



PARLIAMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

State Opening and Budget Address

Second Meeting of the 2023/2024 Session

Fifth Sitting

Friday
15 December, 2023
(Pages 1-14)

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, KCMG, MBE, KC, JP, MP
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	<i>Premier</i> and Minister for Finance, Education and District Administration & Lands
Hon. André M. Ebanks, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister for Financial Services & Commerce <i>and</i> Investment, Innovation & Social Development
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, MP	Minister for Tourism & Ports
Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, MP	Minister for Health & Wellness and Home Affairs
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, MP	Minister for Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure and Transport & Development
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	Minister for Sustainability & Climate Resiliency
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	Minister for Youth, Sports and Heritage
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP	Minister for Border Control & Labour and Culture

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Franz I. Manderson, MBE, Cert Hon, JP	<i>Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service
Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, KC, JP	<i>Attorney General</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Hon. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Parliamentary Secretary to Tourism <i>and</i> Social Development, Elected Member for Savannah
Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town East
Mr. Joseph X. Hew, MP	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town North
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, NP, MP	Elected Member for George Town South
Mr. David C. Wight, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town West

INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West
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APOLOGIES

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	Elected Member for Newlands
Mr. Bernie A. Bush, MP	Elected Member for West Bay North

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
STATE OPENING AND BUDGET ADDRESS
SECOND MEETING OF THE 2023/24 SESSION
FRIDAY
15 DECEMBER, 2023
1:54P.M.
Fifth Sitting**

[Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Parliament is resumed and I call on the Honourable Deputy Premier to grace us with prayers.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier, Minister for Financial Services & Commerce and Investment, Innovation & Social Development, Elected Member for West Bay South: *Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived, we beseech thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Parliament now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations of the glory of thy name, and for the safety, honour, and welfare of the people of these Islands. Bless our sovereign, King Charles, III; William, Prince of Wales, and all the royal family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands; the Premier, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet. Ex officio Members and Members of the Parliament; the Chief Justice and members of the Judiciary, that we may be enabled, faithfully, to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for thy great name's sake.*

Let us say the Lord's Prayer together: *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

*The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace, now and always.
Amen.*

The Speaker: Please be seated.

**READING BY THE HONOURABLE
SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND AN-
NOUNCEMENTS**

The Speaker: None.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS
AND OF REPORTS**

**Report of the Standing Finance
Committee on the (Appropriation
Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023**

The Speaker: Madam Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Minister for Finance, Education, and District Administration & Lands, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Thank you Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament the Report for the Standing Finance Committee on the (Appropriation Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023.

The Speaker: So ordered. Madam Premier, do you wish to speak to it?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: Briefly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with 67(4), the Standing Finance Committee agreed that I submit to this honourable Parliament its Report and Minutes of its deliberations with respect to the (Appropriation Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023.

The Committee had its first meeting, Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, the 13th December, and it also met yesterday when its detailed deliberations were concluded. The Committee also met this morning, Mr. Speaker, to finalise and approve its report, which has just been Tabled. The Committee considered the approved appropriations for '24 and '25 budget contained in the Bill, and it also agreed various changes to the Bill during its meetings.

Mr. Speaker, as the proceedings in Finance Committee were public, I will not make any further elucidations at this point, but to say that the Committee

agreed that the report which was just laid would be the Report of the Standing [Finance] Committee for the (Appropriation Financial Years 2024 and 2025), 2023.
I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well, Madam Premier. Thank you.

**Report of the
Standing Business Committee
First Meeting of the 2023-2024 Session
of the Cayman Islands Parliament**

The Speaker: Madam Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this Parliament, the Report of the Standing Business Committee for the Meetings of the 2023 and 2024 Session of the Cayman Islands Parliament.

The Speaker: So ordered. Madam Premier, do you wish to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: No, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Thank you.

PARLIAMENT MANAGEMENT COMMISSION CAYMAN ISLANDS – ANNUAL REPORT 2022

The Speaker: Madam Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament the Parliament Management Commission Cayman Islands – Annual Report 2022.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier. Would you like to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well. Thank you.

**Ministry of District Administration & Lands –
Cayman Islands Government –
Annual Report and Financial Statements (for the
year ended 31 December 2022) -
30 April 2023**

The Speaker: Madam Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Ministry of District Administration for the year 2023.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Madam Premier, do you wish to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Sister Islands Affordable Housing
Development Corporation – Annual
Report – for the Year Ended
31 December 2022**

The Speaker: Madam Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of the honourable Parliament the Sister Islands Affordable Housing Development Corporation – Annual Report – For the Year Ended 31 December 2022.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Madam Premier, would you like to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well.

**2022 Annual Report –
Water Authority – Cayman**

The Speaker: Madam Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament the 2022 Annual Report – Water Authority – Cayman.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Madam Premier, would you like to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Ministry of Financial Services and
Commerce - Cayman Islands Government – 2021**

**Annual Report - 1 January 2021 –
31 December 2021**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2021 Annual Report of the Ministry of Financial Services and Commerce covering the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Ministry of Financial Services and
Commerce - Cayman Islands Government – 2022
Annual Report - 1 January 2022 –
31 December 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2022 Annual Report of the Ministry of Financial Services and Commerce for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Only to say, *thank you*, to the Ministry for all their hard work over both periods.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Civil Aviation Authority of The Cayman Islands –
Annual Report 2022 –
Excellence & Innovation in Aviation
Regulation – Fiscal Year Ended
31 December 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report 2022 of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Cayman Islands for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2022.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Only briefly, to thank the Authority for their great work.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Cayman Maritime – Annual Report
January – December 2022 – Maritime
Authority Of The Cayman Islands (MACI)**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report for the period January to December 2022 of the Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Only to thank the Authority for their incredible work.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Cayman Islands Monetary Authority
- 25th Anniversary - Annual Report 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report 2022 of the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority which signifies their 25th anniversary.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Just to congratulate the Monetary Authority on the incredible milestone of 25 years in operation.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Auditors Oversight Authority - Cayman Islands –
Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 December
2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2022 for the Auditor's Oversight Authority.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak there too?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Cayman Islands Stock Exchange –
Report for the Fiscal Year Ending
31 December 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Report for the Fiscal Year Ending 31 December 2022 for the Cayman Islands Stock Exchange.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Only to thank the Stock Exchange for their incredible work. The number of assets that they have under management is truly staggering.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Government of The Cayman Islands – Children
and Youth Services (CAYS) Foundation – Annual
Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2022 of the Children and Youth Services Foundation.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Would you like to speak there too?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Only to thank the foundation for their incredible work with at-risk children.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Office of the Auditor General Cayman Islands –
Follow-Up on past PAC
Recommendations 2023 – Report 1
(March 2023)**

**Report of the Standing Public Accounts
Committee on The Report of the Office of the
Auditor General: Follow-Up on past PAC
Recommendations 2023 – Report 1 (March 2023)**

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition,
Elected Member for George Town East:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament a report of the Office of the Auditor General Cayman Islands – Follow-up on past PAC recommendations 2023 – Report 1 (March 2023), together with the Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee on the Report of the Office of the Auditor General: Follow-up on past PAC recommendations 2023 – Report 1 (March 2023).

The Speaker: So ordered.

Those are two separate reports?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Would you like to speak thereto?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: No, thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Very well.

**Freedom of Information - 2022 Annual
Statistics Report**

The Speaker: The honourable elected Member for West Bay North.

An Hon. Member: Absent.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier, would you like to lay it?

[Pause]

The Speaker: It's just a matter of laying it on the Table of the House.

[Pause]

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, it's been found.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Freedom of Information - 2022 Annual Statistics Report.

The Speaker: So ordered.
Would you like to speak?

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I didn't think so.

[Laughter]

**Cayman Islands Judiciary –
Annual Report 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this Parliament the Annual Report for the Judicial Department for the relevant period ending December 2022.

The Speaker: So ordered.
Honourable Attorney General, would you like to speak?

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Mr. Speaker, just to say that the report itself is very self-explanatory. It has some very interesting information spanning from the retirement of the former Chief Justice, Sir. Anthony Smellie; the appointment of the current Chief Justice, Honourable Margaret Ramsay-Hale; and the United Kingdom Privy Council's historical sitting here. Therefore, I commend the report to Honourable Members of this House and the public in general.
I thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Honourable Attorney General.

**Commission for Standards in Public Life – The
Twenty-Third Report of the
Commission for Standards in Public Life —
1 February 2022 – 31 July 2022**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Twenty-Third Report of the Commission for Standards in Public Life — 1 February 2022 – 31 July 2022.

The Speaker: So ordered.
Would you like to speak thereto?

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, only to thank the members of the Commission for their work, and to invite Members and the public to read the report.

The Speaker: Very well.

**2022 Annual Report –
Public Service Pensions Board**

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2022 Annual Report for the Public Service Pension Board.

The Speaker: So ordered.
Would you like to speak thereto?

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Just to thank the members of the Pension Board, Ms. Jewel Evans Lindsey the Managing Director, and the board of directors for their outstanding performance over the year, and to invite Members and the public to read the report.

The Speaker: Thank you.

**STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE
MINISTERS AND MEMBERS
OF THE CABINET**

The Speaker: I have notice of a statement to be made by the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also have a section 11(5). With your permission, I'll just do it afterwards.

The Speaker: That's fine.

**The Premier
One-time Christmas Payment to
Public Service Pensioners**

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this statement is with regard to an award that we are giving to the public service pensioners for December as a one-time grant.

Mr. Speaker, this year has been a challenging time on so many fronts. Just one week ago, I rose in this honourable Parliament to deliver the Government's Budget for 2024-2025. Today, after a hearty budget debate and Finance Committee, we have reported the

resulting Appropriation Bill, and will conclude the budget process for the upcoming fiscal year when we do the Third Reading later today.

This, Mr. Speaker, has been a tremendous outcome. In recognition of this outcome, I have to give thanks to Almighty God for seeing this country through a challenging time and for the many blessings that He has graciously bestowed upon all of us. I thank my colleagues, Ministers and Official Members in the Cabinet for their stellar leadership in their respective areas of responsibility. I thank the Civil Service for their continued diligence in delivering the Government's priorities, and in particular the teams within the Ministry of Finance and the Parliament for supporting this process. Mr. Speaker, I also thank you, as immediately upon assuming your seat, you so effectively presided over the process; and I thank the Leader and other Members of the Opposition for demonstrating through their actions, their commitment to put our country first for the people of the Cayman Islands. It is this collaboration among all elected Members of our Parliament that has made today's outcome possible.

Mr. Speaker, this collaboration has also benefited many vulnerable persons across our community. The latest example of swift action taken by this Government and which, based upon the sentiments raised in the Parliament, one which I believe is fully supported by all of the Members of Parliament here today, is to provide a one-time Christmas payment to all existing public service pensioners.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy Governor mentioned it very briefly yesterday during his debate on the budget, but the announcement may have been lost in the debate. I would therefore like to offer further details at this time.

Our Government has approved a one-off Christmas payment in the amount of \$250 which will be paid to all, not some Mr. Speaker, but all persons receiving a public service pension regardless of their duration of service. I know that this token of appreciation will be welcomed, particularly for those pensioners who may not have benefited from the other programmes announced earlier this year. The Public Service Pension Board has confirmed receipt of the funds and is currently processing this payment. As a result, all existing public service pensioners, just over 2,300 retirees, will now receive this payment within their bank accounts before Christmas.

I wish to record my thanks to Ms. Jewel Evans Lindsey and her team within the Public Service Pension Board, and to the Honourable Deputy Governor, his Chief Officer, in particular—I would wish to name her—Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon, and their team within the Portfolio of the Civil Service.

To all public service retirees, we thank you for your historic contributions which have helped shape these beautiful Islands, and I hope that this one-off Christmas payment of \$250 would provide some respite over the holiday period.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

Appropriations to the Ministry of Education Explanation of “exceptional circumstance” as required under sections 11(5) and 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision)

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: With your permission, I'd like to move on to my section 11(5)s as it relates to the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, as required by section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) (PMFA), I make this statement to Members of this honourable House with respect to exceptional circumstances that transactions were made with Cabinet's approval for the Ministry of Education for the period 16th September to 7th December, 2023. Such transactions were approved pursuant to section 11(5) of the PMFA. This statement provides details of the four transactions.

EGA 4 – Public Library Services

Mr. Speaker, the Cayman Islands Government recently announced a one-time honorarium to be paid to each civil servant in December this year, in the amount of \$1,500. After considering this honorarium, the Cayman Islands Public Library Services revealed a forecasted shortfall in personnel funding of approximately \$25,000. Additionally, various health and safety repairs were identified over the last three months at various branches of this service, being the library services. In order to carry out these repairs, there was a need for an additional \$65,000.

Therefore, approval is required under section 11(5) of the PMFA to increase EGA 4 - Public Library Services by \$90,000; decrease EGA 1 - Policy Advice, Governance and Ministerial Support Services by the said sum of \$90,000.

EGA 10 – Education, Early Childhood and Support Services

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, when registration was completed for the new academic year of 2023-2024, the new students registration far exceeded the previous years. Our new entrants increased by 15 per cent when compared to the average of the last three academic years.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, educational material, increased costs associated with the one-to-one initiative, and an extension of support services were put in place to accommodate this increased school population. The cost associated with these was \$1,056,000.

Approval is being sought under section 11(5) of the PMFA to increase EGA 10 - Education, Early Childhood and Support Services by \$1,056,000;

decrease TP 93 - Public School Grants and COVID-19 Recovery Programme by \$500,000, decrease OE 12 - University of the West Indies Membership Levy by \$556,000.

CCO 1 –Teaching of Tertiary Level, Professional and Vocational Programmes

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) is forecasting a deficit for 2023 due to a sharp increase in its operating expenses for that year. The following factors have contributed to this forecasted deficit: approved cost of living adjustment (COLA) for 2022 that was carried over in 2023, increased utility costs, property and liability insurance premiums, and cost of janitorial services, increased depreciation charges, costs associated with the implementation of critical recommendations that were made by the internal audit service, increased staffing needs to deliver educational programmes, and audit recommendation to reclassify costs incurred for the implementation of the new student information system from a capital expense to an operational expense.

Approval is therefore being sought under [section] 11(5) of the PMFA to increase CCO 1 - Teaching of Tertiary Level, Professional and Vocational Programmes by \$3,400,000 and decrease EI 46 - University College of the Cayman Islands by \$3,400,000.

EI 12 – Ministry of Education

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, within two weeks of the new school year, the chiller system at the Clifton Hunter High School malfunctioned. An entire school was without air conditioning. The chiller system is about 12 years old and has been declining in its efficiency. Due to the instability of the air, a few issues have developed; excess moisture in the air has made the floors slippery where there are tiles or wooden floors. Carpeting has also developed a musky order. The paper used to print the lessons is also moist, which adversely affects the performance of the printers and photocopying machine.

Although there is routine maintenance of the chiller system, with a system wide malfunction, its replacement is now critical, Mr. Speaker. The replacement cost is estimated at \$800,000. However, due to a 10-month delivery timeline for a new chiller, at this time, funding is only required to make a 50 per cent deposit of \$400,000. The carpet would also need to be replaced due to health and safety issues at a cost of \$750,000.

Approval is being sought under section 11(5) of the PMFA to increase EI 12 - Ministry of Education by \$1,150,000 and decrease EA 161 - Submarine Cable by \$1,150,000.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Honourable Minister responsible for Infrastructure for graciously transferring these savings from his Ministry to allow the

deposit to be paid on the chiller at the Clifton Hunter High School.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to explain these exceptional circumstances that have resulted in the Supplementary Appropriations being requested by the Ministry of Education for the period of 16th September to 7th December this year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Premier.

I have also received notice of three statements to be made by the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Deputy Premier Appropriations to the Ministry of Investment, Innovation and Social Development Explanation of “exceptional circumstance” as required under section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision)

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement as to the circumstances and reasons why I, as Minister of Investment, Innovation and Social Development, had to request increases in expenditure in the 2023 Budget under section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision).

TP 41 – Financial Assistance TP 47 – Ex-Gratia Benefits to Seafarers and Veterans

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the Needs Assessment Unit is the Government's primary vehicle to distribute financial assistance to eligible Caymanian households. Approximately two-thirds of its recipients are persons over 65 years of age and persons with long-term disabilities which prevent them from engaging in gainful employment. A smaller portion of the recipients are unemployed and underemployed, and low to no income families with dependent children.

The financial support is given by the Needs Assessment Unit via Transfer Payment 41 which pays for bills such as rental housing, utilities, food, clothing, education, preschool fees, medical travel and equipment. Included within the remit of the Needs Assessment Unit are ex gratia payments made to seafarers and veterans or their surviving spouse.

TP 41 depleted at an accelerated rate for the following reasons:

- increased cost of living during the budget period; and
- an unanticipated demand from the transfer of the tourism workers stipend from the Ministry of Border Control and Labour to the Needs

Assessment Unit which occurred in the latter part of 2022.

As such, Mr. Speaker, in April 2023, Cabinet approved supplementary funding by way of section 11(5) of the PMFA to increase TP 41 by \$5,250,000, though it was acknowledged that by August or September 2023, TP 41 could be exhausted and the Ministry would return once again to request supplementary funding so that TP 41 could be sustained.

In August 2023, Cabinet approved supplementary funding for the Needs Assessment Unit by way of section 11(5) of the PMFA to increase TP 41 by \$1,900,000, so that TP 41 could fund the immediate needs of the NAU and its clients.

In October 2023, Cabinet approved supplementary funding for the Needs Assessment Unit by way of section 11(5) of the PMFA to increase TP 41 by \$3,250,000 and increased TP 47 - Ex gratia Benefits to Seafarers and Veterans by \$390,000. The supplementary funding for the NAU was required for them to continue delivering their services.

With the support of Cabinet, the Ministry increased the seafarers' and veterans' ex-gratia payment and the amount for long-term financial assistance from \$950 per month to \$1,250 per month based on the financial needs of the recipients, and the fact that these amounts have not increased for several years; yet, the cost of living has increased. This increase was accounted for in the request to Cabinet in April 2023 and has led to a deficiency in TP 41.

The supplementary funding was necessary and urgent to avoid disruption of essential services to at-risk Caymanians and clients of the NAU and taking into account the cost of living increases.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Investment, Innovation and Social Development received an increased Appropriation in amounts, just to say this collectively, of \$5,250,000 in April 2023, \$1,900,000 in August, and \$3,250,000 in October to TP 41. In addition, the Ministry received an increase in Appropriation in the amount of \$390,000 to TP 47.

Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned transactions satisfy the definition of "exceptional circumstance" given that the contributing economic factors are beyond the control of Cabinet, many of which could not have been reasonably anticipated at the enactment of the Appropriation Law for 2022, and the social impact in the cases [was] not only significant but necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the transactions approved by Cabinet for the Ministry during the 2023 period did not cause any non-compliance with the principles of responsible financial management.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may God continue to bless the Cayman Islands.

Transfer from TP 80 to TP 57

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement as to the circumstances and the reason why I, as Minister for Investment, Innovation, and Social Development, requested funding for Social Development Programmes transferred from TP 80 – Support for Business Initiatives under Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act.

TP 80 – Support for Business Initiatives, was granted a \$5 million supplementary appropriation by Finance Committee under Section 12 of the Public Management and Finance Act in March, 2022, for the purpose of funding a Business Stipend Programme for small and micro businesses and subsectors of the tourism industry affected by the delayed return of sustainable tourism levels following border reopening and/or government-mandated COVID-19 suppression measures in the Cayman Islands.

The Business Stipend Programme, which was administered by the Cayman Islands Business Development Centre, closed on the 12th December 2022, with all outstanding eligible grants distributed shortly thereafter. Following closure of the programme, TP 80 was left with a balance of approximately \$1.2 Million of which the Business Development Centre only needed \$100,000 to facilitate their departmental activities and functions for the rest of 2023. Accordingly, TP 80 had a surplus of \$1.1 Million.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), provides social work services to vulnerable persons in the community. The Children Act mandates that DCFS provide support to children in meeting basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, therapeutic services not only covered by CINICO, education, utilities, transportation and other living expenses. The budget allocation for children in state care was underfunded in 2022 and to compensate, DCFS brought forward 2023 funding to offset the shortfall. As such, the Ministry received the transfer of funding by way of Section 11(5) of the Act in the amount of \$415,000 in August from TP 80 to TP 57 to provide funding for the children who are under care orders, and to support clients to access early childhood education.

Mr. Speaker, due to the heightened cost of construction materials, as well as projects costing more than initially estimated because of unforeseen damage discovered post-commencement of repair works, funding for the Ministry's Housing Repair Programme was depleted in an accelerated fashion. Supplementary funding was requested to enable the HRA programme and the R3 Programme collectively, to address additional homes during the budget period.

As such, the Ministry received a transfer of funding by way of Section 11(5) of the Act in the amount of \$550,000 in August from TP 80 (Support for Business Initiatives) to TP 60 (Housing Repairs).

Mr. Speaker, the Children and Youth Services Foundation (CAYS), has contracted a new Manager and Deputy Manager who, with the support and the

direction of the CAYS Board, have created a new, modern, vision to enhance the services offered by CAYS and to implement this vision over the course of the next two to three years. As part of the initial stage of the new vision, CAYS propose to create a facility called The Workshop, to provide training activities to the residents in care. CAYS plan to convert existing space at the Bonaventure Home in West Bay, renovate it without causing disruption to existing services, and provide an immediate outcome to maximise the facility for the benefit of children in care.

Additionally, CAYS aim to modernise the IT system and computer equipment at both of its facilities, in order to effectively utilise resources and swifter interaction and communications necessary across the facilities. The current systems pose challenges for CAYS to be able to be agile and efficient with service delivery. As such, the Ministry received a transfer by way of Section 11(5) in the amount of \$100,000 in August from TP 80 to Children and Youth Services.

Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned reallocation satisfied the definition of exceptional circumstances for the reason I have outlined. The transactions were approved by Cabinet for the Ministry during the 2023 period, and did not cause any non-compliance with the principles of responsible financial management.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Re-appropriation of Funding Via Section 11(5) TP 80 Support for Business Initiatives, ITI 3 Digital Services Strategy, EI 78 Equity Injection

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement as to the circumstances and reasons why I, as Minister for Investment, Innovation, and Social Development, requested transfer from TP 80 – Support for Business Initiatives; ITI 3 – Digital Services Strategy; and EI 78 – Equity Injection, under Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act to facilitate shortfalls and provide additional support in several areas.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2022-2023 budget period TP 60 – Housing Repairs Appropriation, received a total of \$750,000 broken in two allotments, \$375,000 in 2022 and 2023, respectively, to benefit the HRA Programme. In June, 2022, Cabinet granted approval for the 2023 Budget Appropriation to be brought forward from the 2022 Financial Year; by this action, the full \$750,000 was made available to the programme.

In August, 2023, Cabinet approved Supplementary funding for TP 60 in the amount of \$550,000, which enabled the programme to repair another round of applicants' cases. The programme has been working steadily to complete all required variations on existing projects, and construction estimates on new projects.

At their October, 2023 meeting, the HRA Programme oversight committee approved twelve more projects and also gave an approval for a thirteenth to proceed, once funding became available to facilitate

the work. These projects were high priority and include repairs for homes that have severe leaks, termite damage, and other significant issues that require immediate attention.

As such, the Ministry received approval for Supplementary funding in accordance with Section 11(5) of the Act to decrease TP 80 by \$75,000, and increase TP 60 by \$75,000. The increase of the funds allowed HRA to cover any overages in the estimated cost of the above repairs. It is noteworthy that construction and/or renovations quite often incur additional costs as a result of unforeseen issues uncovered during the repair process; consequently, it's important for additional funds to be made available beyond the estimated cost of the repairs— hence the request for additional funding.

Mr. Speaker, in order to support a payment of \$250 to seafarers and veterans over the holiday period, and to facilitate reinstatement of “grandfathered-in” financial assistance recipients, additional funding was required for both programmes. As such, the Ministry received approval of Supplementary funding in accordance with Section 11(5) of the Act to decrease ITI 3 (Digital Services Strategy) by \$1,168,800 and increase TP 41 by \$650,550 and increase TP 47 by \$268,250.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Children and Family Services operates four residential facilities inclusive of Grand Cayman and the Brac. These facilities provide 24/7 nursing care; this includes caring for children with special needs who are on court orders to state care, social development programmes, and service lines items funds the department's annual programmes, and supports other community and clinical costs that support service delivery to clients. In order to facilitate the programme's support services, hygiene and food supplies, and maintenance of care facilities until the end of the year, additional funding was required. As such, the Ministry also received approval for supplementary funding in accordance with Section 11(5) of the Act, to increase ITI 2 – Social Development Programmes and Services in the amount of \$250,000.

Mr. Speaker, in order for the Department of Environmental Health to develop the Saint Mary's Garden Cemetery on Willie Farrington Drive in West Bay, and the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture Housing and Infrastructure to repair the roof of the Church of God Chapel, which can be used as an additional hurricane shelter in the district of West Bay, additional funding was needed for these projects. As such, the Ministry received approval for supplementary funding in accordance with Section 11(5) of the Act to decrease EI 78 – Equity Injections by \$395,000 and increase TP 76 – Assistance with Infrastructure Development in the amount of CI \$300,000; and increase EI 30 – Cemetery Vaults, Grand Cayman in the amount of \$95,000.

Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned reallocations satisfied the definition of exceptional circumstances for the reasons I've outlined. These transactions were approved by Cabinet for the Ministry during the 2023

financial period and did not cause any noncompliance with the principles of responsible financial management.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may God bless the Cayman Islands.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable deputy Premier.

I also received notice from the Honourable Minister for Tourism and Ports of his intention to make a statement.

Honourable Minister for Tourism and Ports Section 11(5) Appropriations

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Minister of Tourism & Ports, Elected Member for George Town Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to make a statement in accordance with Section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act in relation to the Section 11(5) Appropriation during the 2023 financial year.

Mr. Speaker, EA 164 – Central Scranton Park, was increased by \$300,000 in order to assist with the construction of a wishing well, demolition of a building, replacement of on-site signs, pond analysis, landscape architecture, retrofitting of an existing building, and the design of the Central Scranton Park. This increase was funded by a similar decrease in TP 67 – Sports and Culture Tourism Programmes Assistance.

The Appropriation TP 12 – Tourism Scholarships, was increased by \$400,000 in order to assist with the shortfall which is driven by an increase in demand, together with the increase in scholarship awards per student, per annum, up to \$30,000. This brings the award in line with the Ministry of Education's Scholarship Award. This increase was funded by a similar decrease in TP – 67 Sports and Cultural Tourism Programme Assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the concept designs for the Waterfront Tourism Experience Project require the securing of an additional adjoining piece of land that the Cabinet has approved to be leased. EA 159 – Waterfront Tourism Experience was increased by \$250,000 in order to assist with the lease of the parcel and to meet the needs of the design contract for 2023. This increase was funded by a similar decrease in TP 67 – Sports and Culture Tourism Programmes Assistance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister.

I also received notice from the Honourable Minister for Health, Wellness and Home Affairs of her intention to make two statements.

Minister for Health & Wellness and Home Affairs The Poinciana Rehabilitation Centre

Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, Minister for Health & Wellness and Home Affairs, Elected Member for Prospect: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for allowing me to bring to the attention of this honourable Parliament the details of two appropriation changes which were approved by Cabinet from the Ministry of Health and Wellness in accordance with Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act 2020, during the 2023 financial year.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet approved supplementary funding under Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act (PMFA) in the amount of \$1.7 million in September, 2023. This funding was to ensure that adequate capital funding is available for the completion of the Poinciana Rehabilitation Centre in fiscal year 2023.

The Poinciana Rehabilitation Centre, formerly referred to as the long-term residential mental health facility, is being established to provide residents of the Cayman Islands with serious and persistent mental illness with holistic care, in a safe and secure environment, with the prime objective of integration back into society. The construction of the 50,000-plus gross square feet building will form part of the continuum of mental health services within the Cayman Islands which aims to empower people to achieve optimal well-being.

Mr. Speaker, the project has faced increased cost due to several factors, resulting in the initial estimated cost at the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage being increased from CI\$16.2 million, to a current projected capital cost to completion of \$21.5 million. The original cost plan at the OBC stage was based on the description of the property as being to standard residential specifications, while the final development has involved significant specialised specifications of constructions and fixtures and finishes, as well as being constructed to higher hurricane standards than would be expected for standard residential properties.

The scope of works has also increased, with the floor areas of the cottages being increased from 3,725 square feet to 3,948 sq. ft., and the main building from 19,216 sq. ft. to 19,410 sq. ft. Significant changes to the site works have also been made, and in particular, the change from basic perimeter fencing to an underground perimeter detection system. These items, as well as an escalation in building costs resulting from increased building activity in the Cayman Islands, combined with supply-chain issues and building materials shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and other factors, are the primary drivers of the change orders that have increased the overall project costs.

Mr. Speaker, there were also several other key-changes to the project from the OBC stage. The OBC proposed the initial construction of seven cottages and the addition of two cottages when demand required them; however, post the completion of the OBC, it was decided to construct all nine cottages in the initial phase to benefit from cost-savings, and to

minimise disruption to the health programmes once the facility opened. This change was approved by Cabinet in August of 2018.

The completion timeline of the project has been affected by several factors. Initially, due to delays encountered with tender packages relating to enabling the main building works and the cottages clusters; and latterly, due to disruptions resulting from COVID-19. The various travel, shipping, and manufacturing disruptions resulted from COVID-19, and the subsequent lockdowns and social distancing restrictions since March, 2020 had a detrimental impact on the construction industry, severely impacting both material supplies and labour. This extended the construction period. The project is currently awaiting final Building Control Unit (BCU) inspections to be concluded, so that the facility can be handed over to the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, the additional funding allocated under Section 11(5) of the PFMA is the expected balance to complete the facility, and was reallocated from savings under appropriation HES 1 – Policy Advice and Ministerial Services to the Minister of Health and Wellness within the Ministry's 2023 budget allocations.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry also received approval under Section 11(5) of the PMFA in December, 2023, of \$100,000 to enable the Department of Environmental Health to carry out a second bulk-waste campaign during December, 2023, in line with the traditional clean-ups that our people are accustomed to. Several representations were made to the DEH regarding holding another clean-up campaign, which was approved from December 4th for two weeks only. An initial bulk-waste campaign was carried out in May of this year ahead of the Hurricane Season, in an effort to encourage residents to prepare their properties ahead of time, thereby reducing the amount of debris that could be generated by a severe-weather system.

Mr. Speaker, the additional funding allocated under Section 11(5) of the PMFA was reallocated from savings under Appropriation TP 73 – Other Health and Cultural Related Programmes within the Ministry's 2023 budget allocations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Cadet Corps

Hon. Sabrina T. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As required in accordance with Section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision), thank you for allowing me this second opportunity to bring to the attention of this honourable Parliament details of two appropriation changes approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Home Affairs, in accordance to Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act 2020, in 2023.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on the following approvals made by Cabinet:

1. Supplementary funding for the Cayman Islands Cadet Corps;

2. Supplementary funding for the Bridge Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet approved Supplementary funding pursuant to the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) Section 11(5), in the 2023 appropriations [to] the Ministry of Home Affairs, by increasing output group NGS 90 – Cayman Islands Cadet Corps Committee in the amount of CI \$75,000. This approval was for the supplementary funding in accordance with Section 11(5) of the PMFA, to meet expenses incurred as a result of stipends for the essential voluntary staff within the Cadet Corps, which is facilitated through a Purchase Agreement between Cabinet and the Cayman Islands Cadet Corps Committee. This was to increase NGS 90 – Cayman Islands Cadet Corps Committee in the amount of CI \$75,000.

Mr. Speaker, with very limited full-time staff the Cadet Corps is dependent on volunteers for assistance with critical activities and supervision of cadets. Since 2016, there has been a significant growth in the number of cadets enrolled in the programme. In this regard, the level of supervision required to ensure safe and efficient delivery of cadet activities, has also increased; however, Mr. Speaker, the purchase agreement for the allocation of volunteer stipends has remained at \$25,000 since its implementation approximately twenty years ago. This allocation, Mr. Speaker, is no longer sufficient to both attract and maintain adequate levels of volunteer staff in light of governments policy to continuously grow the Cadet Corps and advance the strategic impact of the organisation.

Mr. Speaker, as required for the essential operations of the Cadet Corps, and the management of increasing levels of cadets, Cabinet approved the supplementary funding as it is critically needed to ensure the Corps is able to meet costs associated with paying and retaining its volunteers for the remainder of 2023. As previously stated, Mr. Speaker, this request was made and approved pursuant to Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act, 2020.

Bridge Foundation

Hon. Sabrina T. Turner: Finally, Mr. Speaker, Bridge Foundation.

The approval, Mr. Speaker, was a supplementary funding requested to transfer appropriations by reducing HAF 1 – Advice and Support to the Minister of Home Affairs in the amount of \$100,000, to increasing TP 69 – Support for the Bridge Foundation, in the same amount of \$100,000 [for] operating expenditure in the 2023 appropriations.

Mr. Speaker, the Bridge Foundation is a half-way house, or substance recovery centre, for those seeking to achieve or retain sobriety from drug or alcohol abuse, in a supportive residential facility. Substance recovery centres have a vital role in criminal justice and public health systems. For example, Mr. Speaker, they

provide critical services in conjunction with key government agencies. Their function is interlinked with the service of Judicial Administration, His Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service, Department of Community Rehabilitation, and Department of Counselling Services amongst others. Without the recovery centres, there would be a critical gap in services which would likely fall on government to fill.

Mr. Speaker, this request was made in order for the Bridge Foundation to remain operational. Without the transfer of funding, the Bridge Foundation would have been unable to continue operations past April of 2023. Should the Bridge Foundation not be in operation, Mr. Speaker, there would be a significant public health and safety concern. The absence of this centre could contribute to continued substance abuse and crime, which has secondary financial and social effects for government and the community.

In order to meet the additional costs, Cabinet approved transfer of funds in the amount of \$100,000 to TP 69 – Support for the Bridge Foundation from HAF 1 – Advice and Support to the Minister of Home Affairs, pursuant to Section 11(5) of the public Management and finance Act 2020 (Revision). Mr. Speaker, the proposed appropriation change is not expected to impact government's forecasted financial results for the 2023 financial year, as the appropriation change is merely a transfer of funds within the same operation expense appropriation category, and does not increase overall planned expenditure.

As previously stated, Mr. Speaker, all requests were made and approved pursuant to 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act, 2020.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister.

I have also received notice from the Minister for Planning, Agriculture, [Housing, Infrastructure, Transport and Development] of his intention to make seven statements— but, before people “grown” in here, most of them are, mercifully, short.

[Laughter]

**Minister for Planning, Agriculture, Housing,
Infrastructure and Transport & Development
Section 11(5) (Various)**

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister for Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure and Transport & Development, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, statement on the appropriation funds in accordance with Section 11(5) of the Public Management Finance Act for the Ministry's projects budgeted in 2023.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet approved the re-appropriation of \$1,325,000 from EA 160 – Design and Construction of a New Civic Centre (Northward) within the

Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport, and Development. These re-appropriations included:

- An increase in allocation to EA 78 – Government Administration Building;
- An increase in allocation to EA 151 – Ramps and Jetties; and
- An increase in allocation to EA 153 – Parks Upgrades.

This approval had no impact on the Government's forecast financial results and position for the 2023 financial year, as it was merely a re-allocation of appropriated funds.

**Religious/Community Spaces
to be used as Emergency Shelters**

Mr. Speaker, on December 5, 2023 pursuant to section 11 (5) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision), Cabinet approved CI\$745,000 in supplementary funding to complete work being done on religious/community gathering spaces to be used as emergency shelters. This will see an increase in Transfer Payment TP 76 – Assistance for Infrastructure Development by CI\$745,000 for the 2023 Financial Year.

**National Community
Enhancement Project**

Mr. Speaker, on November 8, 2023, Cabinet approved CI\$600,000 to fund the 2023 National Community Enhancement Project (NICE) to run during December 4th -15th, 2023, thereby, increasing the appropriation PAH 4 - Management of Public Recreational Facilities and Cemeteries under Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure to fund the programme for 2023.

National Housing Development Trust (NHDT)

Mr. Speaker, on August 30, 2023, Cabinet approved the NHDT to incorporate housing repairs as a part of their mandate thereby increasing their existing allocation under Equity Injection EI 57 – National Housing Development Trust in the amount of CI\$500,000 from Executive Asset EA 161 – Submarine Cable. This approval will have no impact on the Government's forecast financial results and position for the 2023 financial year, as it is merely a re-allocation of appropriated funds.

Expansion of Edna Moyle Primary School

Mr. Speaker, I rise before the honourable House to report on the approval of the Cabinet, pursuant of section 11(5), the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) to reduce the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport and Development appropriation for the

financial year 2023, EA 161 – Submarine Cable by \$50,000 and increasing EI 12 – Ministry of Education appropriation for the financial year 2023 by \$50,000.

Major Road Works and Infrastructure

Mr. Speaker, in the December 2023 session, in accordance with section 11(5) of the Public Management Finance Act (2020 revision) Cabinet approved the reallocation of funds for the funding of the major road works and infrastructure on two occasions. First, Mr. Speaker, there was an increase of \$3 million to the budget allocated for EA 148 – Major Road Works, accompanied by a corresponding decrease of \$3 million from the budget allocation EA 161 – Submarine Cable.

Likewise, we later increased EA – 148 Major Road Works in the amount of \$2.4 million and decrease EA 161– Submarine Cable in the amount of \$2.41 million. The necessary adjustments will ensure that our road infrastructure project remains on track in spite of the project's financial shortfall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Well done.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I've also received notice of the intention to make a statement from the Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor Section 11 (5) Appropriations

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

As required by Section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act. I make this statement to Members of this honourable House with respect to the exceptional circumstances transactions that were approved by the Cabinet for the Portfolio of the Civil Service for the period December 2023. Such transactions were approved pursuant to Section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act.

Expansion on One-off Christmas Payment to Pensioners

Mr. Speaker, this statement provides details of the aforementioned transactions; \$577,500, funding for a one-off Christmas payment to pensioners. The Honourable Premier just gave some details, but allow me to expand a bit.

In December 2023, the Government extended a one-time special payment of \$250 for all persons receiving any form of public service pension. This one-off Christmas payment is being processed this month ahead of Christmas for all existing public service pensioners. Mr. Speaker, some 2,310 public service pensioners are benefiting from this one-off payment this

month being processed by the Public Service Pension Board. Therefore, in accordance with section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act, the Cabinet authorised the addition of \$577,500 for OE 19 – Ex-Gratia Recipients Plan Payments.

Increase Uplift Ex-Gratia Payment

A second Section 11(5): \$160,280 for funding to increase uplift ex gratia payments from prior minimum of \$950 to the new minimum of \$1,250.

Mr. Speaker, the Portfolio's second request for supplementary funding, which was approved by Cabinet, benefited eligible public service pensioners by uplifting the minimum pension amount from \$950 to \$1,250 effective December 2023. The eligibility criteria for receiving an uplifted pension is governed by the Public Service Pensions (Ex-Gratia Uplift Payments) Regulations and the recent amendment to these regulations, the Public Service Pensions (Ex-Gratia Uplift Payments) (Amendment) Regulations, provides the new minimum uplift threshold of \$1,250 for eligible persons.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware the uplift came about as a result of Private Members' Motion No. 7 of 2023-2024 which was unanimously passed at the first Meeting of the 2023-2024 Session of Parliament. It has been the practice historically, where possible, to link the sums payable to those receiving long-term financial assistance, to the sums payable as a minimum monthly pension for eligible pensioners who served at least 10 years before retiring. This funding helps ensure that Caymanians who work for at least 10 years of pensionable service can live with dignity in retirement. By implementing the ex-gratia uplift payment to public service pensioners, we effectively facilitated the government policy objectives of bringing equity between amounts paid to those on long-term financial assistance and the minimum sums paid to our long-serving pensioners, ensuring that they can enjoy their retirement as comfortably as possible.

Mr. Speaker, 589 public service pensioners qualified and are benefiting from the uplift that commenced in December via the programme capably facilitated by the Public Service Pension Board.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the aforementioned exceptional circumstance transactions related to the initiative that the Government deemed paramount to maintaining the purchasing power for our pensioners. Both the ex-gratia uplift and the one-off Christmas payment of \$250 were requested and approved by Cabinet. The Portfolio of the Civil Service and the Public Service Pension Board are working collaboratively to deliver these payments in December 2023.

Mr. Speaker, even with the inclusion of these unforeseen expenses, the Government has maintained compliance with the principles of responsible financial management. I express gratitude to the Government for their thoughtful support in addressing the various

needs within our community. This particular incident underscores the Government's unwavering commitment to assisting Cayman's elderly population in mitigating the impact of inflation, which gained momentum in the summer of 2022.

On behalf of public service pensioners, I extend my sincere thanks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Deputy Governor,

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

THIRD READING

Appropriation (Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023

The Speaker: I call on the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance to move the Third Reading of the Appropriation (Financial Years 2023 and 2024) Bill, 2023.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill which has been shortly entitled the Appropriation (Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023, as amended by the Finance Committee, be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Appropriation (Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023, as amended by Finance Committee, be read a third time and passed.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. The Bill is accordingly passed.

Agreed: The Appropriation (Financial Years 2024 and 2025) Bill, 2023 was given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: Madam Premier, before I call on you to move the adjournment of this honourable House sine die, I just wish to first thank your good self and indeed all Members of Parliament for the courtesy you have shown the Chair over the course of this, my first Meeting of Parliament.

I also want to thank the Parliament staff led by the Clerk for their courtesy to me and their steadfast courtesy and assistance to all Members of Parliament.

I want to wish for all of you within these Chambers and all of you outside these Chambers, in particular, my constituents, a blessed Christmas season and a happy and prosperous New Year from all of us here in Parliament.

Madam Premier, the adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the House, we graciously accept your kind Christmas greetings. It leaves for me to now move the adjournment of this honourable House, to be adjourned sine die.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House do now adjourn sine die.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Parliament is adjourned sine die.

At 3.11 p.m. the House stood adjourned sine die.