

JULIE GREEN—MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
Avens Operational Review
Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 26, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have questions here about Avens. When I have attended Avens AGMs in the last couple of years, the balance sheet has shown that they are in the hole or about to go into the hole.

It is my understanding that the Minister offered an operational review to Avens to assess whether they were adequately funded. I am wondering if the money that we see that is extra in residential care adults and children corresponds to the results of that operational review or whether those are different entities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We haven't put money in here to address the operational review because we only just got the operational review to us. We are working with Avens right now to analyze that report and make sure that everybody understands it. I think that there is work that we have to do, and there is work that Avens has to do. That work is under way. I am interested in, obviously, meeting with committee with Avens, together at the same time, to go through that report and help them understand some of the challenges that we both face.

In 2017-2018, we covered the shortfall to Avens from within the NTHSSA, and for 2018-2019, we are trying right now to actually quantify what the shortfall is. We have got a couple more weeks in this fiscal year that will help us figure out exactly what that cost is, and we will figure out how to cover that from within, but we can't keep doing that, obviously. This operational review is going to help us inform how we move forward, which may require some supplements.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for that answer. What is it about the report that needs this additional analysis and work? What am I missing there? Don't we pay people to write reports that we can understand? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Sure, absolutely, but as people come back with information, they do apply some principles and theories that may be beyond some of the scope of what we are currently doing and providing. In this particular case, there were recommendations about how work is provided or how work flows within Avens. They want to look at their operations to see what opportunities exist there and what that might equate to once they attempt to implement some of those things. There is work that needs to be done so that we can actually totally have a sense of what the costs will be.

In the report, there are also some suggestions that we modify our hours of care. We know that some jurisdictions use the hours of care that they have suggested, but many

or most don't. We want to make sure that, before we make decisions, we are fully aware of the consequences of those decisions and that whatever we do makes sense, both from an operational, a human, and a financial point-of-view.

We are trying to wrap our heads around the implications of some of the suggestions, and they are just that, Mr. Chair. Some of them are simply recommendations. There are some financial things that have been identified, and I think we are doing our due diligence, and we are working with our partner.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the Minister planning to share this report with the committee? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Absolutely, Mr. Chair. I am hoping to come to committee with Avens, hopefully during this sitting. I think we have a request to meet with the committee during this sitting. We just need to make sure that, when we come in, we have some of those policy questions figured out. That is what we are working on right now with Avens. My intention is to do it in this sitting, probably towards the end of this sitting, and do it in cooperation with Avens.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. That is appreciated, that there will be a meeting of all of the parties with the standing committee in the next two or so weeks.

Is it possible that the committee could receive the report ahead of time so that we are starting with the same information as our guests? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will endeavour to have that report to committee three days prior to the meeting that we schedule with them.