes.

#### Revenue Source

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the estimates of revenue for the service can also be found on page B-279. The revenue estimate for the 2023/24 financial year is estimated at \$320,000, a reduction of \$36,000, or 10 per cent. Revenue in 2022/23 was above normal due to increased licensing and fire certificate applications following a lull in applications during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The Chairman:** And Minister, I will just take this opportunity to let you know that we are at 5:30. You have roughly 25 minutes left.

For the listening audience, we are in the Committee of Supply speaking to Head 45, Fire Service on page B-279.

Minister, you have the floor.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, all commercial buildings and large residential properties undergo Fire and Life Safety Risk Assessment and submit an application for a fire certificate. Fire certificates are valid for a period of one to five years based on the level of risk. Re-licensing occurs over the life span of a building. The combined revenue generated from fire certificate applications fees and general licences for the 2023/24 financial year is estimated to be \$170,000.

Mr. Chairman, the Service also generates revenue from airport operations providing fire protection to after-hour aviation flights at the L. F. Wade International Airport. This includes commercial and critical care air ambulance flights. Revenue for the 2023/24 financial year is estimated at \$150,000.

#### Employee Numbers (Full-Time Equivalents)

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, the employee numbers or full-time equivalents can also be found on page B-279 and reflects an increase of 29, from 127 in the financial year 2022/23 to 156 in the financial year 2023/24. Twenty-four previously unfunded full-time equivalents will be funded to align with the new minimum duty strength requirements for the L. F. Wade International Airport. Five vacant and funded full-time equivalents as a result of retirements, and resignations will also be filled. Advertising for these posts is currently underway and, subject to legislative approval of the budget, the recruits will be on boarded and begin training at the earliest opportunity.

#### Capital Acquisition Funding

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I now draw your attention to page C-15 where you will note that the Ministry of National Security has budgeted \$1,419,000 of capital acquisition funding for the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service. This funding will allow the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service to initiate the purchase of four specialised major foam vehicles for the Airport Operations Division to replace those that have reached the end of their service life.

Funding of \$38,000 is also provided for the procurement of a new command vehicle for the airport operations.

#### Achievements for 2022/23

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, although there have been many challenges during the 2022/23 financial year, the year was also marked by several triumphs for the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service.

- Three members of the community were given the Community Heroism Awards by the Chief Fire Officer for their courageous actions that prevented the escalation of a boat that caught fire while docked alongside of a gas station in St. George's.
- Fire Fighter Dillon Charles received the Community Heroism Award in recognition of his extraordinary efforts while off duty to rescue two people after their car went into the water.
- Ten local recruits recently completed six weeks of intense training in the United Kingdom. The new fire fighters returned on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February having successfully obtained

certification as Airport Rescue Fire Fighters. The fire fighters will provide fire protection for the L. F. Wade International Airport.

- From the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, seven senior fire officers successfully completed the Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command (MAGIC) Course that was delivered by visiting United Kingdom experts from the College of Policing in collaboration with the National Ambulance Resilience Unit and the National Fire Chief Council.

Key performance operational indicators for emergency responses for the 2022/23 financial year indicate that there was a total of 4,169 calls for service, they consisted of

- 614 road traffic collisions;
- 1,057 structural fires;
- 2,031 medical responses;
- 16 vehicle fires;
- 765 responses to hot refuels, aircraft standby, emergency diversions, and foreign object inspections at the L. F. Wade International airport;
- 300 special service calls to floods, oil spills, and gas cylinder leaks.

#### 2023/24 Financial Year Plans

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, in the 2023/24 financial year the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service will continue to advance its objectives of training and assimilation with international standards in fire safety.

Mr. Chairman, in order to ensure that the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service is meeting the needs of the community, I have invited His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to conduct a review of the Service.

Mr. Chairman, over the years the needs of the community have changed with the majority of service calls now being responses to road traffic accidents and medical emergencies. This is partly owing to the design and construction of our properties, the fire code requirements and fire prevention training.

Mr. Chairman, this will be an independent assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service including the services provided and how resources are used. The inspection assesses how effective and efficient the service is, how it protects the public against fires and other emergencies and how it responds to the same. They will also assess how well the service looks after the people who work there.

Mr. Chairman, the objective is to ensure that we have a future facing fire service that meets the changing needs of our community. Mr. Chairman, the review will be tabled in the House and assist us to ensure that the service is properly resourced and its services aligned with the needs of the community.

Mr. Chairman, in the 2023/24 fiscal year the public can expect that the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service will

- implement a robust maintenance of competency programme to support professional development of all fire fighters;
- recruit additional local fire fighters to provide critical fire protection for the L. F. Wade International Airport;
- introduce new technology to deliver and record all training activities, professional development, and incident command competencies;
- develop a business community risk profile through fire safety inspections and the fire certificate application process;
- continue to educate the community about fire safety awareness and installation of smoke detectors in homes of selected population;
- commence the procurement process for four specialised major foam vehicles for fire protection at the L. F. Wade International Airport.

#### Community Risk Reduction

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, to address the risks associated in our community, fire officers and fire inspectors are conducting risk assessments in accordance with the Fire Safety Act 2014. The risk assessments are necessary to identify the risks in the community. This data will help formulate targeted fire safety programmes to increase community education, reduce fires and other related emergencies and with the objective of reducing the calls for service.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to the home fire safety visit programme, the BFRS will introduce a home smoke alarm programme which will see the fire officers providing and installing smoke alarms in selected parts of the community.

Mr. Chairman, as I have already mentioned, the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service is currently advertising for 24 local recruits to join their ranks during the 2023/24 financial year. The selected applicants will be required to complete a minimum of nine weeks of specialised training in Bermuda and the United Kingdom before replacing the contracted fire-fighters who are providing fire protection at the L. F. Wade International Airport. Once again, I encourage all interested locals to ready themselves to apply for these positions as they become available.

The men and women of the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service are some of Bermuda's heroes. They are the first responders we see in our greatest time of need. The service they provide is exemplary. I would like to thank Acting Chief Fire Officer, Dana Lovell and his team for their service to the community. The Ministry of National Security will continue to support them as they remain on the frontline of keeping Bermuda safe.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my submission for the Ministry of National Security, Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Minister.

Would anyone like to speak on the National Security Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45, as we have 15 minutes left.

**Hon. Michael H. Dunkley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I know why the Honourable Member wanted to speak on the motion to adjourn [the other] night. He had so much to say in the budget debate, he tried to get a few minutes off of his chest.

In all seriousness, Mr. Chairman, I enjoyed the presentation today. But it is difficult to give an adequate reply when we only have 15 minutes. But let me hit a few of the high points.

First, looking at Ministry Headquarters . . . but first let me thank all of the professionals in this Ministry and certainly thank the Commissioner and the PS and others who are in the Gallery today, for their dedication and commitment to improving the safety and security of our country. Sometimes we take it for granted. They are on the frontline and we know it is not easy work. But it must be done.

Mr. Chairman, in regard to the headquarters, I am very disappointed that here we are one year on and the CCTV system is now being progressed. It was in the budget for last year. No funds were used. It was supposed to have been progressed last year and it has not been done. Unfortunately, as we have seen with the Honourable Minister's Statement just last week I believe, it seems like a significant number of the cameras are not in very good service and now we are paying a price for that inaction. Obviously, in my view, and I think [a view] supported by colleagues in this Chamber, CCTV is a critical part of the operation of the Police Service and other services throughout the community. So I hope that in this coming year we can actually make some progress because I think Band-Aids are worn out on the system and it is not going to work any longer, +the current system. So we need to replace it.

In regard to other comments in the Ministry's heads, quite interestingly, Mr. Chairman, when you look at the numbers for the past three years through the Ministry of National Security, you will see that with final numbers coming out for 2021/22, every department within the Ministry had an overspend from their original budget, every department other than the police. And I raise that because obviously there can be some circumstances that warrant that. We were just coming off of COVID-19 in 2021/22, but we did have [2020] where we could budget for it appropriately so we should have learned from our past experience in 2021/22. But every department other than police was over [budget] and it was significant at that time.

Police were actually in good shape at \$59 million. They were \$2.2 million under their budget. And it looks like in the current financial year (because this is a budget, so I should raise the number) the overspend within the department, the whole department, all of the different heads, will be estimated to be \$3.4 million and, again, police are projected to come in on their budget.

I say that specifically because in my time in politics, in my time as the Minister, I have been impressed with the police budgeting process. And the police have had to deal with a significant reduction in funding because in 2017/18 (I'm going off the top of my head), I think the police budget in that year was \$67 million. So now here we are. They are \$5 million below that and still expected to keep Bermuda safe. So, interesting. And I would hope that we can do better throughout the rest of the department as we go forward in this next financial year.

A big focus, quite rightly so, for the Government, and the OBA Government as well, was gang violence reduction. Mr. Chairman, not being critical of the programmes, because I wish the Honourable Minister had given more detail on the programmes because it was a rehash, basically, of what we heard in the last budget again this year without saying much [about what] was new, other than there was a meeting down at the Hamilton Princess where they talked about their goals. But I want to see when the actions come out of that [meeting] how they are going to handle that. But if you look at gang violence reduction strategy, Mr. Chairman, we have seen an over-budget every year.

So, in 2021/22 it was \$379,000. The final number was \$499,000, a 30 per cent increase on the budget. In 2022/23, \$621,000. The final number is projected to be \$821,000, a 30 per cent increase in the budget. In this current . . . the next financial year it is supposed to be \$946,000, a 50 per cent increase on the budget for this year. Now, it is one thing to have extenuating circumstances and have to do something about it; but it is concerning when you see the last three years over on the budget. So I ask the Honourable Minister how we are going to stop this creep on the budget every year from what has happened. And generally, throughout the Ministry I have not seen one supplementary estimate tabled yet. The Minister mentioned supplementary estimates, but I have not seen one supplementary estimate tabled at this time.

Before I move on to other important matters, a police authority was talked about last year. That seems to have disappeared. Last year we talked about a national crime plan. That seems to have disappeared. I am pleased to see that we are going to continue on with cybersecurity.

Now, generally throughout the Ministry we have seen a significant commitment by the Government to increase the staffing of the professionals in all

departments. And that's good. But what we are actually doing, Mr. Chairman, is catching up for austerity measures that the Government talked about the past two years. And we have paid for that with increased overtime and, perhaps, a reduction of services and safety in certain areas. It is unacceptable.

But here we are now, where we look at . . . and I just did the back-of-the-envelope numbers on what it is anticipated through all of those departments . . . I added up 87 additional professionals. Now, it might be a bit more because the Minister was going through all of the briefs and it was hard to keep track of it. But the number that he actually said was 87. With all of those professional services pulling from the same pool, I would believe that it would be very difficult if not impossible to get those professionals trained and in those positions in a reasonable period of time in this next financial year. Which means that we will have to pay more overtime and will have challenges based on that. So, I look forward to hearing (there won't be a question period now) the progress on that on how we are going to fill those professional [positions].

Let me turn to the Bermuda Police Service because time is short. Mr. Chairman, I am a big supporter of the Bermuda Police Service. As a former Minister I am well aware of the challenges that they have. There are a couple of things I want to address today, and I am going to be very careful in what I say because of confidentiality and protecting their operations. I support Operation Vega, but as a person who has analysed systems for a while, Operation Vega, to me, is a Band-Aid. It's been successful; it has apprehended a lot of people. We see the numbers. But Operation Vega tells me, because it happens on an infrequent basis every few weeks or every few months, that we do not have the road policing unit we need, because they are probably deployed somewhere else, like investigations of fatal accidents.

Road safety needs to be a more important consideration for this Honourable Chamber and the Government. We focus in on gangs and guns and violence, as we should, but the Minister said how many road fatalities we had since 2017 and I bet you that it is 50 per cent more than the number of murders. If we are having more road fatalities, why are we not making sure we stop that? We are concentrating on gangs and guns, why are we taking the professionals and using them somewhere else and then bringing them out for a mass blitz on the streets? It makes no sense.

What we have now in Bermuda for road safety is a culture of bad driving. It is absolutely disgusting. And we need to, not arrest it (because that is the wrong word, talking about police), but we need to make sure that we change it. And the only way we change it is to have the presence on the streets. So we should support the police in getting them out there and doing that.

The same thing as well. I am hearing concerns within the police in regard to armed response. And I will talk to the Minister off of the record, but I want it on the record here that I am concerned about the number of actual firearm officers we have, their ability to be covered by insurance, and their ability to be compensated for their extra pay for their training. That's all I will say in that regard, Mr. Chairman.

You gave me the five-minute signal, so that doesn't mean I can touch on too many other subjects, Mr. Chairman. One thing that I will do is jump right to airport fire operations.

Now, Mr. Chairman, one of the things that I am kind of curious about is the challenges with OTAR [Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements]. It seems to me that it publicly became a challenge in early 2022. So I ask the Honourable Minister a question. When was the first time this Government knew of the challenges with OTAR? He talked about an audit in 2022. But my sources tell me it was a year earlier that challenges were identified. And what we are seeing now is because we have, in my view, been slow to address it, we see an overspend in Airport Fire Rescue of over \$3 million this past year. And we had to hire 24 professionals to fill those positions which, you know, the way that the recruitment process goes, the way the training process goes and all of the bureaucracy around it, we might we whistling Dixie on this one.

So, as we talk about getting these services up to the levels they need within Corrections, which I know has got very serious morale issues, if we talk about getting the staff needed to run the high expectations of the public I am going to be holding Government to account to make sure that those positions are filled, because I have my sincere doubts that they will be filled, because we do a lot of talk without much action happening. And we are all pulling from the same pool. Does that mean that of those 85 to 100 people that we need we are going to have to recruit them from overseas?

We have some serious challenges to deal with there. So I ask the Honourable Minister if we can have a conversation afterwards because there won't be any question time to get more information on that because I cannot believe that OTAR would do an audit and give you no time to implement it. It just does not seem like a practical way to operate. So, somewhere along the line I believe somebody has dropped the ball.

I am pleased to see that there is going to be a comprehensive review of the Bermuda Fire Rescue Service. But the Honourable Minister talked in Corrections about a review. Last year there was supposed to be an external salary review that has not been talked about. I would like to get an update on that external salary review that was talked about last year.

In regard to Customs, last year the X-ray scanner was talked about, and money being put into

the repair of that. It was exactly the same words that were used this year. So my question is, Have we actually done any improvements to that scanner? Have we given it a longer shelf life? And when will the scanner repair be finished, rejuvenated, refit or whatever you want to call it, and we can move on and just have a regular maintenance contract? The reason why I say that is because every single container that comes into the Island should be scanned, 100 per cent. Every single container that should come to the Island. There should be no down time on it. And if you look at the budget, we are spending a significant amount of money on repairs and maintenance as we go through.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that there are some challenges with air ambulance regulations now on some of the navigational equipment that they might have to be required to fly with which could impact the air ambulances coming to Bermuda. This is serious, because if there is a withdrawal of some of the craft that normally come to Bermuda it could impact patient health and safety. So we need to take a look at that. That is just what some in the industry are telling me, Mr. Chairman.

You are looking at me like you would like me to cut off.

**The Chairman:** You have got roughly 30 seconds.

**Hon. Michael H. Dunkley:** About 30 seconds?

So, I will end by asking a curious question because I am not going to get into something serious in 30 seconds. But a curious question is, last year in Customs they talked about a K9 cash dog. I ask the question of the Honourable Minister, How much cash has that K9 dog sniffed out?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

Minister, it looks like we have reached the end of our time for the debate on National Security, Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45. If you would like to move those heads . . .

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I move the heads, I would just like to undertake . . . the Member who just took his seat. If he would submit the questions to me, I will undertake to get the answers to him.

Mr. Chairman, I move that Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45 be approved as printed.

**The Chairman:** It has been moved that Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45 for the Ministry of National Security be approved.

Is there any objection to that motion?  
With there being no objection, agreed to.

*[Motion carried: The Ministry of National Security Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45 were approved and stand part of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2023/24.]*

**The Chairman:** And that brings us to the end of our debate on National Security, Heads 83, 6, 7, 12, 25 and 45. Next up is going to be the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, Heads 71, 20 and 52. This will be a three-hour debate.

I now give the Minister or the person responsible in this Honourable Chamber for the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport the floor. MP, Kim Swan.

## MINISTRY OF YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is my distinct pleasure to present the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport. And I move the following Heads:

Head 71—Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports Headquarters; Head 20—Youth, Sport and Recreation; and Head 52—Department of Culture be now taken under consideration for the budget of 2023/24.

**The Chairman:** Continue.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am distinctly pleased, humbled and honoured to be able—

**The Chairman:** Junior Minister, I'm sorry to cut you off. This debate is a three-hour debate, starting at 5:56, so three hours from 5:56 will be the end of this debate.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman.

Once again I am pleased, humbled and honoured to be able to present the budget for the year of 2023/24 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, which can be found starting on page B-237 of the Estimates book.

Mr. Chairman, I will briefly discuss the Ministry as a whole followed by information for Head 71, the Ministry Headquarters, and then in detail the two departments that fall under the Ministry, namely, Head 20, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation; and Head 52, the Department of Culture.

Mr. Chairman, the mission of the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport is *To develop and celebrate our people*. And we truly believe that the uniqueness of our people and our culture is the country's greatest asset, our values, our strength our resilience are everything that makes Bermuda the incredible country that it is today. And our Ministry is committed to developing and celebrating our people.

Mr. Chairman, before I get into details of the budget, I just want to share with the Honourable House some of the successes for 2022 from our Ministry. The launch of the National Youth Policy, which was a 2021 Throne Speech commitment, provides a roadmap for this Government to raise the value of sport in Bermuda and increase the participation and regional success over the next five years. The policy will outline the steps needed to create an environment supporting consistent excellence in sport and underscoring the central role of sport in our society. The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation is primarily responsible for the implementation of the policy and will work collaboratively with the National Sports Governing Bodies and stakeholders.

Looking back, Mr. Chairman, I also wish to highlight and welcome the return of the Bermuda Day Heritage Parade in its regular format. Indeed, quite an important part of our calendar. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the first Bermuda Day Parade, held in 1979, was designed specifically to unite the community and remains an integral celebration of the Island and our people. The Bermuda Day festivities are a vibrant celebration winding through the streets of Hamilton full of music, culture and patriotic pride. Showcasing culture at its very best, the parade features dance groups, bands, majorettes, decorated floats, Gombey troupes, and even locals making food on the side of the road (because they know the areas we frequent).

While the traditional floats harken back to the Easter Parade using natural materials, the new categories have been introduced to highlight modern art and the creative ingenuity of Bermuda's floats. Children showcase their hours of rehearsal from dance school. Community groups walk alongside a banner and are cheered from the side-lines with hundreds of people dancing in the streets as Gombey rhythm carries them forward united as Bermudians. Truly, Mr. Chairman, Bermuda Day is a family-oriented day to celebrate our Island home and the cultures within it.

The Ministry continued to support the production of the Clyde Best film. The overall aim of this initiative is to produce a feature length 90-minute documentary film on the Bermudian football legend Clyde Best. This film will give a first-hand look at overcoming racial discrimination in sport through the lens of a barrier-breaking player. All that said, Mr. Chairman, in some sports you see it still being played out today. So, this particular initiative will certainly serve the world, as Clyde Best is well known for his breakthrough in football—the first Black role model in English football. He is a Bermudian native who played 221 games for West Ham United [Football Club], my father's team, from 1968 to 1976, scoring 58 goals as a striker, and in the process becoming one of the trail-blazing Black footballers (soccer players, if you want to call it so) in the 1970s in the UK and also in the United States, where I believe he played a bit for the

Tampa Rowdies and may have played for one or two other teams as well as he neared the end of his career.

Mr. Chairman, the objective of this initiative is to distribute the film on a major worldwide streaming platform and festival. And I know the good work that Culture does in this sphere, having had some experience with them producing one for the late, great Louis Corbin out of St. George's, thanks to a former Minister (thank you, Ms. Foggo).

Mr. Chairman, Minister Darrell had the opportunity to attend the second World Anti-Doping Association (WADA) Forum held for Ministers responsible for Sport in the Caribbean. And it was on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January in Kingston, Jamaica. Minister Darrell attended with the legendary Ms. Debbie Jones-Hunter, from Berkeley, CEO of the Bermuda Sports Anti-Doping Authority. Mr. Chairman, the intent of the second WADA forum is to follow up on issues raised at the inaugural, which included:

- to clearly define a plan of action for the advancement of strong anti-doping programmes in the region to include testing, education, and capacity building;
- to receive reports from member countries on measures that will be taken in respective countries towards strengthening their programmes; and
- to identify areas in which WADA may support member countries.

Mr. Chairman, [delegates], including Minister Darrell and CEO Jones-Hunter were able to tour Jamaica's Anti-Doping Commission's facilities including the mobile unit which is the only one of its kind in the Caribbean and the second in the world. Mr. Chairman, the event provided an opportunity, an excellent one, to strengthen our engagement in sport within the region. The benefits of learning more about anti-doping issues will prove critical as we continue to strive to raise the game for clean sport. Indeed, indeed, indeed.

Mr. Chairman, Minister Darrell just returned from Argentina where he attended the International Cricket Council (ICC) Qualifiers held February 25 through 28. And, Mr. Chairman, as you may know, Bermuda has won a bid to host the ICC 2024 Men's T20 World Cup America Qualifiers in September of this year.

Now that's something big, Mr. Chairman, because our young men are really doing well. You don't hear as much about it. If they weren't doing well you would have heard a lot about it, more about it. But they are doing well down in Argentina and because this Government is supporting sport . . . the Minister has told me that we are supporting the young people through sport and striving for excellence.

As the Government's ambassador for sports, this travel allowed the Minister the opportunity, along with the attending technical officer to

- assess the regional ICC events on display;

- engage with key officials and administrators to gain further insight into the process required to stage an ICC event;
- signal to ICC executives, the establishment in cricket, that Bermuda is committed to representing cricket on a global stage, and one that is exceptional as well.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister's presence at these matches underscores that the Bermuda Government is committed to supporting the Bermuda Cricket Board in delivering a first-class World Cup qualifying tournament in Bermuda. Furthermore, it highlights the Ministry's pledge to enhance the development of sports in Bermuda.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

### House visitors

**The Chairman:** And with that pause, I would just like to take the opportunity to recognise Minister Darrell and also I think I see Senator Lindsay Simmons in the Chamber as well.

*[Committee of Supply continuing]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** You know, Mr. Chairman, I take this opportunity just to segue, to say it is a pleasure to be presenting on behalf of the substantive Minister who has done great work with the youth of this country through his various professions. It is just an honour to be able to see these initiatives that strengthen sport even more and more and making all types of opportunities available.

### Ministry priorities for 2023/24

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** The Ministry's priorities for 2023/24, Mr. Chairman. Next year the Ministry intends to continue to develop and celebrate our people through a variety of initiatives. And we recognise the value of sport to our country and continue to explore avenues that will promote Bermuda as a sporting jurisdiction.

Mr. Chairman, the Bermuda Football Association, the BFA, has confirmed that Bermuda is set to host a Concacaf Nations League game in which Bermuda will take on Guyana on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at the Flora Duffy South Field Stadium. Such international sporting events can assist in bringing much-needed revenue to the Island, and, might I add, exposure internationally as well as people start to find out exactly where Bermuda is.

Mr. Chairman, as indicated earlier, the Government is supporting the Bermuda Cricket Board who are hosting the International Cricket Council (ICC) 2024 Men's T20 World Cup [America] qualifier in Bermuda in September 2023. Not only will this event bring a spotlight to Bermuda as a locale for sports

tourism, it puts us in the running to be considered as a first class ICC training venue for our partners in the Caribbean and the world.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear from the realignment of funds that in this upcoming fiscal year the Government is demonstrating that we value the development of sport in Bermuda. And that we value the development of young people through sport. There is increased funding for our very popular Summer Day Camp and Afterschool Programmes. And this will help in increasing the number of available spots for our young people.

The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation is also providing investment grants this year to assist young persons who wish to pursue their recreational passions in areas, including art, oration, culinary arts, science, technology, engineering and math.

Also, Mr. Chairman, during this upcoming fiscal year we will provide support to ensure that our athletes continue to dominate on the world stage proving that a small—no, that a very small—population can create world class sports people. In that regard, we are offering additional assistance to our elite and high performing athletes. That bears repeating, because I am a sports practitioner. And I just want to say that I hear people say, *You don't put enough money in sports*. I just want to say that the Minister heard you, because we are going to create world class sports people and, in that regard, we are offering additional assistance to our elite and high performing athletes.

Mr. Chairman, in line with goal 2 of the Sports Policy, achieving sports excellence regionally, our elite and high-performance athletes need to be prepared for international competition and we are pleased to be able to allocate funds to this important Government priority despite the challenging fiscal environment.

Goal 5 of the Sports Policy, establishing a framework for talent development focuses on long term athlete development, and the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation will be working with National Sports Governing Bodies so that athletes can reach their full potential. The department will continue working with their leadership in the development of their long-term athletic development plans. The objective in this regard, Mr. Chairman, is to educate the National Sports Governing Bodies on the importance of long-term athletic planning and to encourage these organisations to think analytically about their sport and how it can be improved.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Culture has several initiatives planned to include the creation of a short film series "Gold Bermudians" which will highlight the accomplishments of Bermudians who have punched above their weight on the international stage, and partnering with the Ministry of Education to provide "Tradition Bearers in [Schools]." This will be a programme where we will support a master artisan who offers workshops to primary and middle school

students. It is a great cross-ministry initiative, I might add.

#### Report on the Estimates Book

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I would like to draw your attention to page B-237 of the Estimates Book where you will note that the budget for the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture for the financial year 2023/24 is \$13,718,000. This is an increase of \$849,000 or 7 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, page B-237 shows a revenue estimate for the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport is \$751,000. This is an increase of \$90,000 or 14 per cent from the financial year 2022/23.

Mr. Chairman, page B-237 also details the current account expenditure of departments that make up the overall budget for the Ministry heads, Mr. Chairman, that is Head 71, Head 20 and Head 52. The summary shows that for upcoming year Youth, Sport and Recreation saw an increase in the budget of \$1,043,000, or 11 per cent, while both Culture and Ministry Headquarters saw decreases compared to the revised budgets of 2022/23 in order to relocate the funds to Head 20. Mr. Chairman, this reallocation allows the Government's commitment to sport and the youth of our country to enrich their lives in the community in areas of sport and recreation which will bring together and build unity in our country. Sports remind us of what connects us and enhances our cultural integrity.

Mr. Chairman, you know that Nelson Mandela said "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite in a way little else does. It speaks to youth in a language that they understand."

Mr. Chairman, as we see on page C-20, the grants and contributions budget across the Ministry is \$4,052,000, an increase of \$784,000. The grants and contributions for the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport include Head 20, Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, \$3,619,000 for the development of young persons, increased funding for elite and high-performing athletes and sports development. This is an increase of \$773,000, or 27 per cent. Well, Mr. Chairman, there has been a significant increase as it relates to the Youth and Sport budget.

Sport is intricately linked to culture as is stated in our National Sports Policy document. It brings joy. It promotes health and it inspires national pride. This increase in realignment of funding is a testament to the Government's commitment to youth and sport in Bermuda.

Head 52, Department of Culture, \$328,000 for community and cultural activities. It is a decrease of \$34,000, or 9 per cent. Much of the funding was reallocated to the Youth, Recreation and Sport as there has been a cry in the community that not enough is being done.

Head 71, Ministry Headquarters, \$105,000 to support Parish Council commitments, and to support Cup Match in St. George's.

Mr. Chairman, these grants to the community align with our vision to develop and celebrate our people.

#### HEAD 71—MINISTRY OF YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT HEADQUARTERS

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, I now turn to the current account expenditure for Head 71, the Ministry Headquarters.

Mr. Chairman, the financial year 2023/24 estimates of expenditure and revenue for Head 71, the Ministry Headquarters, are found on pages B-238 and B-239 of the Estimates Book. Page B-238 shows that the budget estimate for the Ministry Headquarters for fiscal year 2023/24 is \$1,167,714. This is \$104,19[1], or 8 per cent lower than the original budget for the prior year due to the reallocation of funds to Head 20 to achieve some of the Ministry's strategic goals.

The budget estimate includes \$45,000 for Cup Match grants which was transferred from the Cabinet Office, in anticipation of a St. George's victory in 2023.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry Headquarters comprises a single business unit, 81000, Administration, on page B-238, which supports the Minister's Office and the Ministry's Centralised Compliance and Accounts functions. This unit consists of eight full-time employees and salaries to provide these services essential to the Ministry's operations. Mr. Chairman, the Ministry Headquarters directs the development and implementation of policy and legislation, has overall responsibility for the management of the Ministry's budget and provides guidance on programming to the departments within the Ministry.

Through its centralised accounting section, the Ministry Headquarters provides accounting and financial management services to all departments under its responsibility. The key activities of this department are to

- undertake strategic leadership of Ministry departments;
- manage the Ministry's accounts and ensure compliance with Financial Instructions;
- lead and operationalise policy and legislative developments;
- issue and manage ministerial grants aligned with the Ministry's mission; and
- appoint and oversee five boards and nine Parish Councils.

Mr. Chairman, I now turn to the subjective analysis of the current account estimates found on page B-239, and I would like to highlight certain line items in this section.

Salaries: The amount budgeted for salaries for the fiscal year 2023/24 is \$831,000 which represents an increase of \$15,000, or 2 per cent. The in-

crease reflects the regrading of specific posts within the Ministry.

**Professional services:** The amount budgeted for professional services salaries for fiscal year 2023/24 is \$117,000 which represents a decrease of \$155,000, or 57 per cent. This decrease reflects the reallocation of funds to the Department of Youth, Recreation and Sport in order to enhance the financial support to the young persons elite and high-performing athletes and sports development.

**Grants and contributions:** The amount budgeted for salaries for fiscal year 2023/24 is \$105,000 which represents an increase of \$45,000 or 75 per cent. The increase reflects the inclusion of the Cup Match grant which was transferred from the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry Headquarters performance measures are listed on page B-245, and our annual indicators reflect the administrative nature of Headquarters' functions. We were able to complete one of the two compliance reviews intended for the year and three training sessions.

Lastly, we completed 100 per cent of the ministerial policy priorities this fiscal year, namely, in the form of the aforementioned National Sports Policy, and amendments to the Parish Councils Act.

Mr. Chairman, before closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the small and dedicated team at the Ministry's Headquarters for the work that they do in ensuring the Ministry meets its mandate. It is headed by Permanent Secretary Ms. Marva-Jean O'Brien, present today, and supported by Comptroller, Ms. Wendy Pond Hunt, and Policy Analyst, Ms. Jane Brett. The Ministry Headquarters is technically supported by the Director of Culture, Dr. Kim Dismont-Robinson and the Director of Youth, Sport and Recreation, Ms. Kimberley Charryse Bean

Mr. Chairman, as I look to the year ahead, we have much to look forward to and our Ministry will continue to do what we can to ensure that our youth, cultural and sports communities are celebrated, supported and uplifted. Mr. Chairman, this Ministry has a great role to play in the fabric of Bermuda's society and the national identity and we will continue to develop and celebrate our people in every way we can.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my presentation on the fiscal year 2023/24, budgetary allocations for Head 71, the Ministry Headquarters, and I will now move to Head 20, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, and Head 52, Culture.

**The Chairman:** Go right ahead. Out of a three-hour debate we have approximately two and a half hours left.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will proceed.

Actually, Mr. Chairman, I will be doing Head 52, Culture, at this particular time. In that particular

order my binder presents it. With your permission, Mr. Chairman.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

### House visitor

**The Chairman:** Go right ahead. You can go after I recognise the PS who is in the Chamber, Ms. Marva Jean O'Brien.

*[Committee of Supply continuing]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

### HEAD 52—DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, I will now present for fiscal year 2023/24 estimates of the expenditure and revenue for Head 52, the Department of Culture, which can be found on pages B-248 through B-256 of the Estimates Book.

Mr. Chairman, the department's mission is *To develop our creatives, preserve our heritage and celebrate our people*. The department's objectives for 2023/24 are as follows:

- To support Bermuda's cultural, heritage and artistic communities and institutions through developmental programmes and partnerships.
- To preserve our heritage by promoting an understanding of Bermuda's cultural identity through education, research, publication and enrichment programmes.
- To celebrate our people and the development of our national identity by curating cultural festivals, public discussions and educational programmes.
- To serve as stewards of Bermuda's cultural heritage.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Culture administers two programmes and 12 business units. A general summary is contained on page B-249 of the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue for the financial year 2023/24. The total estimate is \$1,891,000. This represents a decrease of \$89,000, or 4.5 per cent, from the 2022/23 original budget of \$1,980,000.

Mr. Chairman, for the 2023/24 budget year, the Department of Culture is focused on delivering innovative programming that provides developmental opportunities for Bermuda's creatives engaging in research and film projects that help to highlight the contributions that Bermudians have made to our society as a matter of national pride and shining a spotlight on musicians, writers, Gombeyes, artists, actors, artisans, designers, dancers, and tradition-bearers who help us celebrate what it means to be Bermudian.

Mr. Chairman, I will now offer highlights of the accomplishments, programmatic plans and changes

in estimates for the business units associated with the Department of Culture.

#### Business Unit 62000—Grants to Organisations

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Business Unit 62000—Grants to Organisations which comes under programme 5202 Cultural Affairs.

Mr. Chairman, the total amount budgeted under this business unit for fiscal year 2023/24 is \$230,000. This represents an increase of \$17,000, or 8 per cent, when compared with the original budget allocation of \$213,000 for financial year 2022/23. The increase is the result of grant money allocated to support the Gombey troupes being transferred from the Gombey Festival cost centre into this cost centre.

The Bermuda Arts Council's grant has been reduced by \$13,000 to \$117,000 for financial year 2023/24. One of the primary roles of the Bermuda Arts Council is to review applications submitted by individual creatives and organisations for developing artistic projects and further educating themselves about their craft in ways may not have been able to do without the support of the Arts Council. This includes projects such as the creation of musical albums, films, visual arts exhibitions, as well as the participation in workshops and other intensives. The Arts Council represents the primary funding body of the department to assist with these kinds of applications.

In the 2022/23 financial year recipients of the Council's grants included Jahbarri Wilson, to assist with his first solo show at Masterworks; Hana Bushara, for her forthcoming music album; Eden Furbert for participation in an international summer dance intensive; Stephan Johnstone to produce a short film about Bermudian poetry, Wendall "Shine" Hayward to assist with is staging of a play about Dorothy Dandridge; and support for a number of other creatives.

In addition to the individual and organisational grants that were awarded in the 2022/23 financial year the Bermuda Arts Council also awarded three student scholarships to students pursuing careers in creative writing, media arts production, as well as music, marketing, media, communications. The recipients were Alan C. Smith, Layla Williams, and N'Kosi Hollis.

The Bermuda Arts Council's awards, set to take place later this month, will honour five recipients, including, Patricia Pogson-Nesbitt, and a posthumous award for Rosheena Beek for lifetime achievements, St; Clair "Brinky" Tucker and Rick Spurling, for Founder Awards, and Clement Talbot for the Patron Award.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to artists who have created a significant body of original work that is representative of the Bermudian spirit. The Founder Award is presented to those persons who have been pioneers in their respective art form and have been role models for their fellows. The Patron Award is given to those who have been benefactors to the Bermuda arts community. The Department

would like to acknowledge the years of hard work and dedication by the outgoing Chair, Ms. Jennifer Phillips who has been a member of the Arts Council since 2012 and chaired for the past five years. She has done an amazing job ensuring the smooth-running of the Bermuda Arts Council. We wish her well on her future endeavours. And we welcome the new Chair Ms. Shanna Hollis, a visual artists and graphic designer and look forward to her placing her own stamp on the Council. And we wish them both well in their endeavours.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to the fine work of the Bermuda Arts Council, the department recognises the importance of supporting our tangible cultural heritage. Government plays a vital role in assisting Bermuda's museums and cultural institutions. And although the department provides three fewer grants than originally projected, heritage grants were awarded to the Bermuda Historical Society Museum, the Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Arts, the St. George's Historical Society Museum, the Bermudian Heritage Museum, the St. David's [Island] Historical Society, the National Museum of Bermuda and the St. George's Foundation. And all of these do great work, Mr. Chairman. But I just have to say that the St. George's Foundation has been doing some great work restoring forts which assist tourism as tourists go to them and it is a hobby horse of mine and I am very pleased that they are doing great work.

The Department of Culture also provided a grant to the Bermuda National Gallery in part for their stewardship of the Watlington Collection of art owned by the Government of Bermuda.

#### Business Unit 62001—Administration

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the function of this business unit is to provide for the administration of the Department of Culture, which is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the [Government] Administration Building. Mr. Chairman, the allocated budget for financial year 2023/24 for this business unit is \$863,000, as shown on page B-249. This amount reflects no change as compared to the original budget for financial year 2022/23.

Mr. Chairman, the allocated budget sustains both programmes of operation, including salaries and wages. The remainder of the budget provides for office supplies, board fees, website maintenance and telephone services. This budget also provides funding for department-wide promotions, specifically using social media. The 2022/23 financial year was the first time the department has placed a focus on targeted outreach via social media leading to more awareness and engagement with programming.

The department also met its performance measure of establishing initiatives related to digitisation. A new website "Emancipation Bermuda" was de-

veloped and unveiled in July with content to be discussed in the next business unit's overview.

#### Business Unit 62010—Emancipation and Cultural Festivals

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the total amount allocated for this business unit in financial year 2023/24 is \$40,000. This represents a decrease of \$35,000, or 47 per cent, compared to the original budget of \$75,000 allocated in the 2022/23 financial year. Mr. Chairman, this business unit focuses on highlighting the contributions of our African, Caribbean, Azorean, British and St. David's Island Native Community core cultures. The programmes in this unit align with the goals of our National Cultural Heritage Policy.

Emancipation Programme: The Department of Culture offers an annual commemoration of Bermuda's Emancipation through programming that explores and researches the history of enslavement and segregation experienced by Bermudians of African descent. Beyond commemoration, the initiatives of this programme also celebrate our African roots.

The theme for the 2022 commemoration was "Restoring Community Healing Together." The calendar of events and lectures sponsored by the Department of Culture and stakeholders including the National Museum, Titan Express, and Friends of Sandys, featured a focus on the legacy of the Friendly Society, Mary Prince, and Cup Match. The department also hosted its third Emancipation Youth Creativity Competition around the theme "How can my community heal itself?" with the winning entry "Never Bound" by Zen Marley Mello featuring animation and poetry.

In aligning with our performance measures the department's signature offering for the 2022 Emancipation Commemoration was a research project film and exhibition focusing on the history of Black Bermudian nurses during the era of segregation. The principal researcher for this project was veteran journalist and former nurse Meredith Ebbin who worked with Burnt House Productions to create a film entitled "Healthcare Heroines" about Black Bermudian nurses and the struggle for equality. Complementing this film was a series of interviews and narratives that comprised both. The exhibition and the department presented a Bermuda Society of Art entitled "Pioneers who Persevered: Black Nurses in Segregated Bermuda," as well as the content for the previously mentioned Emancipation Bermuda website. This project shone a spotlight on the experiences of trailblazer Sylvia Richardson, Flora Marlene Trott, Lorraine Dyer Bizek and Dr. Juanita Guishard Packwood, Edna Pearman Jones, and Barbara "Lovie" Davis Wade, among others.

The 2023 commemoration will feature a film entitled "Cup Match: Legacy of Honour" by [Bermudian] filmmaker Dana Selassie. Despite budget reduc-

tions in this business unit, partnership with the Somerset Cricket Club and the St. George's Cricket Club on this film will help to ensure a robust celebration of our commemoration of Bermuda's emancipation.

Mr. Chairman, a "Roots Festival" planned to meet the department's performance measure of supporting festivals, events and publications celebrating Bermuda's diverse cultural heritage was unable to proceed due to conflicting priorities in the core cultures calendar of events. However, in lieu of this programme, in 2022 the department hosted an internal "Eggnog and Dialogue" event for all cultural stakeholders to discuss upcoming programmes and priorities for 2023 and beyond. Funding for this business unit will also help to support the 2023 Pow Wow hosted by the St. David's Islanders and the native community returning in June after a four-year pause as a result of the pandemic.

#### Business Unit 62020—Heritage Celebrations

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the total amount budgeted for this business unit for financial year 2023/24 is \$269,000. This represents a decrease of \$4,000, or 1.5 per cent, compared to the original budget of \$273,000 allocated in 2022/23 financial year.

Mr. Chairman, [this business] unit covers the cost of both Heritage Celebrations and the Bermuda Day Parade. Heritage Month began in 2022 with the second annual Cultural Conference engaging cultural heritage and art stakeholders and reviewing one year of progress on the department's National Cultural Heritage Policy. The year 2022 was an exciting year that marked the return of the Bermuda Day parade as normal, after three years of absence, celebrating the "Togetherness." While the parade was organised within a shorter timeframe than normal due to COVID-19-related uncertainty, nearly 700 individuals in businesses and schools were contacted for participation. Ultimately, there were 37 participants in the Bermuda Day Parade which attracted a vibrant and enthusiastic crowd of people.

The theme for Heritage Month and Bermuda Day 2023 is "A Bermudian Renaissance." The Department intends to host our third annual Cultural Conference for stakeholders in the creative community as a Heritage Month focus. The department is also excited for increased community participation within the Bermuda Day Parade, and is presently actively reaching out to stakeholders to sign up.

#### Business Unit 62030—Cultural Education Programme

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the amount budgeted for this business unit for financial year 2023/24 is \$4,000. This represents a decrease of \$63,000, or 94 per cent, when compared to the origi-

nal budget allocations of \$67,000 for financial year 2022/23.

Mr. Chairman, with the lifting of the pandemic restrictions in 2022/23, the department reintroduced the Tradition Bearer in Public Schools Programme with a new focus on middle school students. In the past year the programme has been popular with educating our students on the traditions of woodcraft with Milton Hill, banana doll making with Ronnie Chameau, Bermuda Gombeyes with Janice Warner, and Bermuda kite building with Mr. Eugene O'Connor. Funding has been allocated in the 2023/24 budget to continue this programme with a focus on the signature schools. The reduction in this business unit is a result of other fiscal priorities within government so the production of a study guide to support this cultural education and programme will be halted for this financial year.

#### Business Unit 62050—National Heroes Day

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the amount budgeted for this business unit for financial year 2023/24 is \$30,000. This represents a decrease of \$15,000, or 33 per cent, when compared to the original budget in financial year 2022/23, of \$45,000. The decrease in this business unit takes into consideration that expenses will not be incurred relating to the naming of a new National Hero, as one will not be selected this year.

Mr. Chairman, funds associated with this business unit are used to formally honour and commemorate a new National Hero when one is named, and to celebrate our existing National Heroes on an annual basis. In financial year 2022/23, in addition to a public awareness campaign, the department organised a series of musical tribute showcases for our heroes also aligned with our Premier's Concert. Celebrating national heroes, the concert features performances and presentations by Jay III, Dennajye Paynter, Jesse Seymour, Brixx, Arijahknow Live Wires, Rated E! Dance Crew, Sabriyya Harvey, Tiffany Paynter, Gherdai Hassell, T'aja Williams, Melanie Eddy, and Ami Zanders.

In financial year 2023/24, the department will again host a tribute concert celebrating our national heroes.

#### Business Unit 62060—Promotion of the Arts

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the amount budgeted for this business unit for financial year 2023/24 is \$98,000. This represents an increase of \$3,000, or 3.5 per cent when compared to the original budget for financial year 2022/23 of \$95,000. The increase in this business unit can be attributed to costs related to coordinating and hosting the Bermuda Literary Award Ceremony.

Bermuda Literary Awards were inaugurated by the Bermuda Government in 1999 to honour liter-

ary achievements by Bermuda's writers, and is administered by the Department of Culture once every five years. The five categories for which awards are granted are fiction, non-fiction, children and young adult fiction, poetry and drama. A Founders Award is also granted to recognise seminal work of the Bermuda literary cannon. A \$2,000 cash award is granted to the winner of each category. In financial year 2023/24 the department will select the winners of these awards and host a ceremony honouring the recipients.

Writer-in-Residence. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Culture supports programming to assist in developing our literary arts. With this aim in mind, the department hosts an annual Writer-in-Residence workshop focusing on a variety of genres. In June 2022 the department hosted Dr. Richard Georges, Poet Laureate of the British Virgin Islands for our first in-person Writer-in-Residence workshop in 2019. This year's programme followed our successful collaboration with the Bermuda National Gallery in January 2022 when our Writer-in-Residence aided poets to create poetry submissions for the 2022 Bermuda Biennial.

Dr. Georges was one of three jurors for the Bermuda National Gallery's 2022 Bermuda Biennial. Ultimately, the work of 11 poets, including Yesha Townsend, Ajala Omodele, Alan C. Smith, Nancy Ann Miller and Andrea Ottley, were selected. For the Writer in Residence programme Dr. Georges guided 12 local poets through an intense programme over the course of nine sessions that focused on poetic form and challenging themes, including writing about catastrophe, home and exile.

This year the department marked two firsts for this programme. For the first time participants benefited from a hybrid model with both in-person and virtual sessions. This allowed us to stretch the sessions over a longer period which accommodated more writers' schedules and allowed the writers additional time to fine tune their pieces to Dr. Georges'. Secondly, at the conclusion of the programme, the participants shared the pieces they had honed over the course of the workshop in a public reading.

In financial year 2023/24 the department will build on the success of the programme by hosting an annual award-winning author from overseas conducting an intense workshop for local writers. Additionally, this year the department will also hold two mini-workshop programmes to deepen the skills and knowledge of local artists and creatives.

Madam Chairman, the Art in [Public] Buildings project was launched in 2019 as part of a Throne Speech initiative. In February 2022, the department issued an open call to Bermudian artists to submit two-dimensional visual art pieces. With the assistance of a selection committee the department selected 18 pieces created by 16 local artists which were printed and displayed in three government buildings. Featured artists included Gherdai Hassell, Otto Trott,

Graham Foster, Dr. Dana Selassie, and Shanna Hollis. The pieces of art from the department's first Art in Public Buildings programme were distributed to public schools to display for the appreciation of students, teachers and staff.

#### Business Unit 62070—Folklife

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the amount budgeted for this business unit for financial year 2023/24 is \$63,000. This represents an increase of \$4,000 when compared to the original budget of \$59,000, or 7 per cent for financial year 2022/23. This increase can be attributed to the cost of an additional promotional film for our cultural apprenticeship programme. Activities that come under this business unit are the Bermudian Heartbeats Lecture Series and the Cultural Apprenticeship Programme.

**Bermudian Heartbeats:** Mr. Chairman, the Bermudian Heartbeats Lecture Series is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year. Originally Historical Heartbeats, the dynamic series of lectures and events were founded in part by National Hero Dr. Pauulu Kamarakafego to focus on Bermudian history. It has evolved into an advanced series that explores all facets of Bermuda's cultural history. The series uses non-traditional locations and a varied method of presentation for an experience that is both educational and memorable.

During financial year 2022/23, our seven events included a poetry reading to mark the anniversary of the emancipation of the 78 enslaved men and women who arrived in Bermuda aboard the American brig, the *Enterprise* in 1835, a lecture on the history of the Cottage Hospital and the segregated health care in Bermuda and a tour of Trunk Island in collaboration with Bermuda's Zoological Society.

In keeping with the mission of the department, the new season has already commenced as it follows the calendar year rather than the budget year and teaches six scheduled events with up to three additional events to be added as opportunities arise, Mr. Chairman. As part of this programme the Department of Culture will feature such as a panel discussion on the present and future of farming and self-sufficiency in Bermuda, a lecture by Professor Michael Jarvis on the history of Black families in St. George's before the 1850s, and a special holiday programme of carolling through the parishes.

**Cultural Apprenticeship.** Mr. Chairman, the Department of Culture offers the Cultural Apprenticeship Programme to support the preservation of cultural knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. The principal objective of the programme is to foster the growth of a younger generation of tradition bearers in Bermuda.

The programme pairs a tradition bearer with interested apprentices. After a pause in this programme due to the pandemic, the department was delighted to coordinate two cultural apprenticeships in

financial year 2022/23. Tradition bearer Christopher Faria of AgraLiving Institute worked with two apprentices to train them in Grow Bio-Intensive sustainable farming, and Mr. Lawrence Mills, one of our foremost experts on traditional Bermuda building methods, and Bermuda vernacular architecture, has developed a dynamic apprenticeship programme with two apprentices. Together they have explored the many aspects that make Bermuda traditional architecture and building practices so unique. And the department looks forward to connecting more apprentices with master cultural artisans in the upcoming financial year.

#### Business Unit 62080—Research and Publication

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the amount budgeted for this business unit for financial year 2023/24 is \$75,000. This represents an increase of \$44,000, or 142 per cent when compared to the original budget of \$31,000 for financial year 2022/23. This increase in the business unit can be attributed to the cost of producing three full-length documentary films.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Culture is responsible for supporting and developing materials that contribute to safeguarding Bermuda's rich history and heritage. To this end, the department recognises the importance of supporting original academic research on Bermuda and is pleased to contribute to the development of material on Bermudian folklife, culture and heritage.

Mr. Chairman, in financial year 2022/23 the department is producing the first part of a documentary film series entitled "Gold Bermudians: Profiles in Excellence" which will capture the stories of Bermudians who have excelled on the international stage in a variety of fields. The first series of five short films to be launched later in the spring will feature the legendary film star Earl Cameron; history-making Olympic diver Katura Horton-Perincheif; musician Lance Hayward; Olympic boxing bronze medallist Clarence Hill; and Fraggie Rock creator Michael Frith.

The Department of Culture will continue to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Bermudians in 2023/34 financial year by continuing with two parts of this series.

#### Business Unit 62180—Special Projects

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, funding has not been allocated for this business unit for financial year 2023/24, which was also the case for financial year 2022/23.

Mr. Chairman, typically the funds allocated to this business unit are used to support special cultural projects. However, funding was distributed to focus more precisely on other priorities of the department.

#### Programme 5203—Community Services

#### Business Unit 62100—Uncover the Arts Programme

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the allocated budget in financial year 2023/24 for this business unit is \$106,000. This amount represents a decrease of \$9,000, or 8 per cent, when compared to the original estimates for financial year 2022/23 of \$115,000.

Mr. Chairman, in financial year 2022/23, funds associated with this business unit were used to support musicians affected by the pandemic with public performance known as “Creatives Live”. This programme provides the dual benefit of giving our artists the opportunity to perform as well as enlivening the social atmosphere of our current environment. Some of the performances on the steps of city hall include Cindy Smith, Toni Robinson, Samantha Smith, Sheila Smith and the Toni Bari Trio, Layaness, Will B, Cush Evans, King Size, Charo Hollis, Royalty, Princess Black and Suave.

Mr. Chairman, in financial year 2023/24 the department will continue to build upon the success of the Creatives Live programme which will be offered throughout the year with the hosting of our Creatives Live evening concert series at sports clubs and social clubs. The series will also broaden the support to performing arts and to sponsor open mic events with cultural partners.

Mr. Chairman, in the financial year 2022/23 the department began building artistic professional development workshops. In these creative cultural lab workshops creatives were given tangible tools such as improving their artistic resumes and hosting skills, honing at-home video production capabilities, and finetuning auditions. The Department of Culture is also partnering with [DJ] Rusty G to offer an advanced “Quest for the Best” musicians workshop which focused on international song placement, marketing, song writing, and more. Funding has been allocated in the 2023/24 budget to continue to develop these worthwhile programmes to support our creatives and partner them with industry mentors through their growth.

#### Business Unit 62210—Gombey Festival

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Mr. Chairman, the amount allocated for this business unit in 2023/24 is \$113,000. This represents a \$31,000 decrease, or 21 per cent when compared to the original budget estimate of \$144,000 for financial year 2022/23. This decrease is the result of budget reallocation, shifting annual grants for Gombey troupes to the Grants and Organisations Business Unit. This shift in funds does not reduce the amount of money allocated to grants for Gombey troupes, nor does it impact the Bermuda International Gombey Festival Weekend in any way.

The Bermuda International Gombey Festival Weekend. Mr. Chairman, in 2022 the Bermuda Gombey Festival Weekend returned for the first time since

2019. This otherwise annual tradition has been held to provide exposure and education to the folk art and traditions of the Bermuda Gombey and the wider influences from across the Diaspora.

Mr. Chairman, as part of the Gombey Festival Weekend in 2022, the Department of Culture successfully launched a short film directed by Bermudian filmmaker Qian Dickinson, “Not a Generic Gombey: Art, Consumption, and Intellectual Property.” This is part of the ongoing work that the department is doing with the Bermuda Gombey to support the evolution and preservation of their cultural identity.

The highlight of the Gombey Festival Weekend is the Gombey Festival Showcase held at the Botanical Gardens, which saw five Gombey troupes, two singers, an African dance group, and three Bermudian dance groups perform.

Additionally, the Chewstick Foundation continued their “Gombey in the Gardens” mural on the Jack King Building in the Botanical Gardens with a tribute to Warwick Gombey, marking the fourth troupe depicted in this ongoing series sponsored by the Department of Culture. To cap off the Gombey Festival Weekend, a “Masks Off” event was hosted at FunZone for the entire community.

*[Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo, Chairman]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the allocated budget for financial year 2023/24 will finance the cost of event infrastructure, financial awards to participating Gombey troupes, local participating other dance groups, and other weekend events related to the Gombey art form. There is no change to employee numbers with the full-time equivalents remaining at eight as found on page B-251.

Madam Chairman, this concludes my presentation on the budgetary allocation for financial year 2023/24 for Head 52, the Department of Culture.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Junior Minister, for your presentation. Have you finished all three heads? You have one more head? Okay. We shall hear from you on your final head.

We have approximately an hour and 52, 53 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, Madam Chairman, there will be plenty of time for questions. If I can continue my reading . . .

#### HEAD 20 – Youth, Sport and Recreation

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, I will now present the financial year 2023/24 estimates of expenditure and revenue for Head 20, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, which can be found on pages B-241 to B-247 of the Estimates Book.

Madam Chairman, the mission of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation is *To develop Youth, Sport and Recreation through our services and to celebrate the accomplishments of our people.*

Madam Chairman, the objectives for 2023/24 are as follows:

- Provide funding/support for National Sports Governing Bodies.
- Provide funding/support for National Youth Organising Bodies.
- Manage and maintain government sports and recreation facilities.
- Provide After-school Programmes for school-age children.
- Provide Summer Day Camp Programmes for school-age children.
- Provide Out of School Programmes for school-age children.
- Prepare and manage the budget to ensure intended deadlines are met.
- Meet and fulfil the objectives of the two department policies: National Youth Policy and National Sport Policy

Madam Chairman, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation administers 9 programmes and 21 business units for which a general summary can be found on pages B-242 and B-243 of the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue for the fiscal year 2023/24. The budget allocation for the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation in fiscal year 2023/24, is \$10,658,764, an increase of \$1,042,461, or 11 per cent as shown on page B-243.

Madam Chairman, I will now discuss the individual programmes under Head 20.

#### Programme 2001—Administration

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the budget allocation for business unit 30045, General Administration is \$839,429. The allocated funds provide for the administration and operations of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation's Headquarters; which is located in Craig Appin House, situated at 8 Wesley Street, Hamilton. In addition, the administrative section provides administrative support for eight programmes within the department and is responsible for monitoring departmental spending to ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to in achieving efficiency and effectiveness.

#### Programme 2002—Sport Development

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the Sport Development Programme is operated through business unit 30055. The budget allocation is \$427,975, an increase of \$9,500, or a 2 per cent increase. This increase represents funding allocated to assist National Sports Governing Bodies with the development of their long-term athletic development

plans. The National Sports Governing Bodies will participate in workshops the department will host over the next year, Goal Five of our National Sport Policy.

The residual funds in business unit 30055, Sports Development, includes salaries at \$269,975, training, recreational services, supplies and other funds to ensure the efficient and effective administration of the sports programmes.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30065, Sports Investments, is dedicated to highlighting how the Bermuda Government invests in the community through sport. In 2022 the National Sports Policy was updated with a five-year promise to raise the value of sport with a new vision that "Sport Matters." To assist with the National Sports Policy, business unit 30065 has been allocated a total of \$2,259,000, an increase of \$773,000, or 52 per cent.

Madam Chairman, funds in this business unit are allocated to contributions to sports development which are investments to National Sports Governing Bodies. The increased funding also offers additional assistance to elite athletes through special grants and provides increased free access to the National Sports Centre for national athletes and teams in advance of international competition. Additionally, this unit represents funding allocated for the hosting of the ICC T20 World Cup Final Qualifier which will be held in Bermuda from 28 September to 8 October 2023, and funding to the Bermuda Sport Anti-Doping Authority, which is a statutory authority mandated for Bermuda to be able to compete internationally.

Madam Chairman, during fiscal year 2023/24, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation intends to continue focusing on all aspects of sporting development and to work with various government agencies to maintain sporting and recreation facilities that fall under the department's remit.

**The Chairman:** While you take a pause, I just want to remind the listening public that we are debating heads 71, 20 and 52. We are currently on Head 20 for the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport. We have approximately one hour and 45 minutes remaining.

#### Programme 2003—Sports Incentives and Awards

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the estimate for business unit 30030 Athletic Awards, is \$160,000. This represents the allocated funding for the Elite Athlete Assistance Programme and the National Junior Sponsorships Awards Programme. The funding will support our junior athletes with important training and competition that will assist in developing them into elite athletes. The investment in sport incentives and recognition is vital for the continued development of sport in Bermuda. This business unit supports the achievement of these goals.

#### Programme 2004—Sports Facilities Management

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the budget estimate for business unit 30060, Sports Facilities Administration, is \$1,313,069. There is no change from 2022/23.

Madam Chairman, the budget estimate for business unit 30060 is primarily comprised of funding for the National Sports Centre. The National Sports Centre provides internationally certified facilities for training and competition, as well as a venue for recreation and entertainment. It is an essential part of the country's sporting infrastructure and entirely deserving of the funding designated for it to reflect the government's commitment to sport development.

Madam Chairman, the National Sports Centre continues to have financial concerns. Last year it was stated that the installation of an energy-saving micro grid system would assist in the critical financial recovery for the National Sports Centre. Unfortunately, the energy project has had a number of delays and is not complete. These delays include shipping and supplies, work permits, and inclement weather. The Ministry still believes that the energy project when complete will make the National Sports Centre energy independent and will be a great benefit in the long run. The board and management are also still committed to correcting the audit deficiencies and are actively working with the Office of the Auditor General to do so.

Madam Chairman, the remaining budget for the sports facilities business unit 30060 is dedicated to salaries and wages totalling \$194,269, and operational expenses.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30075, Michael Preece Softball Park is allocated \$138,099. This represents an increase of \$2,000, a 1 per cent increase of the 2022/23 budget allocation. This allocation reflects the cost for industrial staff and funds to maintain and operate the softball park.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30080, W. E. R. Joell Tennis Stadium is allocated \$421,477, a decrease of \$54, or less than 1 per cent over the prior 2022/23 budget. This business unit provides funding for salaries and wages totalling \$337,177. The remainder of the funds will be used to maintain and operate the tennis stadium.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30090, the [Bermuda] Motorsport Park is allocated \$8,000. The decrease of \$2,000 represents a reduction of 20 per cent from the 2022/23 budget. The funds are used for insurance, maintenance and water at the Motorsport Park.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30390, sports community fields is allocated \$47,000. There is no change from 2022/23. The funds for this unit are allocated for the maintenance and operation of the community fields under the department's remit.

#### Programme 2005—Youth Development

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the allocated budget for fiscal year 2023/24 of \$415,306 is for two of the business units under the Youth Development Programme. Youth Development Administration, business unit 30210, has a budget allocation of \$315,306 for fiscal year 2023/24. The funding for this unit provides clerical and office support, administrative guidance and staffing for all programmes operated within the unit.

Madam Chairman, the allocated budget for business unit 30350 Youth Investments and Grants is \$100,000. These investments are vital and provide funding to youth service agencies working with young people. In addition to these investments, Madam Chairman, this programme is responsible for overseeing and execution of the National Youth Policy. The working group for the policy have just completed its first year of implementation of the eight policy goals focusing on developing and empowering Bermuda's youth. The working group consists of officers from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, representatives from the Bermuda Youth Parliament and other organisations with a focus on young people.

#### Programme 2006—Community Centres

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the budget allocation for three community centres under the department's remit is \$1,394,577, \$53,276 increase [*sic*], or 4 per cent over the prior 2022/23 budget.

**The Chairman:** Junior Minister, do you mean a deduction?

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** This decrease—

**The Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Yes. This decrease represents a realignment of funds to assist with other programmes in the department.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

**The Chairman:** You're welcome.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** The Community Centres' full-time equivalent count is 18 for fiscal year 2023/24. These staff facilitate a wide range of programming for seniors, adults and children providing engagement and participating opportunities for families whilst promoting the philosophy for the department's mission.

The Eastern Zone Community Centre has a budget allocation of \$447,179. The Sammy Wilson Central Zone Community Centre has \$517,354, and the Western Zone Community Centre, \$430,044. Madam Chairman, the three community centres provide safe, structured programmes with trained staff and an opportunity to build positive and long-lasting

relationships. The community centres programming will provide a wide range of sports, recreational, and social experiences year-round that reflect the needs and interests of the community. We will encourage community participation in positive programming that offers the community desirable and enjoyable alternatives. Residents and visitors of the community, both young and old, will be provided with the opportunity to work on special projects such as sporting events, cultural events, recreational and educational programmes and activities, and much more in a volunteer service role, thus promoting civic pride and unity in the community.

#### Programme 2007—Camping

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the budget allocation for the department's Camping Programme is \$940,381, a decrease of \$41,199. This decrease represents a realignment of funds to assist with other programmes in the department.

- Darrell's Island, has been allocated \$311,240 a decrease of \$10,382, or 3 per cent.
- Paget Island, \$261,644, a decrease of \$10,182, or 4 per cent.
- Ports Island, \$106,547, a decrease of \$12,399, or 10 per cent.
- White's Island, \$89,226, an increase of \$3,618, or 3 per cent increase.

The allocated budget for camping provides for the staffing operation and administration and includes 10 full time staff who maintain the facilities and marine equipment.

#### Programme 2008—School Age Activities / Summer Day Camps

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the budget allocation for the Summer Day Camp Programme is \$823,600, an increase of \$73,000, or 10 per cent. This increase supports providing assistance with the burden on working-class parents. The funding will see an increase in the number of obtainable placements for students in the Summer Day Camp Programme.

Madam Chairman, this programme supports approximately 1,500 school-aged children and is provided in various schools throughout the Island. Approximately 130 part-time workers deliver this programme, supervised by qualified educators. There is also a special needs programme that provides care for children with exceptionalities.

Madam Chairman, the camps in programme 2008 are for preschool age children, which were created specifically for the transition of children from preschool to their first year of elementary school, primary school age children and middle school age children.

#### Programme 2009—After School Programmes

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, 30125, previously After School Programme, is expanding to meet the needs of parents/guardians. The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation maintains its commitment to keep young people safe and protected from harm. This cost centre has extended to provide out-of-school programmes during the mid-term breaks, infusing developmentally appropriate sports and recreation activities. In support of Bermuda School Reform, safe spaces and places with experiences (i.e., Career Exploration) promote healthy social, emotional and physical growth are a key focus. This unit is slated to run a before-school programmes pilot in September 2024.

Madam Chairman, this programme's budget allocation provides for staffing, communications, materials and supplies for 14 youth programmes. The budget allocation for business unit 30125, Youth Programme for fiscal year 2023/24 is \$1,470,851, an increase of \$282,501, or 24 per cent. This increase supports providing additional spaces for young people in our programmes via the afterschool and out-of-school programmes.

Madam Chairman, currently the Youth Programme supports approximately 450 preschool, primary and middle school aged children across 14 facilities, and employs 61 seasonal workers along with 2 full-time senior supervisors.

#### Performance Measures

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the performance measures for the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation can be found on pages B-245 to B-247.

For Business unit 30030 Athletic Awards, 17 junior athletes received awards, an average of \$3,000 was awarded to each participant. This year saw Trey Mallory become the inaugural Flora Duffy award recipient and he was awarded \$10,000 towards his pursuit of excellence in the sport of tennis.

Madam Chairman, The Department requires all National Sporting Governing Bodies to be certified. To date, 25 National Sports Governing Bodies are registered with the department. Thirteen of the registered National Sports Governing Bodies have received funds to assist with the development of their sports which includes athlete, coaching and administrative development.

Madam Chairman, during the Annual Sports Awards, which was held in-person for the first time in two years, 30 awards were presented. It was a wonderful evening for all who attended to celebrate sports excellence, with Dame Flora Duffy and Jah-Nhai Perinchief crowned as sports persons of the year.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30075, WMC Preece Softball Park. As the Island gradually returns to some resemblance of normalcy, the use of the facility started to increase. The softball diamond saw an

average of 220 persons utilise the facility per month during the season.

Madam Chairman, in Business unit 30080, W. E. R. Joell Tennis Stadium, the average monthly use was lower. It went down from 300 down to 200 persons using the facility each month. This was due to the damage of the light fixtures during the hurricanes. This forced the facility to close early when daylight was limited and drove down the number of participants playing tennis. The repairs to this facility are ongoing, materials have been sourced and the lighting project should be complete by April 2023.

Madam Chairman, for business unit 30090, as the Island is learning to live with COVID-19, use and participation has improved at the Motorsport Park. After the restrictions were eased island-wide, the facility came back to life with participants enjoying use again.

Madam Chairman, business units 30120, 30130, and 30146, the Community Centres: The number of attendees continues to increase from the prior year, from 35,000 to 40,000. This, again, is due to the Island opening back up safely after the pandemic. We are pleased with this improvement, thanks to programming enhancements, but we also recognise that it was lower than originally forecast at 50,000. Unfortunately, this was due to the pandemic and the lockdowns and restrictions which limited the facilities' use at the beginning of the year. A bright highlight was that the programmes delivered increased to 30, more than the original target of 28.

Madam Chairman, business unit 30125, Youth Programmes for the department increased its average number of participants from the prior year, despite the pandemic. The aggressive target of 450 students was met, and rose slightly to 455. The After School Programmes and Clubs operate on the same schedule as the public schools and this year the introduction of the Out of School Programme, which ran while schools were on break, helped to ensure that working parents had another resource for childcare.

Madam Chairman, business units 30150, 30160, 30165, 30170, Camping Facilities, continued to see a rise in the number of campers. The programme exceeded its performance target of 1,600, [increasing] to 1,932. The camping section received increased requests for our camping facilities. As the Island opened up entirely from the pandemic our number of users increased. Notably, the user-experience measures reached 100 per cent satisfaction for 2022/23. The department is very pleased to be able to serve the country in this way, providing safe, fun and local recreation and holidays.

Madam Chairman, in business unit 30180, Day Camps, there was a decrease in the camping participants, from 1,600 to 1,435. This decrease was due to the number of COVID-19 cases spiking during the programme's operations. Although the target outcome was not reached, the user satisfaction was 93

per cent, with 95 per cent of users willing to use the programme again.

Madam Chairman, from the evidence of our performance measures, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation was able to have a successful year delivering valuable, very well-received programmes to the community.

#### Year in Review

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Madam Chairman, the National Youth Policy Working Group has completed a year. Tasked with developing a working plan to meet the goals, they met on a monthly basis, as well as sub-committee meetings in between. Across government, departments, key stakeholders, third sector organisations and members of the general public have all been engaged in research and deliberation. The first annual report will convey the way forward.

Madam Chairman, the youth section launched the Out of School Programme: Summer. This specialised programme supports the tenets of the National Youth Policy empowering young people to express themselves in the area of the arts, sports, environment and civic engagement. With expert facilitators, trained actors, camping leaders and sports coaches, the department is committed to ensuring that the potential of every child can be explored through affordable experiences. The department is committed to providing quality youth programming for preschool, primary and middle school aged children, ensuring safe and structured recreational programmes.

Madam Chairman, the Youth Investments and Grants were reinstated. This year, 13 youth agencies received investments. Government recognises that a great deal of the work to support youth in Bermuda is being done by private agencies. Although youth agencies solicit funding from the private sector, we believe Government has an important role by standing in the gap. There were three new organisations on-boarded in the area of sport, civic engagement, physical and mental health.

Madam Chairman, in this past year the department saw the completion and commencement of implementation of the National Sports Policy (2022–2027). The policy is a five-year promise to

1. increase participation;
2. achieve sporting excellence regionally;
3. improve access to sports facilities;
4. increase the value of sport;
5. establish a framework for talent development.

The department has already started to fulfil the objectives of this policy and looks forward to solidifying its commitment to Bermuda Sport.

Madam Chairman, the sports section continues to produce a monthly sports newsletter, "The Competitive Edge," to increase awareness of National Sports Governing Bodies programming, events and performances that may not reach mainstream media.

There were many great things accomplished by our National Sports Governing Bodies throughout the year which were all encapsulated within the newsletter.

Madam Chairman, we also saw the return of the Annual Sports Awards ceremony which saw 30 recipients recognised for their accomplishments within the sporting area. The return of the National Junior Athlete Sponsorship Program, which saw 10 junior athletes and 7 National Sports Governing Bodies allocated funding towards their training and junior programming. These annual ceremonies are aligned with the department's mission statement, which is *to celebrate the accomplishments of our people*.

Madam Chairman, the former Director, Mr. Norbert Simons attended the 49<sup>th</sup> CARIFTA Games in Kingston, Jamaica, where he witnessed many outstanding performances by our junior athletes.

The U20 women's relay team of Sanaa Rae Morris, Keturah Bulford-Trott, Shayla Cann, and Caitlyn Bobb powered their way onto the podium with a third-place finish, setting a National Junior Record in a time of 3:48.69.

The U17s women's relay team also took to the track with a medal clearly on their collective agendas. Madisyn Bobb, S'Nya Cumberbatch, Jaeda Grant and Elise Dickinson powered the team into 2<sup>nd</sup> place and the silver medal at the games.

The former Director also attended the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England, where he had a bird's eye view as he witnessed Jah-Nhai Perinchief earn the triple jump bronze medal, leaping a distance of 16.92 metres. Additionally, the director was proud to witness our Dame Flora Duffy secure Bermuda a gold medal at the games. Winning the gold medal saw Dame Flora successfully defend her Triathlon title at the Commonwealth Games, becoming a back-to-back champion.

Madam Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the dedicated staff at the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation for the work they do in advancing amateur sport, recreation and youth development for all, which enhances the quality of life for residents of Bermuda. Also, it is important for me to recognise the significant contributions made by our sportsmen and sportswomen and the pivotal role they play in inspiring our youth to achieve their true potential.

Madam Chairman, this concludes the presentation on the fiscal year 2023/24 budgetary allocation for Head 20, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation. And it concludes the presentation for heads 71, 52 and 20.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Member.

Would any Member wish to speak on heads 71, 20 and 52? And before I recognise MP Jackson, I would like to remind the listening public that we are on

the budget debate for the said heads, 71, 20 and 52, the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation.

MP Jackson, you have the floor.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. I would like to thank the Member who delivered the brief. It was comprehensive and very interesting to hear all of the accomplishments of our young people, in particular, [those] who are doing so well not only in the arts but in sport. And also, of course, to thank all members of the Ministry for the hard work that they do as it is very impressive.

But I do have a few questions, so if you don't mind, I will work through them and try to keep it as much to direct questions as I can. It's getting late. But I would like to start with Head 20, Youth, Sport and Recreation, [page] B-242 and section 2002, Sports Development. I would like to move directly to line item 30065.

The Member mentioned part of the increase in the amount budgeted for sport investment, which is allocated \$2,260,000 . . . there is an increase this year of \$774,000. I am just curious if the [Junior] Minister can give me the budgeted amount for the ICC tournament that is taking place, because I understand from the Member who read the brief that that is included in that increased amount for this year.

I would also like to ask, still with 30065, on page C-42, whether the Ministry has actually included in that increase in the budget any additional grants as well, or if there are any other sports programmes that are going to be initiated and paid for or costed through that additional amount of funds.

I would like to now move over, or down, to [business unit] 2003, 30030, and it is still on page B-242. The Minister had mentioned that there are athletes who are being supported, in particular the elite athletes. And I am just curious whether we are keeping . . . I do not want to say tracking our athletes, but for a lack of a better word . . . Are we collecting data so that we can see the progress of these athletes as they go through their journey with us and how they are progressing and to be able to monitor their progress as they proceed?

The Member who delivered the brief had also mentioned that within that \$774,000, it is also including the National Sports Centre's solar panel project. And he had mentioned that there are some delays that have taken place due to weather and shipping delays and sorting out work permits and such. But I am just wondering whether there is an estimated completion date in there at all, given that there are these delays.

Certainly, I am aware that there is a large framework that is sitting up there. And I am sure that people would like to know when it is going to be completed and put into use. And just as I am mentioning the fact that the solar panel is sort of on the boundaries of a residential area, [I am wondering] whether

the Ministry has canvassed any of the residents in the area just to give them a heads up about what that solar project is and whether there is any feedback on how they feel about having a large . . . I always call them solar farms. I do not know what they are calling it . . . solar project. But whether the neighbours and those who are in the immediate area are okay with that. Whether they have any suggestions or feedback so that we are sensitive to their surroundings and [they do] not feel as though we are overwhelming them in their neighbourhood.

I am not sure. There was not any word said about this but . . . I am still on 30060 on page [B-]242. There were LED lightbulbs. There was like a full replacement of the lightbulbs at the National Centre. And I am just curious, now that they have all been installed, whether we are monitoring the electricity and whether the Minister might be able to give us an indication, maybe month by month, of how the electricity bills are changing now that we have LED lighting throughout the stadium. And I think those are all of my questions for that section.

I just want to quickly move over to page C-7, which is still the National Sports Centre. Page C-7 and it is 75128, the National Sports Centre capital grant. So, it is estimated at \$350,000. And I am just curious what that is for and if the Ministry would not mind just giving me an idea of what that \$350,000 is toward. Whether that is part of the solar project or if there is some other grant that the national stadium might be working on. And before I leave the—

**The Chairman:** You mean some other development, don't you?

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Some other . . . What did I say?

**The Chairman:** Development. The grant is \$350,000. So, you are wondering whether there is another development that will fall into that \$350,000.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Yes.

**The Chairman:** Okay.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Or what . . . Yes. Whether it is either the solar or there is something else.

And I do not want to jump around too much but the . . . Oh, I know where it is. Just to get all of the national sports . . . It is the trustees. I think that is under grants in the Cs. Yes. Page C-20, line 6884, the national stadium trustees. So, that has been consistent year on year. It is [\$1,100,000]. But I am just wondering if the Minister might be able to give us an indication of what that general expense allocation is for. So, we have the \$1,000,100 on page C-20, and then we have the \$350,000 on page C-7, and then we

have the funding within the sports development. Thank you.

I would like to now move to page B-243, and all the way at the bottom of the page, grants and contributions. And this is under the subjective analysis. So, there is an allocation of \$3,619,000, which is an increase over last year. The increase is \$773,000. And I am just curious with the grants and contributions if the Minister could please let us know how many applications were received in the past year for the 2023/24 season. And if it might be possible for the Minister to please list those sports that received grants and the amounts that were given to each of the grantees.

I am also curious, as I was going through and looking at the list of the grants from last year, whether the Ministry bases their grants on performance or their participation, the activity of the various associations, and whether there are any particular criteria around performance that are included. And also, maybe like if they have achievements . . . I do not know if a particular association has tournaments or goes away for tournaments. That kind of accomplishment also gives weight to getting a grant.

Also, under grants and contributions, and I am going to move right into page C-20 so we can see specifically what some of those grants are for. I was very interested in the elite athlete assistance because we are about to enter into our Olympic season. Next year will be the Olympics again, so I wanted to give a little bit of attention on the preparations, what is going on with the elite athletes to make sure that they have all of the resources that they need. And certainly, on page C-20, 6880, the elite athlete assistance has gone from \$20,000 in 2021/22 up to \$250,000 in 2023/24 which is most generous and absolutely wonderful. But I am just curious whether this is including anything else in preparation for the Olympics or is this going to be completely 100 per cent for the athletes? I know that there will be a number of costs. We have the Olympic Association and such. And I did not know whether all of that was being folded into the elite assistance or if you will continue to break them out separately.

Still on grants, but I am going to move over to page C-23. And I am looking at the Bermuda Olympic Associations. So, I am going to stay with that theme for a moment. And I am seeing that it is \$125,000. Is it still going to be \$125,000 for this year as well? Because what is listed here is the 2021/22 grant. So, if the Minister might be able to confirm whether that \$125,000 will be granted again for 2023/24, especially given that we are entering into an Olympic year.

And while I am on page C-23, I noticed that there is now . . . we have our Bermuda Anti-Doping Association, and that gets a grant of \$550,000 a year, which I have come to accept over the years that it is what it is. Madam Chairman would be sensitive to that as well when she has had her time as Minister. But I

noticed this year that there is a World Anti-Doping Agency, and that is a payment of \$5,000. But I was just curious whether that is a membership or why we have to pay the World Anti-Doping as well as participating and investing the \$550,000 into the Bermuda Anti-Doping Association.

**The Chairman:** I recognise Member Pearman.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you very much. And I am grateful to the Shadow Minister for allowing me to pose my one question. It is on the same page and the same topic that she was just addressing. And I know she says, "It is what it is." And she recognised that the Chairman had the same view when she was the Minister. But whenever someone says, *It is what it is*, I am always wanting to ask, *Well, why?*

If one looks at page C-23, and I put this in a politically neutral way, the Bermuda Government is spending \$100,000 on cricket, \$300,000 on football and \$125,000 on our Olympics. You add those three up and we are still not at the amount being paid for the Sports Anti-Doping Association. And to me, that just does not make sense.

I mean, it is the tail wagging the dog. It is like building a Formula One motorcar but then spending millions on the brakes. And I am just struggling to understand why. If you add in the World Anti-Doping Agency amount that my honourable colleague, Susan Jackson, pointed out, that takes us to \$550,000. Well, to get to \$555,000, you have to go from cricket, you add in football, you add in the Olympics, you throw in triathletes and you throw in motorcycle racing. And those are unequal. And it seems like we are focusing on the exclusionary aspect rather than the participatory aspect.

Again, I am being politically neutral about this. I am not faulting the Government. But I do ask the question "why?", and I welcome an answer to why. Because it just does not seem . . . as I said earlier, it seems like the tail is wagging the dog. We want people involved. We want people healthier. We want people doing sports. So, to focus so predominately on the very admirable desire to keep sports clean from drugs, which is a very admirable desire . . . but it just seems so unbalanced from a financial perspective.

So, that was my question for the Honourable Minister. And it is my only question. And I am grateful to Ms. Jackson for allowing me.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Member.

Member Jackson, are you going to continue with your questions?

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Yes, please. if I may.

**The Chairman:** You may.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** So, I would like to stay on page C-23 for a moment. And as the Member who just took his seat had mentioned a couple of comparisons, I too was looking at the grants that were given.

I notice, and I understand that the Bermuda Football Association gets \$300,000. They are a national organisation. And the Bermuda Cricket Board received \$100,000 last year, and, again, they are a national team. But when I looked down further, I noticed that the Bermuda Netball Association is getting \$5,000. So, I looked back a couple of years and I realised that this has been decreased by 50 [per cent] . . . 75 per cent. So, they have gone down considerably.

It just seems disheartening to me. And I certainly stand here as a woman speaking to a female sport, traditionally—netball. How will we ever be able to advance the sport of netball if the teams are getting a total of \$5,000 a year? And this is a traditional Bermudian female sport. I mean, we all played netball. I am sure we all had our chance. And it was a part of our Bermudian culture to play netball.

So, not only the fact that it is a women's sport, but that it is historically a Bermudian sport. I just feel as though the Minister could explain to us why \$5,000 is given to the Bermuda Netball Association and if the Minister might even be able to give us some indication of what we can do to get ourselves in a position where we can get more than \$5,000. Because I do not see how netball players will be able to get to a point of competition unless we have the resources.

I do not know if the Minister can give us any update on the fact that there has been some vandalism at the netball facilities on the Island and whether we have other ministries that are helping us keep that area secure to maybe help offset some of the costs. But I did certainly want to bring it to the Minister's attention and ask him what we can do so that we might be able, as women, to participate and potentially one day we can get to the international level of playing this sport.

I would now like to go back to page B-242. And I would like to just spend a moment on 2006, Community Centres. So, these are the three community centres—the Western Zone, the Eastern Zone and the Sammy Wilson Community Centre in the central parishes. And certainly, we have all heard about the repairs that have been needed at the Sammy Wilson Central Zone Community Centre, and that toward the end of February there were repairs that were major enough. I believe they were electrical and water. And it forced a closure of the community centre for a few weeks, maybe a month, to make those repairs. So, I would like to ask the Minister if he has a timeline specifically on when the community centre will open. And hopefully that will happen, and we can get back to normal especially as we enter into the nice spring/summer [weather] and people are starting to get out some more.

Then I would just like to move to 30146, the Western Zone Community Centre. And I noticed that the allocation of funds has been decreased by \$53,000, and it is now at \$430,000 a year, which is the lowest of all of the community centres. And I am just curious why the community centre is losing the funding and whether the Ministry is considering the impact that this might have on the youth who are in the area. I do not know if there is a particular reason why the funding is less. But certainly, that is going to have some effect on the youth who are living in the neighbourhoods close by.

I will have to wait for the Minister to give us an explanation, but I am curious what programmes will be affected by this decrease as well. I mean, will the community centre be closing and not open every day or will there just be fewer programmes available? I just have no clue. But it sounds concerning, especially given that it is a community centre that is supporting one of our neighbourhoods in the western parish.

I am just giving some thought to the Western Zone Community Centre. So, I was taking a look on the next page under the performance indicators. And I think it is on . . . yes, page B-246. And this is just the performance measures for the community centres. Do I have to read all those numbers—30120, 30130, 30146—community centres. And I was just really impressed. They are showing here that every year, 40,000 [pairs of] feet walk through our three community centres. That is a lot of traffic. That is a lot of people. [There are] 40,000 people who go in and out of our three community centres every year and it just leaves one to wonder, again, whether the Minister could not consider funding the community centres just a bit more given the fact that there is so much traffic and so much activity in the community centres.

Now there are a projected number of programmes . . . I am still on page B-246 under the business units for community centres. It has the projected number of programmes that are run per year, and it is showing that there are pretty much programmes running all the time. And we are looking. The statistic here is that they have 30 programmes running per annum. And there is a target outcome which is like 50 per cent more at 45 programmes for 2023/24. So, we have 40,000 people going in and out of the three community centres. We are having a target outcome of 45 programmes, so we are going to increase . . . 15 new programmes are going to be added to the community centres and the budget for these community centres has relatively stayed the same.

And then the Western Community Centre has actually decreased. Its budget has been decreased. So, I am just trying to figure out if the Minister might be able to give us an explanation of what those additional programmes are going to be and how the community centres are going to be able to manage their operations as well as introduce 50 per cent more programmes into the schedule.

I was also curious. (We are still on page B-246 under Community Centres.) For the last few years, there have not been any surveys, no sort of satisfaction reports and that sort [of thing]. And I guess I would not ask this other than the fact that so many of the other programmes within the Ministry do have surveys. And then I noticed that for 2023/24, there is a target outcome of a 90 per cent satisfaction. And I understand it is a new measure. But I am just curious what the Ministry is going to do to get to the 90 per cent satisfaction.

I would like to now turn to page B-243, the After School Programme. And thank you very much to the Member who delivered the brief. It was comprehensive and you did definitely answer quite a few of my questions. And it is good to see that there has been an increase in budget to . . . as I understood it from the Member, they are going to be enrolling more students. But I just wanted to confirm with the Minister and ask the Minister if that is the case, that the increase in the budgeted amount for the youth programmes on page B-243, [line item] 30125, After School Programmes . . . is that increased budgeting going to be [because] there is an anticipation or [because] there is a capacity for more students? Or are fees going to be increased?

I am hoping that I heard the Member who gave the brief clearly, that it is going to be based on more students. But if the Minister could just confirm that the increase is not from a fee increase. Because when I moved over to page B-244, line item 8665, the After School Vouchers . . . so, these are the costs that the parents pay. Back in 2021, and I am sure a lot of this was COVID-19 related, but there was revenue generated from the After School Vouchers of \$293,000, and that is fine. And then it looks like for 2022/23, the revenue from the After School Programmes went up to \$485,000 which sounds like it is getting more healthy. This year, it is estimated that the Ministry will raise \$600,000 in revenue for the After School Programme.

So again, it was just one other reason why I felt that I should ask and confirm with the Minister if this is because there is going to be an initiative to increase the numbers of students enrolled in after school or whether it is that parents will be paying more.

**The Chairman:** Member, one brief moment.

I would just like to inform the listening public that we have 45 minutes remaining in the debate. We are discussing Heads 71, 20 and 52, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport. Yes.

Member, you may continue.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you.

I am going to move to page B-242, and I would like to look at [business unit] 2007, Camping. And while I was on my fee increase piece, I was just

looking at camping. I remember listening to the Ministry of Public Works' brief. And there was an announcement that was kind of general that said that there would be 5 per cent increases. And I heard a Member kind of chirp, *Does that include camping?* And so, I thought when I saw the Darrell's Island, the Paget Islands, Ports Island and White's Island camping, that I would ask whether there was any increase in fees expected for those particular locations. The Minister from the previous budget in Public Works may have been talking about land-based camping sites. But I just wanted to ask so that there is either a distinction or so that we know that there will also be a 5 per cent increase in camping on islands as well.

I would now like to move over to page B-245. And again we are back in performance measures. I had a few questions about the athletic awards, which are at the top of the page, 30030, Athletic Awards. Now, I spend a lot of time in this space. And I believe part of my question may have been answered with the announcement and the reminder of the \$10,000 Flora Duffy Award. So, if the Minister could just confirm whether the Flora Duffy Award came out of this pool of grants for athletic awards, then that will help definitely clarify things.

But as I was looking at this and as I understand how the athletic awards go, I thought that it was sort of a pot of money and that it was divvied up to athletes who were performing well. And I start out looking at the 2022/23 numbers where we had 18 junior athletes. And they were awarded \$3,500. And it sounded wonderful. And then I looked and saw that there was a revision the same year, that one person was no longer there. So, it dropped from 18 junior athletes to 17 junior athletes. And I would have thought that if there were fewer people, the pot would have gotten a little bigger, that they would have been awarded a slightly larger amount of money than the \$3,500. Maybe they would have gotten \$3,750 or something. But instead, I see that the award for less athletes was less money at \$2,941.

So, I am just curious if the Minister might be able to give some explanation and context around that because that is something that I do not understand. And when I look within that same section, they have the number of elite athletes who received funding. And in 2022/23, there were 17 athletes who received the funding. But at the end of it all, when they revised the statistic, there were only 10 athletes who ended up receiving the funds. So, I am now curious to know if the Minister could just give me some insight as to what happened to the seven athletes who seemed to have fallen off the wayside here between the beginning of 2022 and the end of 2023.

I would now like to just move down the page. Still on page B-245, I would like to now move to 30065, the Sports Investment Programme. So, this is the number of the National Sport Governing Bodies. And my first question was that I see in 2022/23 we

had 25 National Sport Governing Bodies. But there is a target for 26 [National] Sport Governing Bodies for 2023/24. And I am wondering if the Minister might be able to give us some idea as to what that additional [National] Sport Governing Body is going to be for this year/next year.

My other question is that there are 25 National Sport Governing Bodies. And in the research that I have done just trying to catch up with all of this, each one of the [National] Sport Governing Bodies would make an application for the elite athletic award that we just discussed. And if there are 25 [National] Sport Governing Bodies, I am just wondering why there would only be 17 athletes that would be put up for an award. And is that because some of the [National] Sport Governing Bodies are not producing athletes at that level right now that they qualify for the athletic awards? Or are we losing athletes and they are just not there? If the Minister might be able to just give us a little information on that. I do not know if they are training internationally. And if they are, if they have left our shores in order to go to more advanced training and [get] exposure internationally, if the Minister maybe could give us an indication of where those athletes are.

I guess probably based on the conversation when I had mentioned that there were 17 athletes that received the awards in 2022 but by the end of 2022 there were only 10, where did those seven athletes go? And maybe they are. Maybe they have headed off to more international competition.

When I was talking about the 25 governing bodies . . . I am still with 30065 on page B-245. When I was mentioning the 25 governing bodies and yet there are only 17 junior athletes, I was just also wondering if it could be that only 17 governing bodies have junior athletes to put up for the athletic awards. But then I was also curious about the number of applications that you actually received. And that maybe there were a lot of applications received by the [National] Sport Governing Bodies for the athletic awards but that maybe the athletes did not meet the criteria. So, if the Minister might be able to say how many applications the Ministry received for the athletic awards and whether the Ministry feels that we might be seeing fewer athletes developing, that for some reason (and it could be COVID-19 related), we are just slow to get our youth back into the athletic arena, no pun intended.

I just have a couple more questions (page B-242) about the Motorsport Park. And that number is 30090. I just have a couple of observations, and I am wondering if the Minister might be able to answer this for me. So, I notice that the average number of individuals who use the facility monthly is always 150 people. From 2021 to 2023/24, it is 150 people. So, I was wondering if the Minister would break down the people using the Motorsport Park. Are these the spectators? Are they . . . how many spectators? How many

mechanics maybe? How many coaches? How many riders to make this such a consistent 150 people? Because they have events every week. In the performance measures it is showing that they are having four events a month. So, I do not know whether it is a consistent group of people who are going or if it is something about the number of people who are going to the Motorsports Park every week.

I also noticed in the Motorsport Park that the satisfaction was at 75 per cent pretty consistently, and then last year in 2022, it dropped down to 50 per cent. So, I am curious whether the Minister might be able to give us some reasons for that dissatisfaction and if we know what those not-so-satisfied things are. It could be the track. It could be improving the restroom facilities. It could be parking. I do not know. But I am sure that at 50 per cent satisfaction, it has been made known what would raise the satisfaction. Because, you know, the Ministry has put in here that they want their target outcome to be 75 per cent by the end of this year. So, certainly the Ministry is showing that they have every intention of doing something to raise the satisfaction of the Motorsport Park down there in Clearwater in St. David's. So, if you might be able to just let us know what you are planning to do to improve the facility so that the survey score rises from 50 per cent to your target outcome of 75 per cent.

Let's see . . . page B-246. Okay. I am going to take my seat because I do know there is someone else who would like to ask a few questions.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Member.

We are on the debate for the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation debating Heads 20, 71 and 52.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak to any of these heads?

I recognise the Member from constituency 1. Member, you have the floor.

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just have a few questions this evening that I would like to put to the Junior Minister. I believe my colleague covered the question with regard to the reduction of \$53,000 in the Western Zone Community Centre. I am a firm believer in community centres within the community. I am actively involved in the one in mine. And that answer for the \$53,000 [decrease] I will be looking for as well.

I just wanted to know that the summer day camps, there was an increase . . . I'm sorry. [Business unit] 2008 on page B-242. There was an increase of \$73,000 and for the After School Programme on the same page, 2009, there was an increase of \$283,000. And I just want to know what those increases equal in terms of additional students being able to attend after school programmes and summer day camps, recognising that the Junior Minister did read in his brief that this amount also covers two new supervisors.

I too had a question on page B-246 with regard to the performance measures. And I just wanted to know, as well, what information is available in the programmes, because the amount for the community centres has not changed outside the western one, which has now been reduced. But the programme forecast shows that they expect or they hope to have more programmes. If they could give some indication of the programmes if there is no additional funding—

**The Chairman:** You mean more participants in the programme.

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** No. It says that the projected number of programmes run per annum on page B-246 under 30120, 30130, 30146.

**The Chairman:** Okay. I was looking on the wrong item. Thank you.

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** No problem.

So, the revised forecast for 2022/23 is 30. And the target outcome for 2023/24 is 45. So, I am trying to align it next to the budgeted amount if the amount has not changed.

On page B-247, under business unit 30350, Youth Investments and Grants. If you look at the original forecast for 2022/23, it has 25. But the revised forecast is 13. So, I just want to know if we could get a brief explanation on if we budgeted at 25 and the actual was 13, what happened there to have such a much lower number in our youth investment side of it?

And my last point, Madam Chairman, and I believe my colleague covered this as well, which is page C-23, and it would be the Bermuda Netball Association, funding in the amount of \$5,000.

In the *Royal Gazette* for November [13,] 2021, there was an interview with the then president, Kimale Evans, and it was headlined as "BNA president Kimale Evans wants more support for netball." And this was at a time when the Government only gave the Association \$20,000 in 2001. And we are now seeing \$5,000.

Just to give a few points of what she points out is that this is an all-female sport. They have had success in tournaments. They actually have funding needs of anywhere between \$60,000 to \$100,000. They are limited in the traveling to tournaments due to the fact that they do not have sufficient funding. But the major thing that stuck out to me was the fact that in 2021, there were about 250 competitive players in our netball leagues. So, that would be 250 females. And I think it is important to note that we are on the heels of International Women's Day, next week, Wednesday, March 8. And this year, the theme will be #EmbraceEquity. What does that mean, Madam Chairman? Being a woman and looking at an all-female sport, it would definitely be something that I

would contribute in. And knowing that is a 75 per cent decrease from 2021 . . .

But one of the things that this year's theme speaks to is that equity is not just a nice-to-have; it is a must have. And so, when you hear that, and you understand what the International Women's Day 2023 theme is, I just would like for the Junior Minister to explain. And I am hoping that it has us look at it and rethink our investment in our young, older, matured, seasoned females who go out there and religiously put their all in the netball games.

Another part of the 2023 theme for International Women's Day, Madam Chairman, is that a focus on gender equity needs to be part of every society's DNA, which means what we should not actually have to push that we are an all-female thing, that the equity would already be there and that persons making decisions would immediately look at it in that regard.

I will take my seat now, Madam Chairman. Those were my questions for this evening.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

There are 25 minutes remaining in this debate. Are there any other persons who wish to speak to Heads 20, 71 and 52?

Member. I recognise Member Cannonier. You have the floor.

**Mr. L. Craig Cannonier:** Yes. Thank you very much.

Just very quickly, on page B-245, under business unit 30065, Sports Investment Programme. I have always said that, quite frankly, we do not put enough money into our sporting bodies when we have Bermuda producing such high standards of sportsmen.

So, I was just curious about the second to last item there, Number of Investments issued to Sporting Bodies with initiatives geared toward Sports Development. I was just curious as to who those sporting bodies are. If you look at the original forecast, it was 18, were revised to 13. Maybe that was due to COVID-19. I do not know. And then we kind of had a middle ground of 15, so obviously maybe some sporting bodies were dropped out. I do not know. But it would be nice to know and let the public know how much they are doing and the different sporting bodies that they are actually giving these initiatives to, these investments.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Member.

Are there any other members who wish to speak to Heads 20, 52 and 71?

I recognise Member Jackson.

**Ms. Susan E. Jackson:** Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just have one short, little section left. I am picking it up on page B-247, 30350, Youth Invest-

ments and Grants. And this may be dovetailing with the Member who just took his seat. But here we have a performance measure of 13 grants being given out for youth development programmes. And I would like to know whether the Ministry can provide us with the list of the 13 organisations that received those grants.

And then I would be interested in knowing, within the same line, what sort of programmes they are looking to introduce and especially what programmes they are willing to introduce and how they are going to work with those 13 sports organisations to then increase more programmes to get up to 20, which is the target outcome for 2023/24. So, if the Minister would not mind giving us a list of the 13 organisations that got the grants for the youth programmes. And then how the Ministry is going to engage with sports associations, period, to find seven more sports associations which are willing to be qualified to apply for youth programme grants in the future.

Thank you.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak to Heads 20, 71 and 52?

Junior Minister, I recognise you.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, how many minutes are left?

**The Chairman:** You have approximately 20 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Okay, 20 minutes. Thank you.

I will start going through some of these. A question was asked about Head 20 with regard to the increase in the amount that was budgeted for the ICC tournament. And the answer for that is that it was \$70,000 in the first instance, and we anticipate corporate support for the BCB by way of sponsorship opportunities, also the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, additional grants and any other sports programmes initiated could provide funds. And the grants in this area are for National Sport Governing Bodies that can apply for grants.

There was a question about if we are collecting data with regard to elite athletes so that we can track their progress. And the answer to that is yes. We are tracking them alongside the Bermuda Olympic Association.

There were questions . . . let's see . . . list of sports that receive grants and the amounts that are given to grants. We can send this information. The substantive Minister can also share more about this during the Budget Debate. And if his Head is not selected, he can also provide the information in another place. And if so, I can also table it here. I do not have

that answer. But there are criteria that are formulated. And we can use the sports investment framework that allows a department to make more informed decisions when it comes to allocations of funds meeting the objective performance to determine the amount of allocation.

[There was] a question about the elite athlete assistance prep for the Olympics. Do they have the assistance they need? [It is] now up to a \$250,000 increase from last year. Is there anything else or is that just for athletes? And the answer is the BOA [Bermuda Olympic Association] will get \$125,000. That is for the upcoming year, and the additional [amount] is for elite athlete assistance. And the funding is for elite and high-performing athletes.

Question: Is cricket getting \$100,000; BFA [Bermuda Football Association] \$300,000; BOA \$125,000; and then BSADA getting \$55,000? There was a comparison. WADA [World Anti-Doping Agency] gets more than others combined. I believe two Members may have gone there. And the funds for anti-doping include testing of our athletes locally and overseas and operational funding. And the funding for WADA, the \$500,000, is for an annual membership. And I think there was a supplementary question about the WADA \$500,000 is it for membership? And I just answered that, yes, the yearly fee is for WADA affiliation, which is needed to have a national antidrug organisation.

Netball gets \$5,000 and it [has been] decreased over the years. The Member expressed being disheartened, because of female sports traditionally—and [asked] how [can] we advance sports if the women are getting smaller amounts. The answer is each National Sport [Governing] Body must apply for what they deem is needed for their programme. In 2021/22, netball was allocated \$15,000 but during that year they only used \$5,000. Again, the amount of funding received is based on performance and meeting the National Sport [Governing] Bodies' objectives that assist the department meeting objectives. Netball did not apply for funding in 2023/24. We fully stand behind our female athletes. But we cannot provide funding to organisations that do not apply.

Community Centres. The Member asked about the repairs needed for the Sammy Wilson Centre, the forced closure of the centre, and when the centre will reopen. And the answer is [the opening] is projected for early April. I do not want to give a date like the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, but somewhere within that period as long as the weather conditions are favourable. And there was a further question about the decreased [amount for] community centres. I think it was the 30146 cost centre, decreased by \$53,000. It is now \$430,000, the lowest of all community centres. What programmes will be affected by the decrease? And the answer is relief staff has been spread, shared resources across the three community centres, allowing for a reduction in salaries.

I think there was a follow-up question on page B-246. 40,000 people go through a year. Could there be more funding because so much traffic is coming through the centres? The answer is there could always be more funding, and it will be requested as the programme participation increases. So, that is a good observation.

Thirty programmes are running per year with a target outcome of 50 per cent more. The budget has stayed the same or decreased. What additional programmes will there be and how will community centres manage with the same budget? The answer is through community partnerships and volunteers.

Question. There were no surveys over the last few years. The target outcome is 90 per cent satisfaction. How will you get there? The answer is quarterly assessments of new initiatives and the reintroduction of yearly surveys as well.

On page B-23, is the increased budget amount for After School Programmes, is there capacity for more students or is there going to be an increase in fees? Revenues will be \$600,000 in After School Programmes. Please confirm if that is because there will be more students. The answer is the increase in the number of students in the programme and on board of new programme sites, are either the West End.

The next question was about camping. Will there be an increase in fees? And the answer is no. There is not any increase in camping fees for the Island.

Page B-245 about the performance measures relating to the athletic awards. Did the Flora Duffy award come out of this area? And the answer is yes. Yes, it did. And it came out of the . . . (there is an acronym there) NJASP budget. I will have to plead somebody will whisper that one in my year. Excuse me. It came out of the National Junior Athlete Sponsorship Programme. Yes, thank you.

There was a question about the [athletic] awards, \$3,500: why did the pot [not] get bigger? The answer is less funding was given between previous performance measures, \$100,000 when the average allocation was higher. Post COVID-19, the budget was cut. Also, post COVID-19, National Sport [Governing] Bodies had a choice to either select an individual recipient or bring in a coach to work with cohorts of junior athletes.

How many applications does the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation receive for the athletic awards and did they not meet the criteria? Does the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation think that we have fewer athletes? The answer is 20 . . . I am sorry. The answer to all of these questions is we cannot control who applies. And funding is allocated to all National Sport [Governing] Bodies who apply for this sponsorship.

What happened to the seven athletes who fell off, [what is the] rationale? The decrease of some was

because of the lack of ability to travel during the pandemic.

The question about the Sports Investment Programme. The number of National Sport Governing Bodies, what is the additional? There the target is 26 for 2023/24. The list fluctuates yearly due to perspective and current National Sport Governing Bodies meeting recognition standards or not.

Why are there only 17 athletes for an award if we have 25 National Sport Governing Bodies? And, once again, we cannot control who applies. And notice is sent out to all National Sport Governing Bodies.

If athletes travel overseas, where are they? In the US, mostly, and in the UK.

Motorsports Park question came. The average number of monthly users is 150. Do we have a breakdown number of mechanics, riders and spectators, and why is it so consistent? The answer is there are events there weekly—motocross and motorcycle racing one week and karting the next week. [There are events on an] every-other-week basis so the park is heavily used during the season. [There is] no spectator participant breakdown.

Satisfaction was 75 per cent in 2022. It is 50 per cent in . . . And the question is: Why is there dissatisfaction and what will be done to improve it? The answer is the facility is in need of new bleachers. And the Ministry of Works has committed to fixing this by the start of the next season which is in October.

On page B-242, there is an increase of \$73,000 and what numbers does this equate to? The answer is After School Programmes has an increase of approximately 190 students, 16 additional staff [and the] summer day camp has an increase of approximately 100 students.

The question from page B-247 with regard to the youth investment grants. The target was 25 and the revised forecast is 13. Who were the recipients of the Big Brothers Big Sisters signature programme? Children's Reading Festival, Delta NetFest, Raleigh Bermuda, Tomorrow's Voices, WindReach, 4D Promotions, Bermuda Overseas Mission, Bermuda Sloop Foundation, Troika, Devonshire football, Skills Development Programme, Bermuda Sea Cadets, and Bermuda Alumni Chapter.

**The Chairman:** Junior Minister, you have five minutes remaining.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I am trying my best.

The guidelines shifted with the national sloop policy now requiring the department to only provide funding to organisations with safeguarding policies in place.

Please explain the equity in sport with respect to women in sport. Gender equity should be in all facets of life, mentioning again netball. As stated earlier, netball did not apply for the funding and we cannot provide funding to an organisation that does not apply.

But we are very much on board with gender equity right there.

Sports investment. It was asked why we do not put enough money into sport. Who are the sporting bodies? I believe Mr. Cannonier might have asked that [question]. The budget was similar to when the OBA was in power. Again, we cannot force organisations to apply for the funding. Unfortunately, some choose not to apply because they do not need it. It was down to 13 due to COVID-19 and lack of travel and international events.

What programmes are we looking to introduce? And how will we work with 13 sport organisations to increase to 20, which is the target outcome for 2023/24? Facilitation of fundamentals in all sports provide an initial exposure to assist parents in determining extracurricular activities.

**The Chairman:** Junior Minister, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** All right, Madam [Chairman].

**The Chairman:** He has not taken his seat. Minister.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I have not taken my seat yet. I was just going through my notes. Sorry.

**The Chairman:** Minister, you have one minute, and I would suggest that you consider—

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Moving my head?

**The Chairman:** —wrapping up. And moving your heads.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I would like to thank the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture for the sterling work that they are doing on behalf of our young people. The theme of this budget presentation was certainly the reallocation of funds to provide greater access to improvement in sport for our elite athletes. And we wish them well during 2023/24, those young people with these opportunities. It certainly makes me want to jump into a time machine and go back and be young all over again. But we know that is not possible.

**An Hon. Member:** The machine broke down.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** The machine broke down. It saw me coming.

With that, Madam Chairman . . . any questions that I was unable to get to, I am sure the Minister will provide answers to be either tabled here and/or dealt with in another place.

With that, Madam Chairman, I move Heads 71, 20 and 52 be approved as printed.

**The Chairman:** It has been moved that Heads 71, 20 and 52 be approved.

Are there any objections?

Approved.

*[Motion carried: Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, Heads 71, 20 and 52 were approved and stand part of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2023/24.]*

**The Chairman:** Minister, thank you.

I will call for the Speaker to resume his seat.

*[Motion carried: The Committee of Supply agreed to rise and report progress and sought leave to sit again.]*

**House resumed at 8:57pm**

*[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]*

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE

### ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. Good evening, Members.

Are there any objections to rise and report progress and to return to the House?

There are none. Thank you.

We will now move on to the other orders on the Order Paper today. And we are going to do the second reading for the Fire Safety Amendment Act.

Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes. Good night, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Good night.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023 be now read for the second time.

**The Speaker:** Are there any objections?

There are none.

Proceed, Minister.

## BILL

### SECOND READING

#### FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT 2023

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Speaker, the Bill before this Honourable House seeks to amend the Fire Safety Act 2014 to clarify that the National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] standards and codes do not apply

to the operation of air crash and fire rescue services in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, under the Fire Safety Act 2014, the NFPA standards and codes apply to premises. And it was never intended that the standards and codes would apply to the operation of air crash and fire rescue services in Bermuda. Mr. Speaker, the operation of air crash and fire rescue services currently and will continue to comply with the UK Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Orders or any Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements (OTARs) made thereunder in relation to air crash and fire rescue services.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to amend section 7 of the Act to provide expressly that the NFPA codes do not apply to air crash and fire rescue services at the Bermuda airport. This change will not affect the safety of the travelling public. The air crash and fire rescue services will continue to meet the UK Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Orders.

The Air Crash and Fire Rescue Service will continue to meet UK Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Orders and any Overseas Territories Aviation Requirements [OTARs].

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution at this time?

MP Dunkley.

**Hon. Michael H. Dunkley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the Honourable Minister for that overview.

Mr. Speaker, I remember in 2014 when the Act was passed that it had gone through perhaps a dozen drafts. I think it has been through two administrations at the time, and it was always discussed that there would be some changes to it through time and so this one here seems logical. And I am surprised that it hasn't been raised up until this time and it has only been raised because of the audit by Skyport of the airport operations. So, if the Honourable Minister could give some clarification on that we certainly would appreciate it.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other Honourable Member—

MP Pearman, you have the floor.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And thank you to the Honourable Minister for his presentation this evening on this amending Act.

Just a few brief points. The reason that the National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] exists, their mission is *to help save lives and reduce loss with information, knowledge and passion*. And the codes exist to contribute to the safety of the general public. What this Bill tonight is seeking to do is to clarify the scope of the 2014 Act, specifically sections 7(3), 7A

and 7B to carve out the airport from the National Fire Protection Association Codes. So the airport is being carved out expressly when those codes, it would appear, apply to the rest of the Island as a whole. Additionally by reason of section 3 of the Bill, this carveout of our airport from these codes is retrospective to January 2018. So it is going back five and a half years and validating the absence of the application of those codes for that period.

So the questions I would have to the Honourable Minister are these: What is the reasoning behind this change? Is it as my honourable colleague Michael Dunkley has just indicated, part of the audit by Aecon or those affiliated with the airport? Or is it in relation to something else? Because as a matter of logic, it is difficult to understand why health and safety codes that are intended to protect public safety are applicable to all of Bermuda except for our airport. And I guess it begs the question, What would happen if something were to go wrong with our airport? Are we exposing ourselves reputationally as a jurisdiction?

So, in short, our understanding is that . . . or my understanding anyway, I should say, is that these codes are reflective of best practice in relation to Fire Safety. And if we are departing from best practice and we are respectively departing for five and a half years (going backwards) what is the compelling reason for doing that? I just ask because obviously we want to be very, very careful to make sure that we maintain our jurisdictional reputation at the highest levels of best practice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution?

MP Richardson.

**Mr. Anthony Richardson:** Good evening, Mr. Speaker, and to those in the listening audience, and my colleagues who are here in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to give a few comments in term of the Fire Service Amendment Act and in context for me this really speaks in terms of an insurance programme in that the ability to now increase the number of persons who are on each shift at the airport, would help to ensure that, or at least minimise, the impact of any instance of accident or near accident. So, I stand obviously to support the amendment.

I also want to thank the Minister because he took time to ensure that many of us, myself included, understood that as some of the earlier speakers have said, that this does relate only to the airport. What they are doing is specifying that the airport can now be operated a little bit differently from the rest of the Island.

And in terms of impact, I do declare my interest, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that I am very often at

the airport and I often interact with some of these Fire Service persons. And as recently as yesterday there was actually an example whereby the Fire Service kicks in in that they had fuelled an aircraft and for whatever reason some of the fuel started to leak onto the tarmac and they had to call the Fire Service down to clean it up. And that was one of those times whereby you realise, you know what, before they might have had, say, only five persons on a shift and now they have increased it to 12, it enabled them to come and do one task and in the instance of an accident or another requirement, you have more people to go in and respond. And so in this instance what is happening is we are in fact increasing the safety of the overall airport and the ability for them to respond in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, as I started talking about the idea of this being insurance, we can think about it, I suppose, but none of us can really appreciate the impact of an aircraft accident at the airport. Depending upon the actual aircraft itself, depending upon the time of the day, and of course depending upon the time of the year, we would not know how many people would be on that aircraft. So if you think about it, immediately there is going to be a claim in terms of the loss of life. There is also going to be the less important, but equally significant damage to the actual aircraft. And also, depending upon the time of year and time of day there is going to be a short- to medium-term interruption to air traffic. Because obviously, if there is an aircraft on the runway then other aircraft will not be able to land at that time. And so you would have a circumstance whereby all the aircraft have to go back to their destination or abort the actual departure where they are.

So again, I am just emphasising to everyone here and also to the general public that this actually speaks to an insurance programme. And yes, there may be some comments in terms of the actual expense and the timing and what have you, but we could imagine the alternative which would be an accident that could occur.

Mr. Speaker, it is also timely in my mind because we are going through the budget process and there are lots of comments in terms of stimulating the economy. And what some persons might not know is that the ability to have the Fire Service fully staffed at the airport, it actually also adds to the ability for Bermuda to market itself. Because sometimes what happens is that when there are aircraft intending to come to Bermuda, and that will be both military and general aircraft, they may call ahead and ask what the category of coverage is at the airport. And when we are able to respond and say that it is category 9, which gives them some relief even if they have a smaller aircraft, because they know that there is going to be sufficient manpower to attend to any potential incident.

I also speak from experience in terms of sometimes what happens is even overseas military

aircraft will call in advance and ask what the category is of cover at the airport and there have been instances whereby they will call (not in the recent past but in the near to distant past) and they will actually ask what the current cover at airport is. And based upon the fact that it was less than the highest category, category 9, they would actually not come to Bermuda. And the impact of that is that Bermuda loses out. The hotels will lose out. Obviously, the transport loses out. The restaurants, bars and the like [lose out]. So there is actually a tourism component or a stimulus component that is tied to this legislation tonight. So, again, I stand to support it.

Mr. Speaker, in more recent times it has been interesting. The Minister has come to this House and talked about the fact that the Fire Service has had to recruit persons and they ended up recruiting a significant number from Canada who are now on-site and doing their training. And I do say, and I smile, and I smile in support of all of the females who are currently in the House because several of the recruits have been female and it does bring a smile when you see a fire truck traveling at high speeds and you look up and guess what? There is actually a female driving some of these fire trucks. And so it does add to the incentive to encourage right now for persons—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Anthony Richardson:** I am getting some [chuckles], Mr. Speaker, in that women are better drivers. Well, I will leave that one alone for now.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Mr. Anthony Richardson:** Yes, the comment is the recruits at the airport, some of them are male and some of them are female. And yes, they do have females doing everything.

But my more major point, Mr. Speaker, is that as part of this process there are more firemen per shift. And the Minister spoke already about the need to get more Bermudians, so I want to encourage all those in the listening audience, if you have any inclination to do this type of work—it is exciting, it is different, it is important, and it is valuable—to go ahead and make an application and move forward in this process.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this also. The Minister is aware that he talked earlier about potentially having up to 100 recruits for the uniform services that it will be interesting if we are sufficiently forward-thinking to establish a cadet programme for these services. Mr. Speaker, I happen to be one of those who benefited from the foresight of the Honourable Member Simons' father-in-law, Mr. Penny Bean (who is now deceased), because at the time he was responsible for the police cadet programme. And when I was going through the programme, at one level it was said [that] persons like

me should not be part of the programme because the chances are we would not stay in the process. But he had the foresight to say that the benefits of going through the cadet programme actually extend beyond qualifying as a policeman because you learn and you become more responsible. And so I hope we are able to move in that direction to ensure that we are able to get sufficient Bermudian recruits to fill the ranks of all of the uniform services.

Mr. Speaker, as I close I want to commend those who currently work at the airport. The current and some of the past watch commanders, Commanders Bailey, Haynes, Burgess and De Couto, they do go out and do things beyond the call of duty. And sometimes we forget that they are on duty way into the late-night hours and sometimes very, very early in the morning. And they do it in some respects as a thankless task, but they know that their role is to ensure that the airport is kept safe from any potential harm and in the event that something does take place, that they will be there to do their best to minimise any impact.

And so with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will say thank you and again insert that I do support this amendment to the Fire Service Act. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to make a contribution? There are none.

Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Members, for your contributions.

I would like to start from the beginning where MP Dunkley made a comment that he was surprised that this amendment hadn't been made earlier. If I could sum it all up, in February 2022, last year, there was an audit of the airport. In the audit it was determined that the current complement of firemen per shift was not enough to maintain a Category 9 status. I think everybody agreed on that. The recommendation was that there should be 15 persons per shift, up from the current persons per shift at the time, which was 5 persons per shift.

What happened was we got a second opinion and it was determined that NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency) Codes applies only in relation to premises within the scope of the Act and not to operation of Air Crash and Fire Rescue Service. So the further clarity was that the NFPA Codes do not constitute as legislation for the purpose of satisfying UK Air Navigation (Overseas Orders or any Overseas Territories Aviation [Requirements], OTARs made therein in their relation to Aircraft and Fire Rescue Service.

I have a lot of notes here, Mr. Speaker, so bear with me.

**The Speaker:** No problem.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** There was a 2021 amendment that provided for the Chief Fire Officer to be the authority having jurisdiction. A 2021 amendment, section 7B gave the chief authority regarding the application of the NFPA Code. His guidance that the code would not apply to the airport was not accepted by the Order and the Regulatory Authority. This has necessitated this amendment today.

The Bill is not making a change as much as it is clarifying, for the avoidance of doubt, what has already taken place. The codes are not and never were intended to apply to the operation at the airport. So this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is simply giving the Fire Chief the authority to have jurisdiction over the airport and NAPA still has jurisdiction over the building, so to speak. So this is just really . . . it is just clarifying for the avoidance of doubt and not changing anything. It sounds a little convoluted, but I hope I haven't confused anybody, but it is just a little house-keeping.

Are there any other questions?

**The Speaker:** Are there any questions?

No.

Go ahead.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be committed.

**The Speaker:** The Bill will now be committed.

Deputy [Speaker].

### House in Committee at 9:16 pm

*[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr., Chairman]*

## COMMITTEE ON BILL

### FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT 2023

**The Chairman:** Honourable Members, we are in Committee of the whole House for further consideration of the Bill entitled (the second reading) [the Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023](#).

Minister, you have the floor.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023 amends section 7 of the Fire Safety Act 2014 by including subsections 4 and 5 to provide expressly that the NAPA Codes do not apply to Air Crash and Fire Rescue Service at the Bermuda airport.

Mr. Chairman, [clause] 1 is the standard citation.

I think first, should I ask if I can move them all at one time?

**The Chairman:** Certainly. Certainly, you may. Continue.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Paragraph [*sic*] 1 is the standard citation.

**The Chairman:** Clause 1.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I'm sorry. Clause 1.

**The Chairman:** Yes. Thank you.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Clause 1 is the standard citation.

Clause 2 amends section 7 of the Fire Safety Act 2014, for a confirm . . . for the avoidance of doubt, that the NFPA Codes apply for the purposes of the Act.

[Section] 7(4)(b)(i) and (ii) provide expressly that the NFPA Codes as adopted under the Act shall not be deemed to apply to nor constitute legislation governing the operation of any airport rescue and fire-fighting service provide air crash and fire rescue services at the Bermuda airport.

[Section 7](5) provides for the purpose of section 7 that "Bermuda Airport" has the meaning given under section 1 of the Civil Airports Act 1949.

And clause 3, Mr. Chairman, provides for the commencement and validation deeming the Bill to have come into operation on 1 January 2018.

**The Chairman:** Thank you, Minister.

Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Mr. Pearman. You have the floor.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Honourable Minister.

Honourable Minister, I just want to clarify that this is in relation to [clause] 2. I think we understand that the codes (I will just use that expression. We know what we are talking about.) don't apply to the airport by reason of this Bill. And I think that we agree that the codes were never intended to apply to the airport by reason of the comments that you and MP Dunkley agree with.

My question is slightly different. If the codes did apply to the airport, what would be different? What would be different in terms of the rating number or the manpower? What is it about the codes that would be more onerous or different?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I appreciate that question, MP.

The confusion was that the code itself, according to the audit, had authorised 15 people per shift for the airport. The reason that this clarification has come into place is because OTAR, the Overseas Territories [Aviation Requirements], the Review, has said that the Fire Chief has responsibility for the airport and not for the building. So the only difference was, who would be determining who has . . . who would be determining how many people it would take

per shift. So it is really one authority saying that it will be 15 per shift and another authority saying it will be 12 per shift.

**The Chairman:** MP Pearman.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** Thank you. And I think I understand your answer. And I guess my question from that is, Now that we have decided who is going to decide, what will the shift numbers be? Will they be 15 or 12, taking your examples?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you for that question. The minimum duty strength from NFPA had required 15 firefighters per shift for a Category 9. OTAR requires 12 firefighters per shift for a Category 9. And this amendment will give the Fire Chief the authority, and he will come under the authority of OTAR, which will be 12 members per shift.

**Mr. Scott Pearman:** I thank the Minister for that answer. Thank you.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.  
Any further speakers?  
Minister, you want to move the—

**Hon. Michael H. Dunkley:** Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** Go ahead, Mr. Dunkley.

**Hon. Michael H. Dunkley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for a point, I guess, of education for us all. What categories are other overseas territories airports, just to get a bit of understanding. Because quite a few of them have airlines coming in and out (like we do) from the UK and from the United States. Are they facing the same dilemma as us as a Category 9 airport in having to make these same changes?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** In answer to the Honourable Member, Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes. These are international standards that we have to abide by. So, overseas territories—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Yes, OTAR.

**The Chairman:** Any further speakers?  
Mr. Dunkley.

**Hon. Michael H. Dunkley:** I appreciate the answer from the Honourable Minister. So, as a follow-up for that, Mr. Chairman, I am sure there has been discussion with OTAR, but has there been any . . . I guess there was no headway in getting OTAR to change their view on how they would rate the Bermuda airport in regard to the concerns we might have raised? Be-

cause obviously I can't speak for the Bermuda Government but I am sure the Government of Bermuda was not happy when the audit produced this and the changes that we would have to make. So, I am assuming that the discussions with OTAR were fruitless and they just stuck to their position and there was nothing we could do about it. Is there anybody above that that we can discuss it with? Who is the oversight body for OTAR?

**The Chairman:** Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, MP.

OTAR is the body that deals with the overseas territories. Right? And a Category 9 is what we are currently classed as in Bermuda. We have to abide by the OTAR rules, but NFAPA is the first authority that has control over the airport and they had signified the Category 9. That there would be 15 people per shift. But OTAR was consulted by us because we are one of those overseas territories. It was determined that it would be 12 per shift. And that 12 per shift allows us to have Category 9 aircraft coming and going out of Bermuda.

**The Chairman:** Are there any further speakers?

There appear to be none.

Minister, do you want to move the preamble and the clauses?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I appreciate that Mr. Chairman, but before that I would say one more thing and say that as a Category 9 for the British American flight, it comes down to the size of the aircraft as to the rating of the airport.

**The Chairman:** Thank you.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I move that the preamble be approved.

**The Chairman:** You have to move the clauses first. I'm sorry. Move clauses 1, 2 and 3 be approved.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I move that the clauses be approved.

**The Chairman:** It has been moved that the clauses be approved.

Any objections to that?

There appear to be none.

Approved.

*[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 3 passed.]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Chairman, I move that the preamble be approved.

**The Chairman:** It has been moved that the preamble be approved.

Are there any objections to that?  
There appear to be none.  
Approved.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed . . . as amended.

**The Chairman:** No amendments. Just as printed.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** As printed. Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman:** It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

Are there any objections to that?  
There appear to be none.  
The Bill will be reported to the House.

*[Motion carried: The Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]*

**The Chairman:** Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**House resumed at 9:25 pm**

*[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]*

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE

### FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT 2023

**The Speaker:** Members, are there any objections to the Bill entitled the Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023 being reported as printed?

There are none.  
The Bill has been reported as printed.  
Thank you, Members. We will now move on.  
The next item is also in your name, Minister of National Security. The second reading of the Police (Amendment and Validation) Act 2023. Is that being done this evening or carried [over]?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** It is being carried over.

**The Speaker:** Carried over. Okay. Thank you.  
Minister, would you like to do your third reading on the first item then?

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.  
Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move the Bill entitled

the Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023 be now read a third time by its title only.

*[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]*

**The Speaker:** Any objections?  
Proceed.

## BILL

### THIRD READING

#### FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT 2023

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** I move that the Bill be now read a third time by its title only and passed.

**The Speaker:** The Bill has been read a third time by its title only and is now passed.

*[Motion carried: The Fire Safety Amendment Act 2023 was read a third time and passed.]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.  
Thank you, Members, for your participation.  
Deputy Premier.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. Walter H. Roban:** Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn this House until Monday, March 6, at 10:00 am.

**The Speaker:** At 10:00 am.  
Would any Member wish to speak to that?  
None.  
MP Caines.

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Continue.

### BLACK GOLFER'S WEEK IN BERMUDA

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Mr. Speaker, in the book [entitled] *Guinness World Records*, there is a record for the most own goals in a soccer match. Mr. Speaker, there is . . . and I will say that again, I know you didn't hear that part.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Mr. Speaker, there is a Guinness World Record for the most own goals scored in a soccer match. The game was in Madagascar and the score was 149 to AS Adema and the team—

**The Speaker:** It was 149?

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** [It was] 149 to zero.

**The Speaker:** In one game?

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** On the own goals. And the team that won was AS Adema and the team that had zero was SO l'Emyrne. The match was played on October 31, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, the team that scored 149 goals in their own goal was making a protest. They did not . . . it was a national championship, Mr. Speaker. They did not appreciate the decision of the referee in the game prior and so to make a protest, Mr. Speaker, they scored 149 goals in their own goal to make a point. Their city . . . of the losing team, they were besotted in grief. They were angry. They were frustrated.

The National Governing Body in Madagascar, Mr. Speaker, suspended the coach, they punished the captain and they punished all the players, suspending them for an indefinite period in 2002. It was said, when you read the account of this, that they did not understand the damage that they caused to their city, to their country, and to the sport of football.

Mr. Speaker, my mind is drawn to 2023 in Bermuda. This week, Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about football in Madagascar. We are talking about tourism in Bermuda. This week the BTA announced that we will host the Black Golfer's Week from April 27 until May 1. I saw the line-up of golfers, Mr. Speaker, and I was excited. I am not a golfer, but I do watch it on television. I have tried the sport, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the discipline, the coordination to succeed at the sport. And I have tried. I have had coaches and it is not something that I can master. True story, Mr. Speaker. But those around me in my orbit are quite fond of this sport.

I travel, Mr. Speaker, I have been to courses all around the United States. I have been to courses in Ireland at the Somerset in . . . I have played and I have been to California and I have never mastered the sport. I always enjoy driving the golf cart around.

But this week when my friends who are involved and understand golf heard the line-up, the names that are coming in Bermuda, they were buoyed; they were excited. And I too thought, *We have worked hard. We have tried to get this country doing something to get people excited about Bermuda. We have had a phenomenal year.* And so when the announcement came out, Mr. Speaker, I, like most right-thinking people, was excited about what it represented for our beloved country.

To my chagrin, Mr. Speaker, my shock, my horror, Mr. Speaker, I read a post that was posted by my colleague, Mr. Kim Swan, a man who has spent the majority of his life honing his skill, practicing his craft, teaching, training, [and] traveling in the sport of golf. He was excited, buoyed even as he shared this news via Facebook. As I started to read the post, my smile was immediately turned upside down. Where I

thought our people would be excited for the possibilities, the names that were dropped, people coming to our Island, telling people about our wonderful shores, playing this beautiful game . . . again, a game I have not been able—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Terrell Owens.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** A number of these players . . . I was excited.

But I read the post and one post, a Mr. Wendell Hollis posted, Mr. Speaker, and said, *The authority are a national disgrace. They are sitting on their hands as tourism dies.* I read Mr. Wendell Hollis' post and I saw it for what it was. It was a dog whistle. It was a sound that to the untutored only a few could hear and it would unite them and motivate them to a specific task or action.

And I thought about this dog whistle and why Mr. Hollis, and the likes thereof, commenting below this post were so angry, were so volatile, were so vociferous in their consternation about Black golfers coming to Bermuda. I sat and I was concerned, not because of the tournament, but because of his own goal. Because we are at a pivotal time where we are trying our level best to bring people to our beloved isles. And why would not Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda row in behind these efforts? These men could have gone anywhere else in the world. They do this annually. This year, Mr. Speaker, they thought it not robbery to come to Bermuda and spend their money, work and do charitable efforts in Bermuda. We are the only people who will see this philanthropic endeavour, the opportunity for us to be put on the world's stage, and we would decry the efforts of the BTA and make a dog's breakfast out of something that should be celebrated.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** It is a canine theme tonight; a dog whistle and a dog's breakfast. Stay out of the dog house, Mr. Speaker.

Focusing on tourism is the role of the BTA. When we look at the seven pillars, the seven pillars can be broken down. And if I can help you, and I will always take us back to, What is the plan? It goes back to the National Tourism Plan. I would say it again. Everything that the BTA does must be congruent, must be on all fours. (There is the reference again.)

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** They must be on all fours with the National Tourism Plan. The National Tourism Plan

has the pillars. The pillars, Mr. Speaker, let's call it AGILITY.

1. Awareness and relevance. That means focusing on the right audience.
2. Greener.
3. Infrastructure. And infrastructure means making sure our tourists have frictionless experiences from arrival to departure.
4. Local involvement. Making sure they get the best out of who we are in service whether it's in taxis, whether it is in hotels, whether it is in restaurants, whether it is a fort. Local involvement.
5. Innovation. Using technology and data to enhance the visitor experience.
6. Teams and Groups. This is the BTA's emphasis on team and groups, whether they are sports or men like golfers who are coming to Bermuda. Getting teams and groups to come to Bermuda.
7. Year-Round. Finding the opportunity to make people come to Bermuda not only in the summer but in the winter months with our golf and spa season. Fine experiential travel where people come to Bermuda whale watching in February and March. Year-round opportunities for our tourism.

AGILITY, our seven pillars. So when someone asks, *What is the point of these men coming to Bermuda?* It is consistent with the National Tourism Plan. It is consistent with our agility, yes—number six—Teams and Groups coming to Bermuda. African Americans have the ability to come to Bermuda to make a positive contribution and to spend money and to spread their influence over our Island. Let me say that again: African American tourists have the ability to come to Bermuda to spend money and to aid in the revival of our tourism product. We cannot and will not apologise for that.

But in order for us to see the big picture, we must understand and keep everything in perspective. I heard no complaints during the Butterfield Championship at the public course at Port Royal. People came in from all over. We were just getting through COVID-19. And to see us broadcasted and showcased all over the world—the flora, the fauna, our golf course, our people enjoying the best of who we are—was an awesome experience for us to get value for money or see the ROI [return on investment] met when our three-day event was broadcast around the world.

We were even more pleased when we hosted the World Triathlon Series in Bermuda. People were watching that all around the world. A friend of mine said, *Wayne, I caught a glimpse of you going up Flora Duffy Hill.* (It was actually my brother.)

[Laughter]

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** But she was excited that she knew somebody in Bermuda. She watched the tournament for that reason only. She had a friend in Bermuda. She said, *Wayne, I have to come to Bermuda. Oh, my goodness, the water! It was such an enthralling . . .* The very purpose of the event was for people to see Bermuda online. To see Bermuda on the news. To see Bermuda on TV, to excite them. To let people know who we are. And based on that, buy a ticket. Learn more and come to our beautiful Islands.

This year we had SailGP where people were able to do this thing called sailing, Mr. Speaker, and come to our beautiful Island. According to PwC, the impact of SailGP this year was \$11.4 million in media coverage generating interest into the Island.

How about the clipper race? We are looking at an opportunity for Bermuda to be showcased around the world. We saw some growth in our superyacht calls. We saw growth this year at 84 per cent with an economic impact of \$3.4 million. What does that mean? That means as a result of the media, the television, the yachting races coming back to Bermuda, people were able to see something tangible around that, and the numbers that we saw this year through our superyacht strategy was \$3.4 million in our coffers.

The BTA now is focusing heavily on superyachts. The superyacht owners were in Bermuda last weekend. They spent the entire weekend in our country, meeting with restaurateurs, going on a FAM [familiarisation] tour, talking to people of Bermuda. The people were blown away with what they saw in Bermuda. And guess what the superyacht owners, the broker, said? It is their goal, it is their aim to get their clients, their owners back to Bermuda to enjoy this beautiful place over the summer.

So everybody is now coming and seeing the jewel in the Atlantic and saying not only that they like what they saw with the golf, with Flora, with SailGP, now they have their whistle wet and they now want to come back to Bermuda. The superyachts are saying this summer will be a bumper crop summer for superyachts and Bermuda. Not three weekends ago. This was last weekend in Bermuda.

So let me get this straight. We have a BTA that are working night and day. A trained cadre of talented Bermudians to put a plan together and [your] main effort, Mr. Hollis, is to decry the work of the very same people who are doing everything in their natural power to make sure that we have a future in tourism. And that is acceptable? It is not acceptable! It is quite akin to the team Madagascar that because of their selfish goals and self-aggrandisement, when things are not going their way, did not understand the importance of integrity, working with people. They scored 149 goals in their own goal!

We have this year a Forbes under-30 residency. Last year they came to Bermuda. Thirty of the most influential 30-year-olds in business. They spent

the entire month in Bermuda working on projects, working with local businesses, taking out entrepreneurs, working with them. Each one of them using social media to tell their stories, what they are doing, and tell people about the great island of Bermuda. What is the genesis of this? Someone had an idea that we can bring intelligent, talented people to Bermuda. And on this Island they can connect with other talented, intelligent people. And we would mix the ones from the United States with the ones from Bermuda, and we can do education and we can do tourism. And we can both learn and grow from each other.

I was pleased to witness what the end of the 30 days looked like. I saw collaborations that have gone into business relationships. I watched the people have dinner at Woody's, play with the local men at ranges, get inculcated in our culture, go to our local bars, spend time in our local places with our needs and our charities. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the genesis of a long-term relationship. Somebody said, *Fools and children should not see unfinished work*.

**The Speaker:** Mm-mm.

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Somebody said, *Fools and children should not see unfinished work*.

Everybody in this country has been raised, has been groomed to always see the negative. We lamented the fact that the Boston flight ended. Everyone cried on Maj's List and The People's list, and in the *Royal Gazette*. They said, *The BTA has to do something. The Minister of Transport has to do something. What is the PLP doing? What is the BTA doing?* The Boston flight comes back all year around starting on May 5, on JetBlue, and not a dicky bird. The people who have made all the noise in the world, the Minister goes into the hopper, he starts his meetings, he starts the international conversations—the flight comes back. Not seasonal! All year around! Thanks to the people at the BTA. Thanks to the Minister of Transport. Thanks to the Minister of Tourism. And what do we hear? Not a dicky bird! That is how you know some people, no matter what we do, no matter what happens, they will not give Jack his jacket.

Sometimes when things don't go well, you have to adapt. And so, when the Miami flight was lost—and we are working for that flight to come back, the conversations continue, the interactions continue—we have Charlotte. And we are so used to looking at the hole in the donut and lamenting the hole in the donut instead of eating the donut. We now have Charlotte! Charlotte is the third busiest airport in North America, with the third best connections in the country. You are not getting a second-rate airport. You are getting the third best airport in America, with the best connections! Well, guess what? We have been trained like one of Pavlov's dogs to do, to shake our fist in the face of progress.

Instead of saying *We lost Miami and that is not ideal*.

[Timer chimes]

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Mr. Speaker, but we have—

**The Speaker:** Time. Member, your time has expired.

**Mr. Wayne Caines:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

**The Speaker:** MP Simmons, you have the floor.

### PLP FOUNDER'S DAY

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. And good evening colleagues and good evening, Bermuda.

I rise today on the brink of an auspicious event, the Founder's Day of the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party being held this Sunday. Sixty years, Mr. Speaker. Bermuda's first political party. The country and all of us who serve in this Chamber under the Progressive Labour Party banner owe a tremendous debt, not just to our founders, but to all who took the risk, took the step, took the sacrifice to serve as our executives throughout the years, to serve as our branch chairman, our branch executives, our candidates (winning and losing), and those who just did what they could quietly behind the scenes. Each of us owe them a tremendous debt.

Today we, over the past 25 years, have enjoyed a level of success that they could only dream of. Mr. Speaker, think about this. I remember one time I asked my father, because he was a branch chairman in the 1970s and an MP in 1980s, and I [asked], *What was it like going to election after election after election that you knew you would not win? What was it like for the people like Dame Jennifer who ran in St. George's year after year after year? Having the candidates changed so somebody new could come in and beat you? What did it take to be able to do that?*

Now just because . . . I mean, we don't get paid great salaries now, but the salaries were a lot lower then. So they weren't in it for the money. They weren't in it for the titles. They weren't in it for the prestige. And the sacrifice . . . because there was some risk. Even though there is still some form of stigma in certain things in our community, and certain bits of issues that some of us may have if we take up the PLP banner, those who came before us faced a much harder, much lengthier uphill battle. And so we owe them a lot and we sit here now and we must look back to look forward.

Mr. Speaker, what it took to serve as an executive, a branch member, a candidate, an MP in the Progressive Labour Party, to be a founder in the Progressive Labour Party with the risk and the sacrifice and all that it entailed, took something that we should all take to heart, regardless of what our political motivation is. But as we thank them for their sacrifice and their work and we thank all who came before us, we must remember the opportunity we have been given and what we will do with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, part of it . . . it is really interesting. I had a conversation with a constituent a couple of months ago and this is a young lady who did everything she should have. She got the right education, the right everything, you know, did everything you are supposed to. And still has found herself a victim of Bermuda's economy. And she said something to me that really resonated. She said, *It is hard to love Bermuda when Bermuda doesn't love me back.*

**The Speaker:** Mm-mm.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** And I think about those who toiled as slaves in our country, who dreamed of a Bermuda that would love that back. I think about our grandparents and our parents who marched and protested for Bermuda that would love them back. And now I think about people who are poor. I think about people who are different, whatever that may entail, who just want a Bermuda that loves them back. And so, the challenge for us, in my view, is what are we prepared to do to build a country where our people, all of our people, feel as loved and embraced, wanted and desired as they want and love and desire Bermuda.

And I think about what it took. You know, our founders did not have to put themselves on the chopping block. Our candidates did not have to put themselves on the chopping block. But they did it anyway. So in honour and recognition of all those who came before us, in honour and recognition of the opportunity that has been given us, it is my hope that we will emerge from this weekend reinvigorated, renewed, inspired, and more committed than ever to continue the fight to build a Bermuda that loves every Bermudian back the way they love Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to make a comment this evening?

MP Famous.

### PLP FOUNDER'S DAY

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am going to continue in . . . I am going to take liberty and plagiarise from my two previous speakers.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Pun intended.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about those who . . . the Honourable Member from constituency 33, Sandys not Somerset, spoke about those who put themselves on the line time and time again knowing quite possibly they may not win. But they did it to advance the cause, not just of the party, but of the people. I sit and I see Honourable Lieutenant Colonel Burch put himself on the line countless times. And he wasn't quite successful. He wasn't successful in winning a seat, but he helped us to win the election. Starting from . . . I shouldn't say starting from 1998, but I remember distinctly it was the beat of retreat coming up to 1998 and some would say, *Hmm. Your boy looks like he is getting into politics. Why? He is in the Regiment so he must going to be with the UBP.* And somewhere along the line he said, *Not a dicky bird.*

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** So I say thank you to the Colonel because he put himself on the line. He has run in seats that the PLP never would have won, but he advanced the cause. Today I could probably say, most of us could probably say, we became MPs the same day that the Colonel became an MP, finally.

Then there is another gentleman who sits in this House. There is MP Richardson. He ran in constituency 12, twice, I think. To blitz! But he advanced the cause. Now he ran in [constituency] 7 where people say, *Hey, you will never win in 7.* He advanced the cause until he won.

MP Jache Adams, constituency 19. It is one of the hardest seats out there, advanced the cause and won. MP Crystal Caesar, advanced the cause in [constituency] 31. MP Vance Campbell, constituency 9. A seat we never had. He advanced the cause and won. MP Jamahl Simmons, took up the baton from your brother, Mr. Speaker.

But let me not digress. There is MP Kim Swan, C-2 goes back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. But he has held that seat two elections in a row. And then there is someone else, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, have you ever an older cousin who is your cousin, but you know, how they say, *Eh, you mean, you never played marbles?* So it's just keep your place. We all have cousins like that. Cousins we all look up to and cousins that we wish we could spend some time with, but hey, you don't play marbles with them.

Mr. Speaker, one of those cousins over the last few years, I don't know how it happened, but it happened, finally realised, *Hey, cuz, come have a drink with me. Have some Swizzle. Have some soup.* And since that time he has taken me under his wing and taught me so many things. How to dress properly, you know, with a suit because I normally don't wear

suits. How to talk with a silky tongue, because normally I like to be very abrasive at times—at times, they say. Most of all he has taught me how to be a better man, Mr. Speaker. I would like if the House could say Happy Birthday to the Government Whip, MP Neville Tyrrell, who advanced the cause in constituency 11 so I could win.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** And I don't want to say he is the most senior man in the House, but . . . quite possibly.

### BLACK GOLFER'S WEEK IN BERMUDA

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Mr. Speaker, going now for the plagiarising my dear cousin from constituency 14.

Mr. Speaker, there is a thing called statistics, and some opponents like to say, *Look at the tourism stats; they are going down*. Which is true, we can't lie. But they don't say is only 10 per cent of our visitors are Black in a country that is 60 per cent Black, coloured, African American, whatever word you want to use. You know, those who say look at pictures of Brazil would think that Brazil is all these light-skinned people. And most of the people there are my complexion or the complexion of MP Hayward. But it is all in the advertisement, Mr. Speaker. If anyone looks at the advertisement of Bermuda over the last few decades no one would think that we have Black people here.

Mr. Speaker, some would say, *Well, you know, we have to market to the New England tri-state area*. So Black people don't live there. There is a place in New York, called Harlem, and a lot of Black people live there and they have money.

Mr. Speaker, about 11 years ago we had CARIFTA here . . . no, in 2004 we had CARIFTA here. And there was a young man. No one really knew him, [knew much about him], but when he ran it was like, *Whoa!* He won his first international gold medal. Anyone know [who] I am [talking] about?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Heard of him?

Mr. Speaker, CARIFTA, as you know, is all the Caribbean islands. It is like the mini-Olympics. And over the last few decades you can almost predict who is going to win a gold medal by those who won at CARIFTA. But there are those who say we shouldn't waste any money on CARIFTA. It has no value proposition. That's a big word? Value proposition? No return on investment. Right? We shouldn't waste any money on Black golfers. No return on investment. Right? But they are the same ones who would say, *Hey, let's spend \$100 million on America's Cup. Hey, let's make sure the Government gives money for rug-*

*by*. And there is nothing wrong with that. But in a country that is 60 per cent Black, why are we complaining when we advertise something to attract Black visitors?

Mr. Speaker, as a country we have to stop being afraid to . . . let me say, . . . what's the word?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Be silky.

We have to stop being afraid to showcase our diversity. A few years ago, it was the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Azoreans coming here. People were complaining. Black and White people were complaining, *Why do we have to give them a holiday? Why do we have to do this?* These are our people. There is a percentage of Black people that have Azorean blood. These are our people. There is a percentage of people that have both Black, White, and whatever blood. But we have this mentality that the only thing we are going to accentuate in this country is our British heritage, whether it sports, culture, or business.

So, I say to the BTA, *Travel on, brothers*. Right? Accentuate all of our culture[s]—the entire spectrum of our culture—because Black people travel. [If] you go to any other Caribbean island, you can find Black people traveling there, but not coming to Bermuda. [If] you go to any European country, you can find Black people traveling there, but not to Bermuda. We have to bring up our numbers, but our numbers cannot solely be of those people who are of European descent. No offense to them. [I am] just saying [it] cannot solely be them.

So, I say to the BTA, the Minister of Tourism, and the Minister of Transport, *Do what you have to do*. When we had that charter from the Azores, no one complained. No one complained [about] bringing in people from the Azores to visit Bermuda, you know. But let them say we have a charter coming up from the islands, [and] there is going to be an issue.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I am going to close here. MP Jamahl Simmons said it perfectly. *Six years we struggled*. And many people think, *Oh. This is just a Black party*. There were two—anyone can name them—two first female MPs for the Progressive Labour Party.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** [Does] anybody know their complexion? The point I am getting at, Mr. Speaker, is that when we talk about our 60 years as this party, this party was not formed solely to be a Black party. It was to be a party for the working- and middle-class people of this Island, which included White people. Many White people voted for us but kept it under the radar because they were afraid to lose their job. But they advanced because we pushed for things to advance.

As MP Simmons says, *Let's celebrate all those that put themselves on the line*. Each one of us here, those who did not make it here, you, Mr. Speaker, the longest serving MP . . . We celebrate you because that is what our forefathers and foremothers (Is that a word?) who because of sexism did not get written in history.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member.  
MP Swan?

### NEED FOR REAL LEADERSHIP, EQUITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am duty bound to speak on this matter today because the chairman of the Bermuda Tourism Authority of which I am also a member led off the batting this evening, not like Uncle Sheridan, he was more like Colin Blades coming in and opening batting and he was dispatched very carefully and quickly to the boundary.

But he was speaking about a discipline that I think I know as well as anybody in this world, especially from the perspective of being a Black golfer who has played at the highest level of this game. When we celebrated Clyde Best, and we were doing his documentary (and I spoke to it earlier today), he broke down barriers in the 1960s and 1970s in the UK. And I, Mr. Speaker, as an amateur golfer bested the top amateurs in the world at the Azalea Amateur when they thought because of my accent, [when] calling up and introducing myself, that I was White. When I showed up, they found out that I was not. And in a field that consisted of people like Jay Sigel and Vance Heafner (look them up) in 1978, my roommate Ken Green, who I give great honour to because we travelled all around America together like brothers, I love him. Like any other in the 1970s, not too many White guys would have done what he did. [He] took me to the country clubs.

And people like former lawyer Howell Mickey Van Gerbig made sure that he stood between [me and] some of those people who would have otherwise not let me play. I was able to go places where other people could not go. But on my merit, I earned my way there. So, I understand what happens today very intricately. In this country [we] still have 9 to 5 integration. People are kidding themselves. Mr. Speaker, we were raised . . . we went to Glebe. We were raised to embrace all people and to be welcoming [to all]. And I embrace my diversity. I am of Hall extract. I am of Ratteray extract. I went to Scotland last summer because I played in Blairgowrie and Rattray. Why? Because I am Charles Roach Ratteray's offspring. And that is where the Ratterays came from. We embrace that.

The problem in our country is that we have people in our country who are afraid to explore the problems that exist in our country with race. And it is hurting us. It really is. I am mean, I would like to lay my head down for the final count and know that next generations will have a better opportunity at dealing with this.

I have been talking about this subject since the 1970s, Mr. Speaker, and we are still grappling with it. I think what happens in Bermuda is that it is okay to say we would like to get more African American visitors in Bermuda. [After all], it was in the National Tourism Plan in 2017, and I do not think it was originated by the Progressive Labour Party. I think it was originated by the BTA during the tenure of the former OBA Government. So, everybody in Bermuda really would like to see [it], but not everybody in Bermuda likes to see what is required to achieve what they write.

And that is part of the problem because I know in America when I went to play at Ridgeway Country Club in Westchester, New York . . . And across the street where I played a lot of golf at [was] Westchester Hills because my good friend was the pro there. And I think Donnelly was the pro across the street. One was a Christian club, and one was a Jewish club. You go to Quaker Ridge; it is a Jewish club.

If you go in the United States to country clubs, there is . . . there is . . . there is . . . there is ethnic segregation that takes place. It is a reality. If you want to get African American visitors to Bermuda, you do not go fishing . . . necessarily in the Hamptons. You would go to places where . . . And if you wanted a certain income demographic, you would pitch your tent where they were likely to congregate and socialise.

And it is not to say that . . . I was invited to one of the top clubs in the Hamptons two years ago by an African who lives in America, one of the wealthiest people in the world, one of the most successful businessmen in the world, Goldman Sachs chairman of governance and the like, and he was an African who plays in the Hamptons. But there are not many of them. And when he goes to places, like me, there are not very many of us. When I won two, three collegiate tournaments in Alabama in the 1970s all my buddies used to tease me, *Well Swan you are going to be low Black this week*. And I had to have tough skin and let it roll off because I made up my mind, *That's all right. I am going to be the low person this week*. And I was on enough occasions because you lose more in sports than you win. So, I have learned how to lose gracefully.

But in our country, privilege is a problem. People are still prepared to protect their privilege and do not want to look at how we are going to provide some equity. You know, someone told me, *Spit in a cup, and . . . and . . . and you can get your . . . you could get your DNA and stuff like that and find who you are related to*. I know my great grandmother's mother was a Higginbotham from Saint George's. I

know the Outerbridges and . . . down in St. George's and people with . . . and stuff also have Higginbotham. I know I have White relatives on my grandfather Anderson's side. I know on the Ratteray side we have Scottish heritage. I know on the Hall side we have Irish connections. I know that. I embrace that.

But when are my White brothers and sisters going to look at my country with the same inclusiveness that I do, that I raised my daughter to? That is the problem why . . . when we decide we want to get African Americans and we know how to go there because some of us went to school there or . . . or interacted or married into the families from there that we know that we cannot put an ad in a certain paper that we have to go into the communities because they know the reality. They lived through what . . . what . . . came down in the political pipelines every day.

They noticed the children that were going to be hurled up in a police car. Like me, they know what it feels like to be profiled. I have been profiled all of my life and for good reason—so that I can stand here and understand it better than the average person and have courage enough to speak about it. Oh, yes. I can certainly speak, you know, the way other people are speaking and articulate in a way, but that is not good enough in a world of inclusion and diversity. And you are seeing diversity even in the motherland. You are seeing tremendous diversity met with some opposition too. But we have an opportunity in this country with the numbers that we have to rise above that.

And I am going to put [out] a clarion call: Where is the White leadership that is going to call like me for an inclusive Bermuda, that [is going to] stop living the lie, that is prepared to challenge the . . . the the privilege? Where are those White leaders in this country? Why are they not standing up? I am calling on them to stand up in my country because I want a better Bermuda for all my people—Black people, White people, all people in this country. It is only going to happen . . . You cannot sit by—and look at what is happening in the world—and not have the courage to stand up. Mr. Speaker, people talk about wanting One Bermuda. So do I, but you have to be honest enough to look in the mirror and say that you cannot perpetuate the division that comes.

Mr. Speaker, [here is] one example. Last year I was invited to play in the [Butterfield] Bermuda Championship. You know, the second day, for 10 holes, next to guys 30 years younger than me, I ran a 10 hole stretch of even par, but my nerves were getting to me. I was hitting some little, small, little shots, taking three to get up and down from here to there, and stuff like that. It is all right. I could not have had that opportunity had Kim Swan not won a collegiate tournament in Monroe, Louisiana in 1979 where a racket score for Troy University. I could not have done that if I had not been their MVP. I could not have done that had I not been the guy who broke down the barri-

er of the Azalea Amateur. I could not have done that if I was not the first Bermudian to play on the European tour ever. I could not have done that if I had not won three Bermuda Opens before the age of 27. I could not have gotten that invitation had I not been the first Bermudian with Keith Smith to win the World Cup, America's own qualifier, and take Bermuda to the World Cup of Golf. I could not have done that without the things I had done before the age of 28 when a lot of young people never even knew I could play. But I did it because, number one, I had a child who I wanted to show that, you know, no matter what, you can strive and if you fall down, you can stand up.

I earned the right to be invited. I had watched people who would earn the right my age playing the Masters because they had earned the right. I won three Bermuda Opens at Port Royal. I am the one that has been fighting to keep the history alive to help educate people about Louis Rafael "Kid" Corbin, about Earl Anderson, about Leonard Jones. I am not talking about Eardley. I am talking about his father, the forgotten people in this country. Louis Corbin, who wrote an article about the abdicated King, the Duke of Windsor, who was the first Bermudian to play in a PGA Tour event in 1939 Canadian Open and then was the amongst the leaders, I think in the 1951 one or the 1949 one, at Scarboro. It is easy to write us out of history. That is what has been happening.

Mr. Speaker, I am just saying that when we are trying to do things, the people who have really worked hard to integrate this country—no matter what station of life they came from, no matter what side of the political aisle they have been [on], no matter what type of . . . of . . . what people thought about them—have been us Black Bermudians. We are the ones who have integrated this country. We are the ones who have fought. Others have been the benefactors of it.

And the irony of it is the greatest economic boom this country has ever experienced in its history was under the Progressive Labour Party Government when I was in Opposition. And we would not even give Jack that jacket. We crafted a . . . we crafted . . . I say, "we" crafted a narrative that caused people to think that the PLP caused the recession and caused people to leave the country when their stocks in companies like XL [Group PLC] were going down to two and one, and American International [Group] was changing their name, and people who had their stock and all their savings into British American [Insurance Company] went out of business, and Madoff, you know, was tearing the heart out of the world. They do not talk about that.

And when this PLP Government came to the rescue of the Bank of Butterfield, ask yourself . . . somebody, go back and research who the directors were of the Bank of Butterfield when the PLP put in \$250 million. Who was the chairman? And who was the deputy? You ask yourselves. Who? Someone left

their book around here of the person who was the director of that company as well. And that is enough because when 2012 came, there were people in Bermuda who lost their shirt during the recession. It was terrible, the recession that the PLP created globally. And they were playing catch-up!

Wherein my friend down there in . . . down there in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, who worked for Fannie Mae, my boy Losk, he said, *Well, you know, they hired me to chase up some of these guys who took advantage of Fannie Mae, that predatory lending and stuff back, Swanie. How you come to know my cousin that goes to Troy?*

I said, *You know. I am just a country boy. We meet these people in places like Fairmont Southampton and all that. And we know people that know people.*

And I am here to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I call for this diversity because I have actually been the benefactor of some great people who are White who have helped me along the way, people like Jack Moseley, the father of reinsurance. Before reinsurance was coming up, Jack Moseley was the CEO and president of USF&G, the largest insurance company in America, the sponsor of the Sugar Bowl and the New Orleans Open where I played in 1983.

[It] helps to know people sometimes because that is what we do in this country. We have always been trained by people like Victor Woolridge and influenced by Stanley Woolridge down there at Tucker's Town or the Dillas's and Augustus' up at Belmont to be able to know how to interact with people like Mr. Cayman, one of the lead prosecutors of the Nuremberg trials, used to spend every February and October in Bermuda. And he watched me grow up. And they looked out and actually gave you advice, you know? People like that you get to know, and they help you along the way, make sure that you can get out of this country, because I caddied for a man out of Danbury, Connecticut once, and he said, *What do you want to do?*

I said, *I am trying to get away. I have been writing to these schools. I just, you know, I'm just writing up.*

And he said, *I'll help you.*

I thought, *Oh, right.*

Thank God for Bob Clowan golf professional out of Ridgewood Country Club in Danbury, Connecticut. He did his apprenticeship at Ridgewood Country Club in New Jersey. He took me down to West Palm Beach and introduced me to some fine people down there.

But where is that in Bermuda?

Where is that in Bermuda? And yes, I . . . I came up around Ralph Marshall, the pioneer Portuguese man, a leader out of Southampton, who through a good relationship golfed with his son and helped educate me. I am always grateful to Ralph. He was some character in the House, too. I used to go

around and campaign with him. Harry never canvased. I knocked on the door of a very lovely little, young Portuguese lady and said, *Ralph and Harry are here.* When she came and saw me, she was very disappointed because the lady does like looking at a little Harry. But I am saying that, you know, we have got to get off away from this one-off type of . . . I-have-got-one-Black-friend type of thing.

Man, I tell you we have got to change in this country! And it is going to take some courageous White leadership to tell their brothers and sisters that they have to change for the next generation. They have got to do it now and do it soon because when I was a young man, they said, *Do not worry. They are going to die off.* No! You know what they do? They find out another way to run the okey-doke on you.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? Being a golfer, I understand that Bermuda grass does not die. It goes dormant in the winter. The roots are deep. In order to uproot the institutional racism that exists in this country that is founded in the economics of this country . . . You know, you want to know the real reason the cost of living . . . I do not doggone set the price of cheese, but it is going up. I used to like it in Bermuda. I do not set the price of all these staple items, but I can come here and say the cost of living has got to change. Insurance companies are buying medical practices. People are doggone mortgaging their house to get health insurance. In countries like Canada and Britain you can get sick with dignity. You can get sick with dignity. But not in Bermuda. And if you dare be the PLP and try to make a difference, people know how to run the end run on you to cause people to be confused about your how sincere you are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am calling on some real leadership in this country for social change, for social equity, for greater inclusion, to look in the mirror and admit where it lies. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP Swan.

Mr. Hayward? Okay. The clock is on.

## PLP FOUNDER'S DAY

**Hon. Jason Hayward:** Good evening, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join in on this debate this evening or this motion to adjourn session.

I think it is important that the Progressive Labour Party recognises its achievements, its journey for the last 60 years, the work that all have contributed to putting us in a place where we are now in control of this country. It was done through strength, stamina, and resilience. Strength, stamina, and resilience, ploughing through adversity every step of the way. I get confused sometimes when I listen to my colleagues here. Jack is waiting on a jacket from whom?

Through 60 years, persons have showed us exactly who they are, and we continue to allow our

humanity to expect something different. The reality is we are in a position where we are responsible for this particular country. It was a fight to get here, but we need not squander this opportunity. And so, we need not ask anybody to come along [for] this ride. We need not individuals' approval to host events that we choose are in our best interests. We need not [have] this false feeling of diversity and inclusion.

I am not promoting segregation, but I am not promoting the feel-good diversity and inclusion for diversity and inclusions' sake. Leaders before us have learned the hard way when they have attempted to work together with individuals who have no interest in working in their best interests but who want to leverage that relationship to advance their own interests.

Ask Robert Mugabe. Some call him a tyrant. But before he was a tyrant, he was a national hero. He got into power, and he did not kick out the entire Government. He thought it best that they collectively work together. He quickly found out that that was impossible.

Look at South Africa and see what Nelson Mandela attempted. All his efforts to bridge a country together were undermined by one group of individuals. And we sit here in Bermuda and think our reality is going to be different.

When we go out canvassing and we attempt to knock on some doors, people let us know exactly where they stand. I have had a dog set on me canvassing. My colleagues have many of those stories. I was standing at the polls and the person said, *I haven't seen you, so you won't get my vote.*

I don't want your vote. I don't want your vote. For what? So you feel like you have some control over or say over what I do in the future? And that is the reality.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great honour attached to being the longest serving Member within this House. We look up to you. We admire your journey. But there is a part of you inside of you that has to feel comfortable with also walking away. But you are not going to walk away unless you feel as though we are well ahead of the race, unless you see a team on the field that you feel comfortable will win the Cup. And so that is for us as the Progressive Labour Party to assure we continue to field a team that will win the Cup, to assure that the principles when we started this journey are effectively executed on.

As a younger Member of this House, many are looking for the younger Members to carry on the baton. That is the only thing that is going to ensure sustainability of the Progressive Labour Party. It should not end after 65 years. Members should be celebrating the Progressive Labour Party's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We should be celebrating our achievements. We often revert back to our struggles, and we appreciate our struggles. It is now time to celebrate our victories, all what we have done to advance the lives of people in this country. We need to be steadfast on our

mission to advance the lives of people in this country. We need to set a vision for this country that our people believe in.

MP Simmons is talking about individuals looking for love back from a country that they love. Well, there is a harsh reality to that as well. I hope individuals are not looking for love in the wrong place, because this is a journey we are on. The race may never be won. There is no finish line to this race. My grandchildren and my grandchildren's grandchildren will be battling adversity.

We can look at modern day Bermuda, but this Island is 400 years old. The race was started 400 years ago. There are groups of people who have a massive head start. Our people need to realise we are playing catch-up. And so it is for us, understanding that, to be unapologetic in the way we deliver on the behalf of the people of this country. We need not ask for anybody's permission. We need nobody's assistance. We have the capacity to do it on behalf of our people and that is why we are here.

The 30 do not need the 6 for anything. That is a reality. They have a constitutional role, and that is it. And we have a mandate. And it is for us to execute on that mandate, regardless of how they think of us or how they feel about us and whether they like it or not.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Deputy, would you like your turn?

## PLP FOUNDER'S DAY

**Hon. Walter H. Roban:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to give some brief remarks on this motion to adjourn.

One thing I do enjoy about being a part of the PLP today in this time is that because the bench is so deep, often the things that are said say much of what needs to be said. Although I have not been in this House as long as you or some others, I have seen some of that journey. And I, like everybody on this side, am proud of where we are today. You, Mr. Speaker, as has been referenced, have been here for quite a bit of the journey. More than half of that 60 years that we will be celebrating this weekend. And as others have referenced, it is a glorious 60 years.

It is glorious for many things. It is glorious because of how it started. It started in a way that shocked and tested the Bermuda of its time and has continued to shock and test Bermuda, and push Bermuda to where Bermuda is today. Many members, men and many women, have served under this banner, some not even getting in this House. But they served; they held the banner proud and got us one step closer to where we needed to be so that we would have, as the Honourable Member who just sat

down put this, achievements to celebrate and look back on. And we have 25 years of success behind us, even though we had 30 years of struggle to get there. And that's struggle shaped us so that we would be ready for 1998 and what we have done since.

That struggle shaped us because it caused others to change what they were doing. And the PLP has always pushed for change in this country. That is irrefutable. That is without doubt. And my own preoccupation with the PLP's history has been to understand because, as Minister Hayward referenced, struggle is a component of the human existence. And perhaps when humans are not struggling, humans will not achieve. So we as a party have struggled to achieve, and with that we have achieved great success.

I look forward to the rest of this year celebrating the 60 years of achievements. So even our trials have been a part of the achievements that shaped us. But we have years of victory that we have already put in place so we can celebrate. It is not just about the struggle; it is also about the victories that we have had and we should celebrate that without apology.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said tonight. One thing that is apparent from what has been said, is that I think it is important that people of this country who are often out there watching what goes on in this House, that some of them need to, frankly, get off of their couches and off their commodes and think about Bermuda. Think about Bermuda and be for Bermuda. Not for your opinion, be for the country.

The Honourable Member from constituency 14 spoke about the work of the BTA and the people over [at] the BTA who are working hard day and night for this country to shape plans around tourism that will move us forward. There is no one in this House who does not agree that we need to do more and we need to prosper in tourism. And, frankly, I commend the campaign that has brought those golfers on a list to come to Bermuda, because we have to look for prosperity everywhere—not just in New England, everywhere. We need to be global in how we perceive the prosperity we desire as a country, particularly on the hospitality side because we know what that does for our country.

The Premier is now in Abu Dhabi pursuing prosperity that can be brought back to this country. We need to have that approach with tourism. And I believe that is the part of the campaign that the BTA is seeking to put in place. Prosperity does not exist in this 21<sup>st</sup> century world with one ethnic group, [or] with one colour. It exists everywhere. And we should be pursuing it everywhere—the superyacht people, the mutual fund people, the people who travel leisurely, young people who represent prosperity that we can bring to Bermuda. We should be looking for it everywhere, in every part of the globe. That is how I see it, and I believe this is what the BTA is looking to achieve.

But we need to think more about Bermuda and what will be best to make Bermuda more prosperous for all of us. That should be the goal. That should be how the people in the community . . . and that is the message that we in this House should send to people, because if we think “Bermuda”, this is not [being] political, frankly. It is just about the country. And people need to get off of their couches and their political thrones and commodes and start to think about the country and be positive about the country, about what the country can achieve.

We are going through a budget process now, which is about putting together a package that this Government hopes, and is working towards ensuring that the country moves forward. That is what we are working for. And the constituents in this country, children, the elderly, the disabled, those looking for work, those looking to build careers, have the resources to meet their aspirations and dreams. I do not doubt that everyone in this House wants that to happen. So our message in this House should be about telling the country that we have to be about Bermuda, getting more of our people back in tourism, ensuring young people see where the opportunities are in hospitality. Also in the reinsurance industry, and some of the new industries that we want to bring here, the digital asset industry that we are trying to develop. The blue economy that ultimately we want to see even further prosper, and other opportunities, the telecommunications and other areas.

We have to be about Bermuda, Mr. Speaker.

And just going back to talk about the PLP, without a doubt the vision of the founder was built around trying to create a country that at that time seemed almost a dream, where segregation was no more, where opportunity was possible, where equity was a reality. And, as has been referenced, that message was not just to the Black people of the country; that was a message to everyone. There have never not been White people involved with the country. Not that I need to say that. I am just stating what is a fact. And, yes, some of them went through considerable difficulty because they chose to stand under the banner, a banner that was about representing working people first and foremost, representing women who were disenfranchised, representing the poor, representing those who did not have access to an equal education opportunity.

That is who the PLP, when it was founded, were looking to enfranchise. And because the party believed philosophically that if we enfranchised those with the least, all would benefit. And that is what the vision of 1963 continued to be, to motivate the members on this side. And members will tell you. I have said it, and others have said it. Go back to that platform that was published prior to the election of May 9, 1963. And if anything that you read on that platform you think is fulfilled, then tell me. Hardly anything is, because it is the unfinished business of this country

that the PLP committed to in its time. The work continues to be done. The work perhaps will never be done and someone else in a future generation will continue.

So, as has been said, 100 years from now I certainly hope the PLP is celebrated. But I also hope that we have a Bermuda that can be celebrated even more than we do now. I am positive about this country. I am positive about our future. I am positive about the work we do in this House because I believe, as an Honourable Member said, on this side we are unapologetically pursuing the vision of those people that we are going to celebrate this Sunday at our luncheon. We are going to celebrate them for the rest of the year. And I look forward to that and continuing to do the work they have sent me here to do. I would not be here without their achievement, but because . . . all of us who sit on this side would not be here if they had not walked, fallen, gotten back up and continued again. And we fell many times; but we're here! And the PLP is here because we are going to continue fulfilling the vision of 1963 unapologetically, without stopping, with the focus that we know it deserves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Deputy Premier.

Members, thank you for your participation today. This brings us to the close of day three of the economic debate on the budget. Get some rest this weekend because we are back here bright and early on Monday morning to continue into next week's debate.

The House now stands adjourned until Monday morning at ten o'clock.

*[Gavel]*

*[At 10:45 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Monday, 6 March 2023.]*

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