

# **HANSARD**

**NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, February 9, 2012**

**Committee Room 1**

**Organizational Meeting**

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**VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Gary Burrill (Chair)  
Jim Boudreau (Vice-Chair)  
Michele Raymond  
Howard Epstein  
Lenore Zann  
Hon. Wayne Gaudet  
Harold Theriault  
Alfie MacLeod  
Chuck Porter

In Attendance:

Kim Langille  
Legislative Committee Clerk

Gordon Hebb  
Legislative Counsel

WITNESSES

Veterans Emergency Transition Services

Jim Lowther, President

Roland Lawless, Vice-President

David MacLeod, Director of Communications and Policy



House of Assembly  
*Nova Scotia*

**HALIFAX, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2012**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**9:00 A.M.**

CHAIR

Gary Burrill

VICE-CHAIR

Jim Boudreau

THE CHAIR: Order, please. We will call our meeting to order and welcome our guests from Veterans Emergency Transition Services. I was really glad, as the chairman of this committee, to be able to participate last summer with Veterans Emergency Transition Services in a press conference about veteran homelessness that was held here in the city to bring their work and their campaign more to the forefront. We're really glad to have them at the Veterans Affairs Committee here today to present about the particular part of the work of veteran support that they're providing leadership in.

As we were just saying before, our format is we will have you make a presentation and we'll follow that with conversation and questions and see where that leads us and see how long it takes us. Our only other business is to deal with a couple of administrative things afterward which we'll do somewhere after your part of the meeting is over.

My name is Gary Burrill, I'm the chairman of our committee. I represent Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley. Perhaps we could just introduce ourselves to you first.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: Perhaps we could have our guests introduce themselves and begin the presentation.

JIM LOWTHER: First I want to say thank you very much for actually having us, we really appreciate that. Exposure is number one when you're trying to get the word out. My name is Jim Lowther, I'm the president of VETS Canada which stands for Veterans Emergency Transition Services. We started almost a year and a half ago, when I ran into a homeless vet that I sailed in the Navy with.

I'll just give you a quick brief. I went to Veterans Affairs and they basically said that we didn't have homeless vets in Nova Scotia, but I had two of my friends who were homeless so it all started from there. So far to date, we've gotten about 13 veterans off the streets here alone in Halifax. I'll hand it over to our vice-president Roland Lawless, and he can say a few words.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Hi, my name is Roland Lawless, I'm a 20-year veteran of the Army. I spent my whole career as a vehicle tech, beating and banging around in tanks. I came on board in October of last year, my doctor advised me maybe I should meet with Jim Lowther, he's doing some great work, so I went and met with him and it has been straight ahead since then.

About a week and a half after I met with him I was on my way to Ottawa to meet with the Minister of Veterans Affairs and be recognized in the House of Commons for the work that VETS has been doing. Since that we've been up and down in meetings trying to get help from anybody and everybody who will listen to us and get our word out, eyes and ears, everybody looking and listening to find the veterans so we can get them off the streets. That's me.

JIM LOWTHER: I want to introduce our Director of Communications and Policy, David MacLeod, who we just elected to our board last night.

DAVID MACLEOD: Good morning. As introduced, I'm David MacLeod. I am a 27-year veteran with the Canadian Military. I spent 17 years in the infantry and my specialty was reconnaissance and I spent another 10 years working in intelligence. I was medically released from the Canadian Forces on February 24, 2010 and as mentioned, I am the newest member - the absolute newest member. Naturally, I was told last night quickly after I was elected, you have a presentation to do tomorrow morning, so the games have begun already.

Why don't we start with our presentation. I wasn't quite sure if Jim was going to be here so I prepared the presentation on behalf of Jim.

VETS is a 100 per cent volunteer organization. We're not funded by anyone and we intend to keep it that way, 100 per cent arm's length if it all possible, apolitical - and that's very important - and, of course, non-profit. We see ourselves as veterans helping veterans and that's why we have to keep ourselves 100 per cent arm's length, if at all possible, from

government organizations. Many veterans that we deal with feel that it's very important that they're not seen or used by other entities.

This is what we do in general, the aid and comfort to at-risk veterans. We feel this is very important because at-risk is very broad. It's an activity-oriented job - people that are already on the streets as well as a preventive role. We see ourselves trying to prevent as many at-risk veterans as possible from falling through the cracks. There are certain policies that exist right now that may see an increased number of veterans falling through the cracks.

With an organization that is only a year old, we're already national and we're expanding very carefully across Canada. What we mean by 'carefully' is we don't just jump into a community and start. We have to make sure that we have the right people in the right place, that they have the right connections and the right credibility to operate on the streets.

We're international in that we're part of an expanding network. There are many, many veterans on the streets in the United Kingdom; the estimates are in the tens of thousands. In the United States, although they wave the flag quite well, they still have veterans on the streets as well, but once again, there are no hard numbers. We're going to try and remedy some of that, and, of course, our chapters are spreading across the country.

We have two levels of operations, one is tactical and that is right on the ground. The next is strategic and that is the larger governance issues that we're facing right now. With an organization that is growing very quickly, one of the reasons I was brought to the board was to provide strategic guidance. Before, it was, bluntly, very much hand to mouth. You'd see a problem, try and solve the problem, move on; there was no long-term plan. We have now started to put one together, even before I was the director.

We have many strengths and many challenges, just like any organization. Our board members have a lot of strength because there is a lot of credibility. Jim walks the streets and gets things done. Rollie was on the street, he understands how things work. Then there's me; I've done things at a much higher level so I'm used to doing things that way. A lot of our volunteers are people who have a great deal of credibility on the street. Our outreachability, because of their credibility on the street, is what allows us to do what we do.

Our challenges are the same as any other organization - funding - but housing is a problem as well. Trying to find a place for our veterans is a real problem. We're working on our charitable status, but it has become cumbersome. If you have questions about that, I'll let Jim tell you the entire ugly story of the charitable status problem.

That ends our brief. If you have any questions, I'll hand you over to Jim.

THE CHAIR: Leonard.

LEONARD PREYRA: Thank you very much for your presentation. I must say this is a bit of a revelation to me. I represent downtown Halifax and Veterans Memorial Hospital is in my constituency and there are a lot of veterans so I'm disappointed that there have been so many cases. Certainly, as members of the Legislature, we are also available to support in those situations. We have a general issue with homelessness, and in downtown Halifax, in particular, but we have some experience in that.

I have a question for you about what you've found so far in terms of what are the precipitating issues. For example, in my constituency, we know that it is connected to addictions and mental health and other issues that drive people to it or just a question of skills not being recognized and credentials, those kinds of things. I'm wondering if you have any kind of early data on what it is that you find among veterans who are in this situation as the main reason for their situation. I know you mentioned housing, but how do we deal with that?

JIM LOWTHER: What we find is, we did 10 years of peacekeeping. Peacekeeping in the sense that Canadians were put into a situation where other countries were trying to kill each other, so they were shooting at us as well. We were trying to do peacekeeping to stop them from killing each other, which was to us the same as war. Then we did 10 years of war, so we have a lot of veterans who are mentally or physically disabled. PTSD is huge with our vets out there. They don't really trust government. They're kind of forced to get out of the military; they don't want to, they're not ready. It's the only thing a lot of them know. It's a spiral. They have to get out of the military due to injury so they're looking around going, what do we do now? It's a spiral. With PTSD it's a lot of anger. There's so much to it that a lot of them eventually wind up on the street because they burn through their family, relatives, friends and then they're left alone. That's what we've been seeing out on the streets.

The other problem is that we have no place to take them. We spent 36 hours in the ER with one of our vets who was suicidal and they were going to turn him away. He was homeless and we said, no, I don't think you're going to turn him away. He had a diagnosis and they just said, you know, he has been here too much, he's got to go. We spent 36 hours in the ER until they actually helped him. They finally helped him and he's doing well now, but that's what it is; it's just like, go away. So that's a problem we're facing.

There are a lot of hospitals around to help veterans, but veterans are classed, so if you're World War II or Korea, well then you can go to certain hospitals. If you're not, you can't even get in. So there might be 25 beds, but they won't give them to you, so there's nothing for an emergency. What we wind up doing is when we find a vet, we give them shelter right off the bat and if I have to pay for that myself, I do. We get them shelter, food, clothing, if needed, and then we pull Veterans Affairs in. Veterans Affairs will do a situation report, along with ours. We pull in the province - the province has been great;

Community Services has called us a few times - to try to access everything we possibly can to help get these guys on track again. We point them in the right direction; the direction that they need to go and we're the only ones out there doing it. There is no other organization that works from the ground up. We've been really successful. Our five-year plan is not to be here. I hope I answered your question. I probably went into too much detail.

LEONARD PREYRA: In fact, I'd like a little more detail. What supports are in place now for veterans who, for whatever reason, want to make the transition from military life to civilian life and what supports are there for families of those veterans?

ROLAND LAWLESS: Minimal at best. There is stuff that is coming on line and there are a few programs that are on line, but there is no transitional program in place.

LEONARD PREYRA: So DND or Veterans Affairs don't have an exit kind of plan, say, when you're leaving . . .

JIM LOWTHER: They say they do. They have the IPSU, which is Integrated Personnel Support Unit. They say that's a one-stop shop, which in theory sounds wonderful, but really it hasn't been because a lot of them are located on the base. There's not a lot for families at all. For any soldier dealing with PTSD or mental, physical, I think the family really needs just as much therapy - if not more - than the serving or retired member; they don't have a clue the kind of stuff that we've gone through. So to answer your question, not a lot, it has been really hard.

DAVID MACLEOD: Let's clarify. If you're talking about an at-risk person there is hardly anything. If you were the nice, clean-cut veteran with a very clean and simple wound then yes, they'll get rid of you, but they'll do it appropriately. For example, when I transitioned out I was given six months where I could work with any company or organization and the Canadian Government paid for me, they gave me my regular paycheque. I went to work with the Coady International Institute, that's a decent place to go and my wife was going to work at St. F.X. so it all worked out relatively well. But I was a clean and simple example, I was exactly what they want because I had no addictions, I had no problems, I had a very simple, clear-cut medical problem that was directly related to a combat wound and they were more than happy to take me through that system.

But if you're suffering from addictions, if you are suffering from workplace violence - and that is a problem with PTSD, you become incredibly aggressive. It's a wonderful thing for a soldier to be incredibly aggressive as long as you can focus that on the battlefield, but when you bring it home and you're perhaps having problems with your supervisor or your family, then there are huge cracks where a soldier can and does fall through.

THE CHAIR: Just before we go to our next question, Jim and Rollie, I want to introduce you to Junior Theriault, who just came in, the representative for Digby-Annapolis. Becky.

BECKY KENT: Actually, I have quite a few questions, but I'm going to start with thanking you very much for coming in, first of all. This is certainly enlightening and it's helpful for us to be aware of what you're doing. In our constituencies we certainly - I can tell you I do in Eastern Passage - deal with quite a few veterans and their families in various capacities, including some of this situation. It's good to know what you're doing.

My first question is, are these people self-identifying? Are you out searching for people? How are you finding out about those who are in need? I know that's probably a big question.

JIM LOWTHER: Not really, it's pretty easy actually. What we first started doing was, I went to a Sunday supper to help volunteer at St. Andrew's Church and that's when I ran into a friend of mine who I thought was there volunteering too. I went there because my wife told me - I was having bad PTSD, I have PTSD as well - to get out and do something, go help in the community, so I did. When I took him to Veterans Affairs they said there were no homeless veterans and so I said, really and then I decided to look. I got a couple of guys together and said, let's go looking and then the floodgates opened, it was like they were everywhere. The more we started helping, the more we started talking to people downtown and talking to Community Services and slowly getting Veterans Affairs on board. Doctors started calling us saying, we have a veteran in our office, can you possibly help them? Community Services called, we have a veteran here who's homeless, is there anything you can do? We saw you on the news. We had a lot of media exposure across the country, a lot of radio here in Nova Scotia, so a lot of people saw us and that has helped a lot.

We still do our ground support stuff where we actually go out and have a look around and talk because that's the only way you can actually learn is by talking to people who are on the street. When they see us - the police, we talk to the police, the guys on patrol, they all know us and that's the way it should be. If they come across a veteran they give us call - Jim, we've got a guy down here, can you come down.

One thing with us is when we get that call, we're down there, 15 or 20 minutes we're there, we're helping. A lot of other organizations, it's days. These people don't have days, they need help now. It's not as hard as you would think. I hope I answered your question.

BECKY KENT: Yes, you definitely did. Again, I have several so I'll just do a few and then we'll share some time if you would come back to me, Mr. Chairman. I'm interested in knowing a little bit more about how you're operating and generally what your budget would be, associated to mostly where you're spending your money and are you



successfully getting the donations that you need? Obviously there is a need for what you do. I understand your rationale with staying away from the government support, I get that, we deal with that a lot with anyone associated with the military and their association then to a government.

I'm curious more about your operations, and the reason I am is I think about as much as I know that we would all love for you not to have a role in five years, the more effective you become, the more likely it is that your need is going to grow for a little while and will your donation pot continue to manage the financial needs that you're facing as an organization to meet this gap?

JIM LOWTHER: We've definitely had a lot of donations over the year, people just donating \$25 here and just word of mouth. We've donated a lot of our own money and the way I look at it is that in my life, I've spent money on a lot of really dumb things. This isn't dumb. This is something that when you're helping a fellow brother or sister - really, that's what we've been doing so far. We do raise money, we have people raising money for us in the Valley, and at veterans' organizations all over the country, they're raising money, but money is definitely an issue.

Being tied to a government - I guess we would definitely accept government donations, but being tied to the government, I don't think it would be as effective because we wouldn't be able to work the way we work because they would want to try to control what we do. What we do is simple, straightforward, it's not hard, it's not rocket science. We get out there, we help each other and that's it.

The donation thing, it's coming. Once we get our charitable status we have a lot of people who say, as soon as you get your charitable status we're going to help you out, we're going to help you with finances, money, but we have David here and David's pretty on the ball so he'll be rattling some chains. Right, buddy? We'll sell his medals.

BECKY KENT: Without taking any further time on questions, Mr. Chairman, that charitable status issue, can you give us a version of what you're facing just so it may elicit some more questions?

JIM LOWTHER: We put in charitable status probably a year ago, straightforward, we thought, straightforward, this is what we're doing. It went in, three months, four months and then it came back and we didn't have a line filled out right so we put it in again. Then it came back again.

BECKY KENT: Is this federal or provincial?

JIM LOWTHER: Federal. Then it came back again, we didn't have something else put in right. We've just put it in again and we got a letter confirming that yes, it's in, it's going to be six months to get it to this person and then another six months to get it to that

person. We're trying to get hold of a few people, higher-ups that we've been working with, to maybe push it along a little bit. I don't really know how that works.

One thing is over the past year we've been dealing with Ottawa quite a bit with the minister; we've met with the minister a couple of times. He came down from Ottawa to meet with us here, we met him for an hour and a half, the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Rollie went to Ottawa and met the minister. Everybody seems to want to be seen with us which is great, but it's definitely challenging because we need more than that right now. We need some temporary housing for our veterans, it's as simple as that. When we find one we put him up, we put him up in a motel, a hotel, or anywhere we can and it costs a lot of money to do that. If we had transition housing, it would be a lot easier.

DAVID MACLEOD: If you're looking for a key way to actually help vets from a political standpoint, the best way to do that would be to network and to cut the red tape. I don't just mean cut it - I mean slash it because our response time is quick. If we can respond quickly to the police officer on the ground, social worker on the ground, the hospital, what have you, and then have the resources to cut the red tape, it means we can respond even faster. It means that we could pull these people off the street far faster. Let's not forget, when you have a veteran who is on the street who goes to a Nova Scotia hospital, he is absorbing Nova Scotia's resources. These resources should be expended by the federal government, so it's in the best interests of the province to help us along - of all provinces, to be honest with you. So if you really want to help, cut that red tape or address the appropriate federal organization or agency, if they're willing to listen.

JIM LOWTHER: What we've been finding, too, is that one thing with serving members and veterans is they're skilled. They're educated, they're skilled and once they get back on their feet, it really doesn't take them long to get working again because that's all they want to do. They want to work again; they want to feel that pride. In the military, Canadians, that's what we do. We have that pride of wearing the uniform and being proud to be Canadian and helping other countries and helping people, and that's what we're used to. So when you come back home, what do you do? You're out of the military - it's like, well, who can I help? It doesn't take long to get them to transition back to being citizens, normal taxpaying citizens.

THE CHAIR: Michele, before we go to you, I just want to welcome Gary Zwicker to the meeting this morning. Michele.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Listen, I'm sorry - as I say, I'm going to have to go early so I hope you don't mind me barraging with questions a little bit. There is this constant frustration with a reference to veterans because there are these two classes of veterans; there are the traditional veterans and there are the new veterans. There seem to be so many supports, which the federal government has put in place and the government has put in place over many, many years for the traditional veterans who, I suppose, are veterans of a

period of time when everybody was at war. Then you have the new veterans and I don't know if there is a terminology for that at all.

You talk about the difficulty of identifying people. It sounds as though you're almost walking around looking for people; you're getting people reported in, all the rest of it. I certainly know my experience with friends who were veterans of the Merchant Navy was that they really kind of wanted to go off and be by themselves and even once they became aware that there was some support that they hadn't been identified as veterans, they sometimes didn't want to be gathered into that again, so you're really dealing with this.

One of the things that I know is that the federal government has given huge amounts of support to the Legions over the years and are they even a point of contact? Are they even a place where there is a CAP site, where there is an e-mail address, where there is something that people know that they can be contacted, if nothing else? I mean, I know that they have become social clubs over the years, but is there a role for them with the new veterans? I mean, there are various organizations that - and maybe the forces already do this, but I know some universities, for instance, when people leave the university they give them a lifelong e-mail address, so no matter what, your mail is here. Can the Legions function that way? Can they be a phone number? Can they be that clearance, once needed? Is there any move towards that? Would that be of any help?

JIM LOWTHER: First off, there are some really good Legions. In British Columbia, they're funding a program called the Veterans Transition Program and that's just absolutely wonderful. Dr. John Whelan and myself and our board were trying to bring the Veterans Transition Program here. The problem with the Legion is, yes, they get millions and millions of dollars - they say they don't, but they do. There are not a lot of veterans in the Legion. It's made up of - and I think the stats are roughly 78 per cent civilians who have never worn a uniform, so they don't really understand a lot about the new veteran. They think the classic veteran is this World War II/Korea and it has been pretty hard pulling them along. But slowly, I think, you know . . .

MICHELE RAYMOND: Is this something that the Forces could be engaged in doing, say, just handing them an e-mail address or a post office address and saying, this is your Legion where you go to? Is this something you get the Forces to do?

JIM LOWTHER: They won't go to the Legion. The reason why is because the Legion typically was made up of the bar, that kind of thing. A lot of newer, younger veterans are just not into that. They have families; they're just not into that so they would never go there. That's why there are so many different veteran organizations popping up.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Something else that you mentioned - and I know this is a huge issue - is PTSD. For a lot of new veterans, in fact, it seems to be a whole different story and that's causing a lot of what you're talking about. I mean, despite the skills and

everything, it's leaving people sort of faring. You also showed that concentration - an awful lot of our new veterans do come from the Maritime Provinces, as I understand it. Now is there any kind of common - I mean, I know a lot of people with economic issues over the years have sent people to the Forces as a place to get a good education and a trade and, you know, it's a way into the world. But is there any sort of common profile; is there anything you can look at, before people ever go into the Forces, that you can say, these are the things that may make people vulnerable when they leave?

JIM LOWTHER: That is huge. Even to open up that can, that's 40 years of research. I mean, I totally understand what you're saying. It would be great if something was in place to tell our young people who are joining the military, well, you know, this might happen, that might happen. For me, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I'm from Springhill, a small mining town, and I absolutely loved the military every day I spent there and it really made me who I am today. I think there were a lot more pros than cons definitely.

Yes, that would be wonderful if we could do that, but what we focus on - basically we don't want to expand it to anything like that because it's just too hard on the head. We focus on the vet, getting the vet help, getting them off the street, helping them transition, and family.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Anyway, I'll let you go. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Alfie.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, Roland, Jim and David, for the presentation. It certainly is an eye-opener. I want to thank you, Jim, because you saw a problem and you reacted and did something about it. That's not always the case. We probably should thank your wife today for sending you out.

JIM LOWTHER: I thank her every day, believe me.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I'm surprised, to be quite honest with you, with some of what we're hearing here today because it is not something that has gained a lot of attention. So to hear what you had to say today, I think, is very important for all of us and it's valuable for us to learn more about what's going on. One thing that I'd like to say is that before the end of the meeting I'm probably going to want to make a motion that we send a letter to Gail Shea, the Minister of Revenue, in support of the charitable status issue that has been brought up here.

JIM LOWTHER: That would be wonderful.

ALFIE MACLEOD: If we could do that as a committee, that would be something that I don't think we'll have much problem finding agreement on. That's one thing that I'd like to see us do before the end of the meeting.

Right now, it seems that your efforts are concentrated here in the metro area and that's obvious because of where everybody is. Are you hearing from other parts of the province? Being from Cape Breton, I'm just wondering if you're hearing from people there and if there's a group there doing the same thing so that when we go back home we could probably meet with and see if there's anything we can do to help them - and Yarmouth and all parts of the province because we're from all around. It would be really good to know, Jim, if there's something there.

JIM LOWTHER: We try to have a rep everywhere in Nova Scotia which we pretty well do, the Valley, up where I'm from, Cape Breton, so we have a lot of members. What we'll do is, wherever the members live, if we have a situation where we hear of somebody who needs help, not necessarily homeless, but somebody who is having a really hard time who needs help, we contact the nearest member to assist, to see if they will assist. That's what we've been doing so far and it has really been working. Again, it's veterans helping veterans and it's like spreading out the fingers. If we don't have anyone in that area when we get the call, we go ourselves, we jump in the vehicle and we go. So yes, in Nova Scotia we pretty well have the whole province covered and other provinces as well, all the Maritime Provinces actually.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I wonder if after the meeting you could share the names with the committee so they could be spread around so if there is an issue that arises in our areas we would know who to contact right off the bat, quickly. I think that would be helpful.

JIM LOWTHER: We'll make you up a list and just send it around to all your areas so you'll know.

ALFIE MACLEOD: You can send it to Kim and then if there's something that comes up in our area we might be able to interact with your person to a degree.

JIM LOWTHER: Yes, absolutely.

ALFIE MACLEOD: In a perfect world, which we're a long way from, but I know money is always a challenge when you're trying to do these things and I hear you were saying you are taking money out of your own pocket and those things. What kind of investment would it take to have some kind of a transition house here? You were saying lodging is the biggest problem so I'm wondering if there is a way we can find - maybe through Community Services or through some of the housing - there might be a few apartments that are available that could be used in such a situation. Also, I think in the military they have some facilities available for when you have family who land in the hospital and some people come to visit, has anybody ever broached that to see if it's . . .

JIM LOWTHER: We definitely tried; that was one of the first things we tried to do. I thought, anytime I was out of province and I was in Toronto or Ottawa, I would stay at the base, all I had to do was show my ID, I'm a veteran, I'd stay at the base. So I figured, well geez, here's a great way if we had to put somebody up for a couple of nights, why don't they stay on the base? No, they wouldn't even hear it because these people - and that's what they were saying which kind of drove me nuts because 'these people' are their people - they might need supervision and they might need this and they might need that. I said no, they just need a roof over their head just for a couple of nights. A year ago this person was probably working here. So yes, it really wouldn't take much.

We do have partnerships with Killam Properties and we've tried everything we can think of. Killam Properties have been wonderful with us helping. We found one veteran on the street and what was it, six days, Rollie?

ROLAND LAWLESS: Six days, yes.

JIM LOWTHER: In six days he went from the street to an apartment, so that was our fastest time yet.

ROLAND LAWLESS: And that's the first time we used Killam Properties as an agent.

JIM LOWTHER: What they do is give us a little bit of a reduced price, they'll find a place in a suitable, nice area. What we do is supervise, we make sure that the rent comes right off the veteran's pay, if he has it, or we pay it. They love it because they have retired military personnel who are disciplined, who don't give them a hard time, and they're helping the community, so they have been wonderful with us. So, yes, an apartment would be wonderful, it really wouldn't take much to get this really going.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Rollie, I'd like to ask you a question because Jim mentioned that the reason you got involved was that you had a challenge yourself and you met with Jim.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Well, I did and I'd like to clarify that - I wasn't homeless, but I was what I would consider at risk of being homeless.

As I said, I spent 20 years in the military, I was released in 2002, diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and other mechanical ailments. From there I was spinning out of control, up, down. When I was able to get up I would not focus properly. I would spend money where I shouldn't spend money and drove myself into a financial quagmire; alcohol abuse. I was one of the lucky ones, I always say. I was extremely lucky to have a stubborn wife, she stuck with me and great doctors when I got out that helped me through

my crisis. But even that being said, there was still the spiral effect. The word sounds easy, but it's a long way to come back up from a short distance down, if you can appreciate that.

One of the things I see is a lot of mention of programs and stuff, who has got what in place and who can offer what. Most of these programs all have criteria attached to them. If you fit that criteria, you get that program. If you don't fit that criteria, you don't get the program. With vets, there's no criteria. If you're an 18-year-old veteran or if you're a 78-year-old veteran, we're going to help you. That's us.

JIM LOWTHER: We don't judge. We can't because we'd be judging ourselves because these people are us, you know what I mean? We can't put people into different categories, which the government does - you served here, well then you can't get that; well you served here. We don't do that because it could be us; we've been there, and that's why I think we're so effective as well. Just not judging people is huge and the vets, when we find them, they feel like that camaraderie is back because we're just the same as they are; we're not better, we're not worse. We're helping each other and it feels good to do that, right?

ALFIE MACLEOD: I want to thank you, Rollie, for sharing that, I know it's probably not easy. I want to thank the three of you for what you're doing and there may be an opportunity for more questions, but you have certainly raised some very valid points and it is really an eye-opener for me. I want to thank you all for what you've done and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Jim Boudreau.

JIM BOUDREAU: One of the disadvantages of asking questions after everyone has asked is that the points you want to make are sometimes already taken. For example, I'm certainly glad that MLA MacLeod brought up the issue of writing a letter because that was certainly something that was on my list to do here. I think it's extremely important to try to move that process ahead so I think you'll find the table very supportive of that.

One of the things that I'd like to explore a little bit is, you indicated in your presentation that you've helped about 13 vets get off the street right now. Maybe I missed it, I'm not sure, but do you have a general idea of how many veterans there might be out and about in this province? That's probably a difficult question.

JIM LOWTHER: It is because we've actually had to pull back from looking, fearing that we would find even more because we didn't have the resources to do it and my wife wouldn't let me spend any more money, and that's basically it in a nutshell. We had to scale back. The 13 that we've helped, some were easier than others, like the one that was six days. Yes, I'd be afraid really. I mean, if we had the funding and the transition housing, holy smokes, we'd clean up this place in a month and the same for other provinces as well,

I know it. We have a lot of good support in other provinces as well and a lot of them are pulling back too because they're just finding too many. It's pretty scary.

It's not necessarily homeless. When you think homeless, you think of the guy underneath the bridge - one of the first guys we found - but not necessarily. It's couch surfing - people who don't have an address so they're just using up all their friends as they go, sleeping on the floor or sleeping on the couch or sleeping on the couch. That's another homeless thing, so there are different steps to it.

ROLAND LAWLESS: I was only in Ottawa probably 45 minutes from the time I arrived, talked to my niece and said I have to go down here. I went downtown Ottawa to a mission and found that there were two veterans using that mission which is three blocks from Parliament Hill, and this was before I went to see the minister. I went to see the minister and he says, who are you and what have you got to say? I got up, introduced myself and said by the way, Mr. Minister, do you know there are two veterans using the mission three blocks from Parliament Hill? He didn't even know there was a mission. I kind of did a little shock therapy to him right there and he got the message right off the bat and I couldn't believe it.

I said to Jim, what do I do and he said just go to the mission, go look at the mission and see if they've had any service people go through and I said, it can't be that simple. So I did exactly what he said, I walked in and introduced myself and gave them our literature and said, have you got any serving members or anybody who was in the service in your system and they said yes, we have two right now with severe mental problems that they don't even want to come out of their apartment most days. I said, here's our literature, let them have it and if they want to contact us, let them contact us and we'll see if we can get them any assistance. It was a shocker.

JIM LOWTHER: It was funny because Rollie got there early and said, I've got time to kill, what do I do? I said just check out the missions, go down and have a look around, check out the missions, you never know. Sure enough, boom, he called me and said, I've got two and I've been here 20 minutes, what do I do? That's just how fast it is, that's one mission.

ROLAND LAWLESS: That was no advertisement in Ottawa that I was coming or anything, I just kind of walked in. If we were having billboards, posters and everybody was looking, there's a good chance we'd be overrun and how do you cope with overrunning? We'd be scrambling worse than what we are now.

JIM LOWTHER: People would know that there's help out there which I think a lot of people are getting it now with the media exposure and stuff that we have that there is help out there and we'll do everything we can to help you if you want help.



ROLAND LAWLESS: The homeless culture itself has a network all of their own. We call it ground support where we're walking down the street and if we see a homeless person and you put a loonie in his jar and you say, what's your story, he's going to tell you his story. If you ask him, do you know anybody on the streets who has service time, they're going to tell you, down the block.

JIM LOWTHER: We don't necessarily say veterans because a lot of guys who are on the street that did 25 or 30 years don't even think they're a veteran. They think their grandfather was a veteran.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Not entitled to anything.

JIM LOWTHER: So we say did you serve? Were you a serving member? I've had people where I've asked, are you a veteran, since I kind of knew the guy was, I mean, we know each other. No, I'm not a veteran. How many years did you do? About 25. What? So, it's all how you ask the question, too. That's what Veterans Affairs was having a really hard time with because they were going to visit the shelter and they were asking, do you have any veterans? They were like, no, we don't have any. There could have been 10 serving members there who weren't properly identified so it's all how you ask the question as well.

JIM BOUDREAU: Mr. Chairman, just one more and it sort of cut to the quick a little bit. We've had a great discussion here and I want to thank all three of you for coming in and we've talked about a lot of barriers. You talked about cutting red tape and some of the compartmentalization that happens. I'm wondering if each of you could maybe provide one or two of the major barriers that each of you sees to addressing this problem? I'm sure we'll get some different views here, but what do you see as maybe something that we could sort of focus on?

JIM LOWTHER: Do you want to go first, Rollie? We've got a list of about 100.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Okay. The obvious one is funding. Funding is a barrier until we receive our charitable status and then funding, I feel, will become less of a barrier; there are companies in the wings that are waiting for the receipt to donate. So that's one thing.

Location - we need a storefront where we can hang a sign that when people walk by they go, what's that? Or the veteran walks by and says maybe I should ask what that's about. In your lobby downstairs, my jacket got us the billboard effect, right in your lobby downstairs - the lady asked, can you tell me more about that? I pulled a flyer out of my jacket and there you go, right? That's the only exposure we really get is what we give. So storefront and emergency housing, those are the two obstacles right now that if we advertise, we're going to need right away.

JIM LOWTHER: And I see what would be good is a desk anywhere; a desk here, a desk over with the Mayor. We talked to the Mayor about that and he hasn't gotten back to us yet. Just having a desk so we can have a phone, a desk, an address, that kind of thing, to have some place to work so we're not working out of our houses. We do have the Salvation Army where they let us use their office every once in awhile, which is good, but it would be better - I'm sure in the city somewhere there has to be a desk and a phone - well, actually, we have our own phones - that we can just have a place where somebody can get hold of us. For instance, we had the minister come down and the minister said, well, I'm going to bring my people, where's your office? I said, well, an office costs money so we don't have an office, but we're working on it.

That's what I would see; an office is big. The other thing, as we touched on, is the transition housing. That would be ideal. Those are the two things I see. David, what have you got?

DAVE MACLEOD: For me, I'll reiterate exactly what I said before, it's the red tape. Having worked in Ottawa and having worked with senior people, I have never seen so many silly little rules in all of my life. I thought I saw a lot of rules in the Army - and there are a lot of rules in the Army; they have their own rules, as you all know - but holy hockey socks, some of them are rules within rules so they sort of make it up as they go. I find that just mind-numbing.

To reiterate what Jim said: a physical address. I was interacting with the Governor General's office, and of course their biggest concern was, what is your physical address? If you cannot prove that you physically exist - it's one thing to exist in the cyber world, that's very easy to do, but you have to have that physical space and as Jim said, a desk. A simple desk is all you need with a simple address and sometimes a landline is better than a cellphone; it lends credibility. For us, maybe credibility is the correct word, and credibility through a physical location. We already have credibility on the ground and now we need credibility with the bureaucracies.

THE CHAIR: Junior.

HAROLD THERIAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry I was late, but this is very interesting. I can see the problems that you're having and me, as a fisherman for years, we always tried to deal with Ottawa - the Department of Fisheries and Oceans - and we were never truly organized to do that. I think that's one of your problems right now. The two problems you've brought up, one is you're not organized; you don't have that base. Have you thought about putting in a formal application to Veterans Affairs to start an office here in Halifax? I think that's all it would take. With support from this committee, I think we could probably make that happen. I can't see them turning you down as well as you are organized.

Another question is - and I think that question was asked - how many homeless veterans are there? That would probably be an eye-opener if you did have a ballpark figure, a count of them. That's what I was interested in, how many are out there? I'm from Digby, I don't know of too many, but then again if you had that figure then another formal application, once you get your office, would be to put into Veterans Affairs for a transition home. We have transition houses all over the province for women, et cetera.

JIM LOWTHER: Exactly, yes.

HAROLD THERIAULT: So there's no reason why Veterans Affairs - I would like to know their reason why they wouldn't help one of them be established. We have a base in Cornwallis, a former base, beautiful buildings sitting there - one of them could house maybe all of the veterans there, I don't know. I don't know the number, that's the number you have to have. Formal applications to the federal government for the office and another formal application to the Veterans Affairs for housing for these people. That seems to be the two main topics that you're talking about here today.

JIM LOWTHER: If it was that easy that would be just wonderful, but who do you do a formal application to?

HAROLD THERIAULT: Veterans Affairs.

JIM LOWTHER: To whom, to the minister?

HAROLD THERIAULT: Yes, I'd start with the minister and this committee could support that too.

JIM LOWTHER: We've had three meetings with the minister. We brought this up, I don't know how many times, about transitional housing. They tell us that they cannot do that, they can't do bricks and mortar, they can't do it - we'll support you any way we can, we will not purchase or give you money for a building. That is what I thought, I thought it's a department for veterans so therefore we have veterans who need help.

HAROLD THERIAULT: Is it because you're not formally organized yet?

JIM LOWTHER: Actually, we're as organized as any other non-profit organization can be. We have members right across the country. The only thing that wouldn't make us organized is not having a desk in a building; we're quite organized. Being able to take 13 veterans off the street and completely turn their lives around when Veterans Affairs couldn't find one in Canada, I think isn't too bad, do you know what I mean? I think we're organized that way. I don't understand what you mean by not being organized.

DAVID MACLEOD: Maybe I can interject here. The concept of organization for many people of my age group, 47 and up, is a physical location, but the reality is that many

organizations these days are amorphous, they don't have to be in any location. That's the comfort zone I was talking about before, you can exist on the Internet very easily and VETS does. We have our own Web site, we have our own e-mail address, we stay in contact by e-mail, by VoIP, by Skype and these are the main methods of staying organized and that's the way many corporations are actually going, the amorphous organization or the networked organization.

The need for a physical space is required so that the older generation, from 47 and up - from Ottawa's perspective and the older institutions that exist within Canada, from their perspective - they require a physical location and that is why I think the misunderstanding over organization exists. We have a board and you're a legal entity because you are a legal, non-profit, you have an organization.

ROLAND LAWLESS: If I may, on the number of homeless veterans. The only studies we have to go by are one that was done in the U.K. and one that was done in the United States which estimated 1 per cent. So if there are 700,000 veterans in the country, 1 per cent of that is 7,000 people on the street. Break that down geographically and what the lady over there said - I can't remember her name, forgive me - Michele said, a lot of those veterans come from the East Coast. So how many? We could break it down to say there could be as many as 500.

JIM LOWTHER: The thing, too, is the more we find - we're keeping our own stats but to actually go out, I mean you'd need a whole committee group of people to do . . .

ROLAND LAWLESS: Stats Canada.

JIM LOWTHER: Yes, Stats Canada to do actual stats on how many homeless veterans are out there. The numbers are scary; I think 1 per cent is so low.

HAROLD THERIAULT: Shouldn't Veterans Affairs have an idea?

JIM LOWTHER: They don't want to know.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Veterans Affairs' outreach consists of sending flyers to homeless shelters once every two years. A black and white flyer - my doodling has more appeal than what their flyer has.

JIM LOWTHER: Two hundred and fifty flyers.

ROLAND LAWLESS: A homeless veteran may not consider himself a veteran, so as soon as he sees anything from Veterans Affairs he's not going to pay attention to that, it doesn't concern him, and they don't keep regular contact. If you're going to do ground support and try to find these veterans, you have to be at ground level.

JIM LOWTHER: Yes, you have to have a one-on-one with them. Veterans Affairs, I think they're getting better, but they're more of an insurance company kind of organization, which is scary. They'll give you a 1-866 number to call but you'll never be able to actually get through to anybody, it takes days and days. A lot of people have said to us, just let Veterans Affairs do it. Well, we can't, they're not doing it so we have to, and the government can catch up to us. These guys and gals don't have time to wait to get through to somebody on the 1-866 number, when they can get through to us in 15 minutes. We don't have time, they don't have time, so the government can catch up to us and that's what's slowly happening.

I thought as you did, I thought, wow, this should be so easy; we'll just put in a proposal to get housing through Veterans Affairs. They don't do that.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Thank you and I really apologize that I have to leave. I think you've done a huge piece of the work, the T-shirts you're wearing, the hats you're wearing; you've got a brilliant and very identifiable thing there. Really what I can see is yes, you're absolutely right about organization and so on, and making these applications. Meeting with the minister is one thing, but what you need to do is to be able to write to the minister and say, we're asking you to do this, and then you get the letter back that says no and so on.

In the meantime what you're doing is outreach and I wonder whether you might be doing something like producing that as a sticker, sort of like with Block Parent or Neighbourhood Watch, and people agree - organizations and offices agree - to put it in their window and okay, this is a point of contact and that will become recognizable. Yes, absolutely, it's brilliant, it is so recognizable and I think what you need to do is get whatever it takes, the \$500 it takes to print a bunch of those stickers to go around and get offices to put it in their windows: these are the people you call; if you come in here we'll tell you how to get in touch with these people. So that's one thing.

You've answered the question: Veterans Affairs apparently doesn't maintain lifelong contact with its ex-service people, and that is horrifying in itself. Again, I don't know whether somebody here would be willing to make a motion for me, but I think we really ought to write to the Minister of National Defence and say we would like to suggest that everybody be assigned a lifelong e-mail address when they leave the Forces, for whatever reason, so that at least there's a point of contact. It could be '.navy.vets.ca', whatever the case may be, so people know that at least there's that and those outreaches can continue to be made, so you can go into the library or whatever. That's something that V.E.T.S. can put itself behind, as well, and I think if you wouldn't mind, Becky, maybe you could make a motion to say that we do this and encourage the minister to do that. I don't know whether there would be support from everybody else around this table.

It's very important that what you're doing is you are forcing the connection between the Forces and the departure from the Forces. The Forces need and you on the

street need to make people aware that there is that connection that yes, they are veterans, if they need to be called ex-services, whatever it takes. As I say, that logo is brilliant and anything that you can do to make it recognizable on the street will eventually do this.

As far as a physical space goes, mine may not be the best one, but I'm certainly willing to approach my local Legion, which is in Spryfield and say, okay, can you please give an office space to this organization? I don't know what the result would be, there may be a downtown Legion that would be more appropriate. I cannot imagine organizations, which are asking the grandchildren of veterans to join for membership, saying that they're unwilling to support modern veterans. Again, if you would like approaches made for the desk space.

ROLAND LAWLESS: The Legion is - they're coming on board. I have to interject there because they've already made up an initial contact backpack for us. Jim has one at his house and I've got one at my place so that as soon as we've made contact. It's got soap, socks, underwear, blanket, a few essentials in it. We are in meetings with Dominion Command here with the Legions so they are coming along slowly; they're playing catch-up. If the Legion was doing their job, VETS would not exist.

MICHELE RAYMOND: I think for one of the Legions to give you the desk and the phone is probably not unreasonable and I don't know if there is a downtown Legion or something, but I certainly don't mind making contact with the one in Spryfield.

ROLAND LAWLESS: It might be an option, but I don't think we want to be associated with the Legion because of that, because a lot of the vets that are veterans don't belong to the Legion; they've heard horror stories about service officers having people's pensions totally denied that should have been black and white. There are horror stories.

JIM LOWTHER: And a lot of them have already asked the Legion for help and were denied.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Individuals, yes.

JIM LOWTHER: A lot of them, so they don't want anything to do with them.

MICHELE RAYMOND: You may be able to close this gap.

ROLAND LAWLESS: And we're open to closing gaps. We're not saying that we'll never be part of the Legion or not co-exist, of course. We were just talking about that earlier. We need to start using their service officers to keep us from doing all the paperwork.

MICHELE RAYMOND: Right. And make them display that sticker in their window.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Michele. Becky.

BECKY KENT: As a follow-up to some of what Michele is talking about, particularly around the lifelong connection, communications with service members and such, one of the first things I think about when I think about the longevity of what you're doing, I think about the preventive side of this. It's one thing to deal with what we have and clearly there's a lot of damage to the relationship between a member who has served and the member who has left the service. There's this huge divide, a lot of bad blood, a lot of bad experiences and all of that. There's a certain amount of that, that at some point you've got to move to the next step, which I think is clearly what you're doing, but I'm thinking more about the preventive side.

I wonder if you've had discussions either internally or with the Minister of National Defence or even current serving members. Clearly you are a family of people in an industry that care about each other, whether you're serving military personnel or you're a veteran. I feel there would be great benefit in an education or camaraderie around the current serving members who can identify or help members who are leaving not get into the scenario where you're going to need to help them.

I don't know what the protocols are and I don't know what the fears or risks are to serving members getting involved in this kind of layer of community advocacy. I know sometimes there is a layer of fear and risk association to your kinds of groups really, frankly because they're continuing to serve and they have a career that they're still moving forward.

My question very specifically is, have you discussed that kind of preventive step to have current serving members who know about a member who is about to leave the forces have an avenue or a network that they can help connect their buddies, their mates, their colleagues, their peers to a service - and it could be yours - that is not necessarily the emergency that you're currently facing with homeless veterans, but the one that we want to keep out. I absolutely understand or feel that Veterans Affairs should be much of that and perhaps maybe there's not a department within that department, but I think there's a great benefit to that. Can you comment on my thoughts there?

JIM LOWTHER: Absolutely. We have a program that we're working with right now called the Veterans Transition Program and that's a preventive thing.

BECKY KENT: Is that the B.C. model you talked about?

JIM LOWTHER: Right, that's the B.C. model. It starts with - as David will mention here - the SCAN program.

BECKY KENT: SCAN?

DAVID MACLEOD: What the military does is when you're being released - whether it's medical, longevity, end of contract, whatever reason - they have something called the SCAN program. The SCAN program is the Second Career Assistance Network and it's a cunning plan, it's a good plan. It's where Veterans Affairs and various organizations will help you when you release; there's even Canada Company, they come and give a brief as well; and the life insurance companies come and they give briefs, and they try to sometimes help you find a job as well. What these briefings do is help orientate the guy who's leaving, the guy who's scared, in a direction that may help.

What we're thinking is eventually what we'd like to do is actually become part of that program because we realize that, as we already mentioned, if you meet certain criteria you get into certain programs. Sometimes you find yourself falling through the cracks. For example, I found myself falling through a crack and if it wasn't for the fact I was rather straightforward with my Member of Parliament, Peter MacKay, things would have fallen apart for me. But because I was aggressive and straightforward and because I knew exactly who to contact and how to do it, it helped an awful lot. So we're thinking we should be part of that program, as well, and that's the whole point of SCAN. They make sure you know who your Member of Parliament is, who your MLA is, where you vote, how you vote, the whole nine yards, so that you become part of society once again. That's why we want to fit in there because I think that's the first layer of where we should be.

BECKY KENT: Can we follow up on that and, absolutely, I think that would be a tremendous success story for your efforts. But I still feel there's a layer between now and then that the peers of those serving members who leave can have a communications tool, even if it's your flyers that they are free to pass around, free to discuss within that service while they're currently serving, with no concerns around the upper levels of their supervisors being critical of them. Let's face it, those members who are leaving and end up - and I feel very clearly that the people you're serving are the worst-case scenarios of this. These people are at huge risk of homelessness, death and I mean you can't get worse than that.

That's a huge blemish on our military and on our elected officials who are governing at the time - and we've had many over the years who have contributed to this so not laying blame to anyone in particular. I guess I really feel that camaraderie, that family network that you have of serving personnel could be of tremendous benefit to you right now.

DAVID MACLEOD: Another organization that's out there is called the Military Family Resource Centre. I believe it's partially funded through the military itself, partially funded through VAC, partially funded through the donations that they collect themselves, and I think that's a good place for us to go.



When I talked about the first layer being SCAN, the second layer is incorporating ourselves or building relationships with other organizations that are non-governmental in nature and building that as part of the support network. MFRC is very important because it's made up primarily of military spouses, and a lot of these spouses put an endless amount of hours in, whether it be for child care or whether it be - I put myself into a bit of hot water once because I was raising funds for Christmas hampers for troops, but they did all the support work for that, the fundraising for that. They are a wonderful, wonderful organization and it's very much locally generated, so I feel that is a second layer.

I know that there is still a third layer that we should look at and I'm not sure how to go about it because I'm thinking about - as Alfie mentioned - veterans go all over the place. When they're done, I came home; some veterans don't. I came home because I have family in the area, because my wife could get a good job, because I felt comfortable in my community. Not all veterans have that, so there is that gap. What happens if they go to - let's say they go to Glace Bay and they're not quite sure who to talk to or there is no base there. There's really a more remote or rural community where they don't exactly have any place to go. I haven't come up with a plan for that yet. So that's the third layer. Is that one you're aiming for?

BECKY KENT: I think I'm getting at that. What you just showed me was a perfect example of how you got into hot water because you were advocating for something that would improve the quality of life for a serving member or, in that case I think it was for troops overseas or something. I don't want to dwell on that because you kind of get where I'm going. There's a network of members that should be safely, securely and proudly able to help their peers who are leaving the service, so that they can continue to be thriving, productive citizens.

Very quickly, can we get some of your flyers for our offices? I think they would be tremendously beneficial. If you could pick out a number of your transition housing numbers, I guess that's what I'm going over in my head, if you could say to us today that 5, 10, 20, 50 transition housing units could help you tomorrow - that's idealistic - what would it be?

JIM LOWTHER: Eight to twelve.

BECKY KENT: Eight to twelve, thank you.

JIM LOWTHER: I would like to go back to the MFRC thing because thinking - I'm small town - okay, well, the MFRC, what a wonderful organization; they do so many great things, they have so many programs. First place I went, MFRC. They said, is the member still serving? No, the member is retired. We don't have any programs for retired members. I said, this is a non-profit. They said, yes. I said, you don't have anything for retired members? Go see the Legion.

So what I've said to the minister many times, the ADM Keith Hillier, anybody else higher up who could listen, we could solve this problem if we had access to the MFRC. I mean, they have their own apartments (Interruption) they have emergency housing for family members who have a spouse who was injured. They have apartments here in Halifax, furnished apartments for military generals and the higher ranking military personnel to stay in. Retired military personnel, we do not have access to that; they won't - you're retired. That's the problem with the military. A lot of the problem is when they're still serving, they don't really care. Some do. Some are awesome, some really help us a lot. Others think that if it has anything to do with pulling back their career, they don't want to do it. They'd rather give all their time to - what's that organization that we always give money to and most people don't even know . . .

ROLAND LAWLESS: United Way.

JIM LOWTHER: United Way. They'd rather give everything to the United Way or another organization that really has nothing to do with their own people than to help their own people, which hopefully we can change that mindset. The MFRC was one of my first contacts and it was very disappointing because I thought it was - it's not rocket science, let's write a letter to Veterans Affairs; well, let's go to the MFRC, there's one on every base, they could help us. Well, they have apartments. Why can't we use those? Oh no, you can't use those. Only a certain retired member can use those. If you're in crisis or you're having a hard time you can't use those, but if you're another retired member who's coming down to visit, you can have it as long as you want, furnished.

ROLAND LAWLESS: The veterans memorial hospitals, too - criteria. If you're a Second World War veteran or a Korean veteran you get in, if you're any other veteran, too bad.

JIM LOWTHER: They won't even let you in the door.

ROLAND LAWLESS: There's an answer for the worst case scenario you were looking for - the guy who's schizophrenic and he's going to kill the world and he needs to be hospitalized. The answer is there, but accessibility is an issue.

JIM LOWTHER: The thing with us, too, is that we do anywhere from the worst case scenario to helping just a group of veterans who are getting out to let them know what they're entitled to, we do that as well. We help them fill out their paperwork, we get their groceries, do you know what I mean? One of our veterans, he's housebound, Rollie has been helping him for years; actually today you're going to get his groceries for him. That's what we do. The range is pretty broad. Basically we do what we can with what we have.

ROLAND LAWLESS: And we're not afraid to step outside our scope. Our scope is to house homeless veterans and get them in off the streets and transition them, but if a veteran is in need like this guy in Lake Echo that I get his groceries - if I don't do it, who's

going to do it? His family is all away, he'd have to rely on somebody who he doesn't know, has had no communication with. He has been 32 years a member of the Legion, they didn't know his wife died, they didn't know he was bedridden, so where's your Legion support for this guy?

JIM LOWTHER: Actually, they did come out and give him his 32-year pin because I was there that day, I was visiting him. I said, I like your pin and he said, yes, the Legion guys were out here. I'm thinking, what the hell are we doing out here four times a week to check on him, I mean they're right there and they have a committee to visit.

Anyway, we can't even get into that because I don't want to do that. I don't want to put blame on any organization because we don't have time for that.

THE CHAIR: Leonard.

LEONARD PREYRA: I just wanted to follow up, I wanted to echo what our colleagues here have said that it's remarkable what you're doing and we admire what you're doing. We're sorry that it's such a struggle to do something that is just so basic and so elemental and so necessary. I did want to comment on what Dave was talking about, their level of support and Jim, you had mentioned the St. Andrew's meeting that you went to. I'm part of that program, the Brunswick Street Mission . . .

ROLAND LAWLESS: Wonderful.

LEONARD PREYRA: We have at St. Matthews that breakfast and two weeks ago a gentleman named John Hipson died. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and was a volunteer and he was a cook there for 10 years and no one really knew that he was a veteran of the Vietnam War until he died. I think one of the things that we notice there at St. Matt's is that there are a lot of hidden casualties, you don't know. Sitting down and talking to people you get their story and all of sudden say hold on a second, we can help out here. But the Brunswick Street Mission has a number of programs, maybe you already know about them, but they will fill out your taxes, for example and most veterans and most people on the streets don't know they're entitled to get GIS rebates and other Community Services support that they can only get by filling out taxes. They don't appear in Stats Canada because they don't have a home.

There is a trusteeship program at the Brunswick Street Mission where they can take responsibility for your life decisions. I know you said you already do that, but we have an arrangement with Killam, for example, where you arrange to pay the rent, arrange to receive the cheques, arrange to supervise things that you might be needing, maybe even monitoring some medical care and things like that. The mission also will help prepare documentation. A lot of people don't know they need certain levels of documentation, certain forms filled out to get access to other types of supports. Sometimes, as you know, just navigating through the system is a lot of work and all of us in our offices deal with

those things on a regular basis and I should say we have that kind of expertise in our offices as well.

Certainly at the street level, I don't know if you worked with the MOSH, the mobile unit . . .

ROLAND LAWLESS: Absolutely.

LEONARD PREYRA: They're very good in my constituency, they're very sensitive. If you're looking at building relationships and building partnerships, we're all aware of groups that you might be able to connect with that we can use our offices to help you connect with them. Our offices themselves are available, so if you want to go off on this third channel of support, we can help you identify partners and networks and we can probably be the navigation you need to other levels of government as well.

JIM LOWTHER: The Brunswick Street Mission, we have been in contact with quite a bit. They're absolutely wonderful, I can't say enough about them; MOSH, same thing, we've used them, we basically try to use everything that the city would provide. The idea with Killam Properties came from the same type of thing with the Brunswick Street Mission. It would be nice to look into that further, so yes, we'd definitely be open to anything like that.

LEONARD PREYRA: We'll set up a meeting and we can do that.

JIM LOWTHER: Yes, fantastic.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Part of our outreach is to try to utilize all the different community environments out there that can spread our word, like the federal and provincial governments. That's why we're here today, to try to do just that. Let us put a sign in your window too, that will help.

JIM LOWTHER: We don't want to reinvent the wheel. If it's already out there, we're going to use it. It makes no sense to do that, so definitely, that's what I've been trying to do. It's funny though when I first started, to get into those communities, to branch into it, it was kind of hard because you had to have some street cred, right, and until we got some good street cred, then we were welcomed with open arms. Yes, they are wonderful organizations.

THE CHAIR: Alfie.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I'm just thinking about what Michelle had to say before she left, looking at – we're talking about all the issues and the challenges, what I'd like to be able to help do, and I'm sure everybody here today would like to help do, is find a solution to one or two of those issues as soon as possible. I understand your reluctance to get tied

with politics or maybe even with the Legion, but the question that I really do think needs to be asked is, what do we need to do to get to the next level.

If that means we have to sort of talk to the people at Dominion Command, for example, to see if they have space, in Dominion Command not in a Legion, but in Dominion Command, there may be some office space there. You could get an independent post office number, rent a postal box then if you don't have an address, if that's an issue. The current president of Dominion Command is from Springhill.

JIM LOWTHER: Les.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Yes, formerly from Glace Bay where your wife comes from.

JIM LOWTHER: I know Les well.

ALFIE MACLEOD: So there might be something there you can do in the short term. The way it should be approached is, this is six months or a year that we're looking for until we get other pieces of the puzzle in place so that we can move on. The other thing we may be able to do as a committee is approach our property services; many times there is office space the government is not utilizing in different areas and different buildings. Maybe there's an office there we could help find access to, again, under the same principle, six months to a year. It's a transitional type thing, but it gives you that desk that you were talking about, it gives you that home that you were talking about and it's a positive thing that makes your life a little easier.

My experience with organizations that are trying to grow, it's like eating an elephant, it's one bite at a time. If you can get a little thing done this time and a little more done that time and we, as a committee and as a province, can show support to what you're trying to do, then that might help to open some of those other doors that you're talking about.

For me, the family crisis centres, I don't know if Ray Doucette is still the guy who's sort of in charge there?

JIM LOWTHER: Ray, yes. We had a big meeting with the IPSU, with OSIs - actually he didn't show up - the Legion, Veterans Affairs and us. We had a huge meeting at the executive level to discuss how we could work together and close some of these barriers. The problem with the Legion that we've been finding - and believe me, I know Les - they have a national - I wouldn't say "agenda" - but nationally they will not help other veterans' organizations. They don't want other veterans' organizations to do well because they're a veterans' organization. We've been told flat out that they won't - they'll help us, but they won't help us.

ALFIE MACLEOD: And again, space is a different type of - and I could be wrong.

JIM LOWTHER: I know. They won't do it.

ALFIE MACLEOD: So far.

JIM LOWTHER: So far.

ALFIE MACLEOD: The other part of it is that maybe what you need to do is listen to all these organizations that you got together with, and maybe you need to do it one-on-one. I guess "divide and conquer" is not a proper term, but if you can get one group to talk to them one-on-one about what they might be able to do and then once they decide that you might be able to talk to someone and build on that and go forward. Sometimes when you get a whole bunch of people in the room, everybody's got their own agenda and they forget the reason for the meeting and they're all protecting their turf. These are only suggestions.

ROLAND LAWLESS: The last meeting we had, Jim had to leave early so he didn't get to see the summation of it. Basically what came out of it is exactly what you said. There are going to be a lot of inroads made, a lot of, "we can do this, how about if we do this, and you guys do this and you guys do that".

JIM LOWTHER: It was really good actually.

ROLAND LAWLESS: One of the things is a contact letter. All of our single points of contact are going to be on one form so that as soon as somebody wants somebody, like we make contact and we can give the veteran a contact sheet; he can go right up that sheet if he wants to, right to the Minister of National Defence, so that at least he'll have all the information he needs to contact all the other agencies that he might need to help him.

That being said, we take it upon ourselves to make sure that all this is done and that he is aware the Legion is there to service officers, but once again, the veteran is in control. If he says, oh no, I tried the Legion, and big, bad things happen there, then we don't take him to the Legion; we'll take him directly to Veterans Affairs.

ALFIE MACLEOD: And I certainly appreciate that. I used to work in the coal mines and if you really wanted to understand the compensation Act, you didn't ask human resources, you asked one of the guys that worked underground. So I appreciate what you're saying.

All I would like to say is that I personally don't believe there's any higher calling than serving your country and what you fellows do for us, allows us to do what we do, so I want to personally thank you for that. Secondly, if there are some small things after today's meeting that we can achieve as a group, that's what our goal should be and is here today, I'm pretty sure of that by looking around. So if it's finding a desk somewhere or finding a

place, if we can help with that - the letters to Gail Shea and talking to our property services people, those are the kinds of things that we might have a small impact. We've seen it done for other things that we wanted to get done so maybe we can do that.

JIM LOWTHER: Thank you so much for that because what seems small to you is huge to us. I mean that is absolutely wonderful, and we really thank you and the committee for thinking of that because it's another step. Like you said, it's another bite out of that elephant.

ALFIE MACLEOD: And I've eaten a few elephants. (Laughter)

THE CHAIR: Perhaps it's a good time for us to turn to some of these concrete suggestions. Alfie, it would be in order if you wanted to make a motion calling on the committee to issue that support to the application from V.E.T.S. for charitable status.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I so move that this committee send a letter of support to Minister Gail Shea recognizing the charitable status application that has been made by V.E.T.S. and that we as a committee send a letter of support to that application.

BECKY KENT: I'll second it.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion on the motion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I would also move that we ask the chairman to approach property services of the Province of Nova Scotia to look for a small space on an interim basis that would allow V.E.T.S. to have a home. I would suggest that we're talking somewhere from six months to a year to see how it works out and then be able to follow up with that.

BECKY KENT: Could I add to that motion that we ask that the department liaise directly with VETS around the requirements and such and really just open that dialogue. I know that it would be implied, but let's give them that contact information. Let's give them a sense of where we're coming from.

HAROLD THERIAULT: I'll second that.

THE CHAIR: That would be in the spirit of the motion.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I would leave the writing of the letter to the chairman because he's a very capable person. Just so long as we make the contact; I think that's the important part.

THE CHAIR: And following Becky's suggestion that we get the suppliers of that possibility in contact with you. Is there any other discussion on this motion?

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Another suggestion from our discussion had been that we ask Kim, as the clerk of the committee, to get the information about contacts in different parts of the province that VETS has out available through the offices of all MLAs. Would someone care to make that a motion, that we direct Kim to do that?

JIM BOUDREAU: So moved.

THE CHAIR: Is there any discussion about this motion?

ALFIE MACLEOD: Again in the spirit of friendliness, but maybe at the same time we get the brochures that Becky talked about, even if we have just an initial copy that we can make copies at our own office.

BECKY KENT: Yes, we can make them in our own offices. I don't know if it needs a motion, but it's on the discussion, that either we as a committee get that to other caucus Members of the Legislative Assembly so that all Nova Scotia has that resource. Could we do that through this committee's efforts?

THE CHAIR: Say that again, please.

BECKY KENT: I just would ask that whatever resources this organization brings to us, either our committee or through our caucus members, committee members make sure that those resources get to the other members of the House of Assembly.

THE CHAIR: The motion is for all MLAs.

BECKY KENT: Okay, good, thank you, missed that.

THE CHAIR: Is there any other discussion on the motion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

BECKY KENT: I just want to follow up with a request from Michele Raymond while she was here - and perhaps it needs a little more discussion - around a letter to the Department of National Defence, related to the issue of having a lifetime communications



tool for certain members who have left the services. Maybe the committee needs to discuss that a little more on what that letter could - or perhaps a draft could come back to the committee on that. I'm not quite sure how we would word that. I don't know enough about what they have in place right now to even fully put that motion forward. Maybe the committee could discuss that a bit.

JIM BOUDREAU: I was going to ask the presenters to give their ideas and views on that or their suggestions with regard to what Ms. Raymond suggested, which was sort of a lifelong e-mail.

JIM LOWTHER: I think it's a great idea. If you did write the letter, I'm sure that it would come back saying, oh, we know exactly where all our members are at all times. I'm sure that's what you would get back. How to go about doing that, that would be a long one. That would be hard.

ROLAND LAWLESS: Myself personally, I see that playing into the lump sum payment that the DVA is going to be giving out to these young veterans. Instead of a monthly annuity, they'll get a one-time cheque, so when that money is gone they have no support. So they need some kind of - like you say - identity, a contact. I think you're somewhere on the right track, whether it be e-mail or not, I'm not sure, but I think it would be a positive thing. If you can get it to happen, that would be the big step.

JIM LOWTHER: It would be great actually.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I wonder if maybe we could ask VETS to go away and send some of their ideas back to the committee and then we could discuss it when Michele is here to have her input into it so that we could come up with something that's kind of rationalized and then maybe even share it with VETS before we ship it off.

THE CHAIR: Would that be square with you?

JIM LOWTHER: Absolutely. We'll do anything, yes.

THE CHAIR: Maybe draft a paragraph on what would be useful and get that to Kim and then we could discuss that when Michele is back at our next meeting.

JIM LOWTHER: Absolutely.

BECKY KENT: The only other thing, before you folks leave - again, we thank you. I think you can feel within the room there is immense interest in the work that you are doing and any way that we can help. I would ask - and I'm not a regular committee member so forgive me any committee members if I'm stepping out of line, but I don't think I will be - that you continue to keep us up to date. You can't always be in here before us in this way, but the committee is a committee of the Legislature and it has reason to be here. It's about

helping Nova Scotians and that's what you're doing. If I could ask the committee to consider, through your regular presentation dialogue about next presenters, that this be a follow-up in whatever, a year's time or however long you deem it necessary because we're taking some action that could potentially require some discussion and maybe progress, we hope. That's just food for thought.

LEONARD PREYRA: Just apropos to what Ms. Kent is saying, I noticed that in the roster of topics is the treatment of post-traumatic stress as a topic that will be looked at by this committee as being proposed. So certainly on that score there will be some follow-up. I'm not a member of this committee, but I gather from the discussions that I have been part of here before, the committee is very interested and concerned about it and is looking for ways to help.

JIM LOWTHER: The Veterans Transition Program is probably the newest program that actually works, which will be coming to Nova Scotia shortly. We're just waiting for funding. We were going to start in January, we had a program ready to start in January. The Legion in B.C. basically funds that. The Legion here wouldn't fund it. The B.C. Legion was fighting with the Nova Scotia Legion.

THE CHAIR: In your opinion, would it be useful at some point - perhaps next year - if this committee were to invite someone to come and speak about the Veterans Transition Program and its possible relevance for Nova Scotia?

JIM LOWTHER: Absolutely. We'd love to do that, yes. Dr. John Whelan is the one heading it up and Dr. Heather MacKinnon.

THE CHAIR: I wonder if someone would make a motion, and second that, that we place that on the list of subjects to be considered sometime over the next 12 months here .

Is there any discussion on this motion? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

Is there any other response to the presentation that we've had today? Is there anything that the three of you would want to double back to or underline for us?

JIM LOWTHER: I just want to say how much I appreciate - because I can tell, everyone here really cares about our military and our retired members. What we're trying to do, we're doing it because it needs to be done, and it's as simple as that. We're not doing it for money; we're all volunteers. I really appreciate everything that you've done here today because for us it's just like a lift. It's such a lift for us thinking that our province supports us as much as it does and I'm just proud to be here, so that's what I want to say, thank you to each one of you.

ROLAND LAWLESS: I just have one comment on post-traumatic stress. One of the stumbling blocks for post-traumatic stress is that it's not always identified upon release. That being said, it could be five, six years down the road before you even realize there's a problem, so there's where a crack can be visualized, if you will. I think that's good to know. That's why we exist - to fill that gap - so that five years down the road when a guy figures he doesn't deserve anything from Veterans Affairs because he never had anything to file for when he got out, he was perfectly fit, all of a sudden falls apart, still doesn't feel he's entitled, so he's relying on the services of the provinces or the goodness of family and friends.

BECKY KENT: On that, I think there would be a tremendous benefit for you - and I don't know if you realize, but these meetings and the agenda, the presentations are open for you to come and hear.

JIM LOWTHER: I've been to a couple.

BECKY KENT: Okay, good. I just want to make sure because I think about your insight into that and then hearing the presenters - I don't know, was this agenda item approved for March 8<sup>th</sup>, the treatment of post-traumatic stress?

THE CHAIR: Yes, that's right.

BECKY KENT: I think it would potentially be of some benefit to all agencies that present here to have that opportunity to hear each other, if you don't get it otherwise.

JIM LOWTHER: That's great. I'd love to come to that one. Who is putting that one on for March 8<sup>th</sup>? Who is coming in for that?

MS. KIM LANGILLE (Legislative Committee Clerk): They are representatives from VAC.

JIM LOWTHER: Oh, okay.

THE CHAIR: Leonard.

LEONARD PREYRA: I know we're winding down, but I just wanted to ask Rollie what he meant when he was talking about getting access to post-traumatic stress support after release. Is there a limitation period that prevents people from getting access after they've been away? How do they get identified and when do they get treatment?

ROLAND LAWLESS: This is the problem. Usually it will be identified - either they're going to run in with the law or through a health profession - maybe he has tried to commit suicide - it will be that kind of identification. It wouldn't be Veterans Affairs

saying, hey, are you still okay? That doesn't exist. That kind of individual contact doesn't exist. Unless you physically take yourself to Veterans Affairs, they're not going to be out there looking for you - not at this particular junction in time.

JIM LOWTHER: That's where we come in.

ROLAND LAWLESS: And it's an undiagnosed problem on release, so until you get diagnosed, you may be having all the symptoms, but until you get your diagnosis, you don't know what's wrong with you so how would you react and say, listen, that happened when I was in my service, why is it coming back? Well, if you make that relation, then you're fine, you're going to get help. But if you say there's nobody out there to help me, who do I go to, and the only one is Veterans Affairs and you've already dealt with them and they said no, then it's hard to go back because in the military when you're told no, no means no.

JIM LOWTHER: And a lot of times, when you put your first claim in for anything with Veterans Affairs, a lot of times it's denied. The first claim is always denied. We all know that, like members of the military who've put claims in, and it's denied hoping that you'll just leave it; you'll just get pissed and you'll leave it and you won't come back for that second time that you put it in and it's passed. That happens a lot, like 75 - high, high, high.

THE CHAIR: Don't be worried, that's not restricted to the DND/VAC world.  
(Laughter)

Look, perhaps that's a good place for us to bring this part of our meeting to a close, and just to say again that we really appreciate you bringing all of the things that have been brought to the floor and I think we've had a really constructive exchange.

JIM LOWTHER: Fantastic.

THE CHAIR: So thanks again. We'll take a two-minute break to say good-bye to our guests and then we'll convene.

JIM LOWTHER: Thank you very much.

[10:48 a.m. The committee recessed.]

[10:51 a.m. The committee reconvened.]

THE CHAIR: Just a couple of things; you see on the agenda that we are going to be dealing with the PTSD question on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Just going back to our last meeting, Kim had been directed to draft a letter and this doesn't require any decision, just that the letter to the Minister of Education - a copy of that as a follow-up is there for the members of the committee. That leaves us then to look for a couple of minutes at the list of upcoming agenda items so we can think about meetings beyond March.

Did I understand the suggestion from the discussion that we wanted to think about this Veterans Transition Program B.C. model with some priority?

LEONARD PREYRA: I just want to comment on that. I'm not a member of the committee, but it may run into some federal-provincial issues because it's a federal organization and it's hard to know what authority the province has in terms of compelling federal groups to adopt programs that are federally funded. Certainly it sounds like an interesting model and if we can look at it as a model without - I don't know how you go about that though because I know in the past in other committees, the federal government has not been able to participate or federally support it.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I wonder if we could maybe just write and ask them to send us an outline of what their program is so that we can have it for information. Then that way we're not stepping on anybody's toes, but we get a sense of what it is.

LEONARD PREYRA: Yes, it sounds like something we want to consider here. I think that's a good idea.

BECKY KENT: Would it be a reasonable approach to encourage that group to make the connections. They certainly seem to be the group that are saying that it's coming. They would be our point of contact so would it not be reasonable for them to carry through with that request, which I think is what they committed to when they left. We expressed an interest in having someone, but in their efforts, should we be going ahead of that?

THE CHAIR: Well it sounds as though we, in general, would like to follow this up, but we don't quite know enough to know where we would like to place this on a list. Do you think it would be best to ask Kim . . .

HAROLD THERIAULT: I think we should just ask for the information on it. That's all we really need. We could ask this group to get it for us.

BECKY KENT: That's what I'm saying.

ALFIE MACLEOD: I think the group would probably do that, but maybe for the group it might be good if they saw the committee had the interest to go and do the follow-up and ask for that information.

THE CHAIR: Well, among the ways that we could ask Kim to look at this would be to see if they had some initial material. Does that sound okay? Okay.

Back to the matter of the list. Are there matters here in the black typed list that members want particularly to bring forward?

ALFIE MACLEOD: I'm just interested - and I know nothing about it - from the NDP caucus, the last item is a Canadian Army veteran. Is that a group or an organization? Is it similar to the one we're doing now? If it is, I'm interested in hearing the story. Are they doing the same work? I think these guys are doing a great job, but as they said, they don't want to recreate the wheel. There might be something we could learn from this group, but I'm not even sure what it is. Do you know what it is - the Canadian Army Veterans, do you know what they are?

KIM LANGILLE: I don't know a lot. I know that Lenore Zann had a card that she was given at some event and she put it forward as a suggested item. That's really all I know about it.

THE CHAIR: It's a national organization of solidarity. It's usually younger service members.

ALFIE MACLEOD: Doing the same type of work?

THE CHAIR: No, it doesn't have the kind of advocacy connection in the same way. My experience is it's more organizational solidarity.

ALFIE MACLEOD: So would it be useful for us to maybe hear from them? There might be a marriage that could take place here, if you've got a society that's already national. (Interruption)

THE CHAIR: Alfie is suggesting that we look into the possibility of having CAV present following the meeting after the March meeting. Does that seem like a good proposal? Are we agreed on that?

KIM LANGILLE: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Kim, do you need anything more from us?

KIM LANGILLE: It probably wouldn't hurt to have one more just in case there's a fall-through and we have to re-jiggle. It's always good to have one in the hopper.

THE CHAIR: Are there other thoughts about this?

JIM BOUDREAU: I'm not sure how many people are well aware of The Memory Project that was put forth by the PC caucus. This is a really good project and I know I've

dealt with it in the schools myself as a teacher. It might be something that - it's Remembrance Day and so on, so it is a good project that has been going on for awhile. The Historica Dominion Institute puts it on and it might be something that the committee might be interested in hearing about.

THE CHAIR: Leonard.

LEONARD PREYRA: I just want to say something about that too. It is a very good program and as I recall, I think I was a judge for a couple of years in that program. Kids tell stories about - usually it's about their parents, grandparents, or their family or their community and how they were involved. They're very touching and they're very nice memories of individual involvement. I think it would be an interesting thing for the committee to know more about. I'm not sure if there are any action items that would come out of the meeting, but certainly for information purposes it would be very interesting.

HAROLD THERIAULT: Last month we had a meeting here, a Call to Remembrance. Isn't that similar?

LEONARD PREYRA: The Historica Dominion Institute does a number of things, but The Memory Project is for junior high and high school students who do projects.

THE CHAIR: Yes, it's a different thing, Junior. Well, Jim has made this suggestion.

LEONARD PREYRA: The PC caucus made the suggestion.

THE CHAIR: Is there any other comment on this suggestion as the next topic to bring forward? Are we agreed to this? Agreed.

Is there anything else to come before the meeting? Is it agreed that we adjourn?

Agreed, the meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 10:58 a.m.]