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ANGUILLA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

18 NOVEMBER 2025

(House Meetings)

Hon. Speaker

Speaker

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OTHER BUSINESS

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND BUDGET

Hon.Cordell Richardson:

Contains practical support programs that help farmers where they are. Such as? Subsidized inputs, seeds, fertilizers, feed and equipment, water tanks and irrigation. Shared houses and protected structures. Veterinarian services and animal health. Technical advice and extension services. Access to land through leasing programs. Marketing support. To farmers market. These are not glamorous programs, Madam Speaker.

But they are essential. They reduce the cost and the risk of farming. They show farmers that the government is a partner of their success, not an obstacle to overcome. I have visited several farms across the island from east to West. From Sandy Ground to Allen Harbor has spoken with several farmers who work small plots with hand tools and farmers who are experimenting with hydroponics. Madam Speaker, Wadi Al Shia is the dedication, pride in the work and a deep desire for support and recognition.

This budget provides both. Madam Speaker, the average age of a farmer in Anguilla is over 55 years. Let that sink in for a while. I repeat, the average age of a farmer in Anguilla is over 55 years. In one generation. If current trends continue. We will have lost the practical knowledge. The muscle memory and the passion that keeps our agricultural sector alive. And under my tenure. And my colleague.

Mr. Kyle Hodge, who is responsible for natural resources. We cannot afford for this to happen. This is unacceptable. And this budget begins to address it. Through partnership with Albania's comprehensive school New Technical Block. We are introducing agricultural science and agribusiness programs that expose young people to farming. Not as the grandparents knew it. But as it can be in the 21st century.

Technology. Theater driven. Environmental Sustainable. And to be financially feasible. We are working with the Ministry of Social Development to incorporate agricultural components into youth programs like Potential Unlock and Social Upskilling. Showing young people that farming can be a patriot to entrepreneurship. Not just employment. We are also exploring agricultural scholarship opportunities, partnering with regional institutions like University of West Indies Faculty of Food and Agriculture to ensure that young Anguillians can access world class training and agricultural science, Agri, business management and food technology.

Madam Speaker. We must make farming cool again. Perhaps make it cool for the first time. That means modern equipment. Digital Marketing. Value added products. And income levels that reflect the critical importance of this work. The future of agriculture and Anguilla depends not only on technology, but on our people. Particularly our young people.

That is why I am pleased to announce that agriculture will soon be formally introduced in the primary school system. Beginning with the Valley Primary School and the Orelia Kelly Primary School. This initiative. Will now be confined to classroom theory. It would be practical, engaging. And hands on. Students would be involved in planning, planting and maintenance of gardens right there on their own school grounds. They will learn the importance of soil preparation, water conservation, composting.

And the life cycle of plants. In essence, we'll be planting seeds not only in the soil. But in the minds of our young students. Through these programs. We are cultivating more than traps. We are cultivating discipline. Teamwork. Environmental awareness and national pride. These young minds will grow into citizens. Who value self-sufficiency. Who understand that food production is a noble calling? And who will one day carry forward the vision of a sustainable Anguilla? It is the intention of the government. That once these plots pilot projects take root, they will expand into other schools across the island in doing so.

We'll be shaping a new generation of farmers, scientists and businessmen and women. While ensuring that our agriculture means a living part of our economy, not a forgetting memory of the past. Madam Speaker. Growing food is very important. But we do. With that, food after harvest determines whether our farmers prosper or merely survive. Currently, most agricultural products in Anguilla are sold fresh with minimal processing.

A tomato is picked and sold as a tomato. A fish is caught and sold as a fish. While there is absolutely a market for fresh produce, this approach have limitations. Fresh products, fresh produce are perishable. They require immediate sale. They face competition from imports and the capture only a fraction of the potential value. This budget. Invest in agri-processing infrastructure.

Particularly the plan for fish processing facility and national abattoir. It opens the doors to value addition that transform raw products into diverse market ready goods. Consider the possibilities, Madam Speaker. Fresh fruits become smoked fish. Fish cakes. Fish Nuggets. Each with our longer shelf life and higher profit margins.

Livestock becomes not just fresh meat, but also cured meats, sausages and other processed products. Fruits become jam. Preserves. Juices and dried snacks. Vegetables become Pickles. Sauces and frozen prepared food. Orbs become teas, seasonal seasoning, and essential oils. Each step of the processing adds value. It also creates jobs, extends shelf life, open new markets and build brands that carry the history of Anguilla to the world. But, Madam Speaker.

Value addition requires investment. And equipment facilities. Training, packaging and marketing. It requires food safety certification. Quality standards. And a constant supply. These are challenges, yes. But there are challenges that this budget begins to address through strategic investment and Technical Support. Madam Speaker, I want to focus particular attention on the national abattoir.

Because this facility represents one of the most significant agricultural investment in modern history. Currently, Anguilla has no modern certified meat processing facility. This means that livestock farmers. Face numerous challenges in bringing their product to market. It means that we cannot fully capitalize on the growing demand for local meat. It also means that consumers pay premium prices for imported meat while our livestock sector remains undeveloped. Madam Speaker, we cannot continue in this rim.

The construction of the national abattoir will change this fundamentally. This faculty will provide livestock farmers with certified hygienic. And effective locations to process the animals according to international standards. It will also open up new market opportunities, not just in Anguilla, but potentially in neighboring islands. And as a youngster, I would have heard numerous stories about Anguilla being able to export fish. Meats, animal products to Samarthan. We must get back to that place where we could market outside of just Anguilla, and these are some of the opportunities that this government. Is proposing to make happy.

In this sector. It will ensure that meat products meet healthy and safety requirements that protect consumers. And critically. It will create a complete value chain from farm to table that keeps more money circulating in our local economy. But, Madam Speaker. Beyond economic benefits. This facility sends a powerful message that Anguilla is serious about developing its agricultural capacity. That we are investing in infrastructure that supports production and that we recognize livestock farming as a legitimate and value profession. I have spoken with livestock farmers across the island, men and women.

Who have maintained small farms for years. Often at personal costs because they believe in local production. Even when the economics didn't fully make sense. This budget rewards their fate and creates the condition for their success. And while we are speaking about umm. Livestock farmers we would have recently received. Some animals that are going to increase. And the breeding capacity That we have here in Anguilla, we have just received those last week.

So that is something that a livestock farmers would be very intrigued about and excited about. So that's a program that this government. Have rolled out. Because we are serious about livestock farming, I want to see meat production increase here in Angola. Madam Speaker. Permit me to be a bit direct. Anguilla imports approximately 90%. Of the food we consume. Pause and reflect on that number. 90%.

That means 9 out of every 10 bites of food eaten by an Anguillian family come from somewhere else. Travel across the ocean. Pass through multiple hands and arrive on our shoes at a price inflating.

Hon.Cordell Richardson:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker. As I draw to a close. I want to speak directly to different groups of society. To our farmers and our Fisher folks. This budget is for you. It recognizes your work. Support your efforts and invest in your future. So how are you?

Agriculture is not the grandfathers profession unless you choose to make it so. Modern farming is technology. The opportunities in this sector for creative, ambitious young people. Who see the potential? I invite you to explore these opportunities with fresh eyes and open minds. The consumers. When you choose local produce, you are not just buying food, you are supporting your neighbors. You are strengthening our economy. You're reducing our invent our environmental footprint. You are investing in our food security.

To investors. There are significant opportunities. And Anguilla and in Anguilla's agricultural sector processing, packaging of distribution. To my honorable colleagues in this House, I ask for your support. Of this budget, not just in words, but in action. Speak about agriculture in your constituencies. In constituencies, connect farmers with resources. Advocate for local products.

In your own purchasing. Read me the speech. This budget is about more than numbers and allocations, it is about people. The aspirations, the livelihoods, the future and its purpose. We are moving forward together nonetheless. Empowering our people. Strengthen our purpose and ensuring the prosperity is not a privilege for a few, but a shared reality for all. Madam Speaker, in full support of this budget, I urge all members of this honourable House to do the same.

I thank you and, and by extension, I'd like to thank the people of district. For placing the trust in me. And I'm honored to serve in this House.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order. Good morning, member. What is, what is the point of order? The point of order is that section 56 Three of the Rules of Procedure states that a member shall not read his or her speech, but he or she may read extracts from the written printed papers to support his or her argument. The Member for Valley South is reading verbatim from a prepared speech and that is against the Rules of Procedure, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you for noting the rules. I have taken a very flexible approach on reading because several members have read on both sides of the aisle from their speech. Members, proceed with your speech, please.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker. How is it that you have taken a flexible approach when the members of the opposition, I mean, the members of the government, break the rules, but you're not taking a flexible approach when we make presentations. There's no member of this side of the House that I have read verbatim from in a speech. And I am saying to you, Madam Speaker, today that a member for Valley

South is breaching the rules, breaking the rules that is stipulated and the rules of procedure, and you are acquiescing to that, the breaking of rule and saying that you ain't justifying it as such. Like I said yesterday. You are the arbiter.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Remember, it is too early. Thank you for your objection. Proceed Member from Valley-south, it is too early. I take I overrule your point of order because both sides read from time to time. If you want a strict approach to that, I can consider that at another time, but I'm not going to consider it today.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Member. Member for our Rd. South. Good morning. Let's start with good morning. You stormed into the House, you didn't acknowledge the sitting, you didn't say good morning to anybody. And your first matter of business is to interrupt a new parliamentarian and then you shout at me from the whale that the public is watching.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Speaker, our point of order, Madam Speaker. The member is impugned in proper motive.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The member is impugning and productive motive again. Because he is insinuating that Leader of Opposition can read a soft copy. When the Leader of Opposition said yesterday that he misspoke and the figure was indeed $9 million, he corrected that, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order. That is, he's the member is impugning product motor because these things were brought.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Hold on, member. He's imputing improper motive to whom?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

To the former administration.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, no, no. To whom?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

To the former administration.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You're raising a point of order of improved.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yes.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

You're going to the Roosevelt.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Imputing improper motive has to be to the member that's on their feet. So is he impute improper motive to any member? So who is the member that he's imputing improper motive to?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Make.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

He's impugning the proper motive to the minister who is responsible for water during that time, Madam Speaker, Yes, because.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You and and and how so?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Because he's claiming that there was number focus on water, there was none of these, yes, there was none of these present, none of these rules filled when the minister, these were budgeted for, allocated for. And we do not do the hiring, the ministers of government do not do the hiring of public service of public servants. This goes to public administration and that is where it fell down. So he's, he's trying to blame the former administration for these rules not being filled.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Remember, that is his debate.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member. First of all, hang on, Member. Imputing improper motive. Relates to what he's alleging against the member. What he's stating is a matter of fact that doesn't appear to be in dispute. Is it in dispute? Remember, I'm speaking to you. It's your point of order. I know you're on your phone, but I am addressing you.

Is it in dispute that there was no.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Director at the time, is that in dispute?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

He's stating a matter of fact. Your point of order is that he is imputing improper motive to you. Is it in dispute by what he says as a statement of fact that there was no director at the time?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

He is. He is given the impression that was due to.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Is that in dispute?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, no. Is it in this his, the statement that messed up Mr. Hodge made is that there was no director at the time. Your point of order is that he's imputing improper motive to you. So I'm asking you, I'm working through your point of order. I'm asking you, is it a dispute that there was no director at the time? Because that's all.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Statement are considered to me.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

He said.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, you are impugning a proper motive because you said.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member Hodge, please proceed.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Who said I would wish that it was?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Please proceed.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

My speaker, thank you.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

I know it is tactic.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Lord, if you don't scratch up, Madam Speaker. And a point of order. Just for correction for the member, like you did for me yesterday. The announcement was that abattoir was coming and it was under construction. Madam Speaker, no one at no point in time announced that it was completed and there was operational.

No one announced that it was opened and the announcements were always that it was under construction. So it was a appetite that was under construction. Yes, there were. The pipes were being laid in the floor and all those things, Madam Speaker, by the IT wasn't, it wasn't completed,

Madam Speaker, just for just for the correction and for the records.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yes, thank you for that. Remember, do you know the correction made by the member from Rd. North?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Madam Speaker.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

I can remember.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

The Leader of Opposition.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Would you withdraw unless you have it? OK, The Member will withdraw it, Mr. Richardson.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Yeah, but I'll look for that.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member noted. Proceed.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Now see what the IGP credit was supposed to be paid back if the stores passed it on to consumers in effortful, but then to them their records and point of sale system. I think the only two way we could do that now. Speaker The member knows it, but he's intentionally doing this, Madam Speaker, I'm wondering what he had plus the coffee this morning.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Yeah, now see you the.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker. There was a court order.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, that is not what the court

ruled so.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

He hang up, Hang on. He hasn't finished. The thoughts proceed.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

It was about giving.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

So, so the point of order from the honorable leader, which I'm dealing with no. So I I didn't interrupt because the point of. The point of order from the leader is that he wanted to, to, to clarify or to add on the second part of the limb, which you've now admitted that they were required to prove it. Whether or not they did or didn't isn't really what we're disputing because we don't have evidence on any of those things. But I think you accept the clarification. Point of clarification by the honourable leader.

Thank you very much for your respectful contribution, Leader, proceed.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Were required to prove it.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Yes.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yes.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Yes, they were required to prove it.

PARLIAMENTARY DECORUM

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Member. Member for our Rd. South. Good morning. Let's start with good morning. You stormed into the House, you didn't acknowledge the sitting, you didn't say good morning to anybody. And your first matter of business is to interrupt a new parliamentarian and then you shout at me from the whale that the public is watching. That's absolutely unacceptable.

Your Member to your left was once a young parliamentarian. He has improved, he is outstanding and it is unacceptable that you would do that to a new Member. So yes, the public is watching. Does any other member wish to speak? I recognize the honorable single island wide member, Mr. Hodge.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, may respond, may respond.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Mr. Hodge, please proceed.

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Madam Speaker, good morning, Madam Speaker. And good morning.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Well, I'm gonna ask the clock to give you back your time because the member for Wood S insists on heckling you and I think, and I think it's way too early for anybody to be heckled.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam, Madam Speaker, I am not heckling the Member.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I, I, I think it. Let's stand down for 5 minutes, please. This house stands down for 5 minutes.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I am not heckling the member.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Can you tell me the map?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Good morning. Again, we resume. Member Hodge was on his feet. I will invite him to continue his presentation. Member Hodge, we have not eroded your time. We'll take that into consideration when you get to the one hour mark. Please proceed.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

OK. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate it.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Remember that is your one hour, but I have given you room for an additional 30 minutes because of the disruptions this morning. Please proceed.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

So, Madam Speaker, that project is.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The word was representing that.

POINT OF CLARITY

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, on a point of clarity, I just want the clarity. The members say that the former minister allocated 4 million for water which year?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

7,000,007 million.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No 4, we could.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

I have the budgets here.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yeah.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Drive. We look at the back.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Member, for pointing that out. Are you satisfied? Member from Rd. South on where he's speaking about you found it. OK, good.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

I've studied the budget. I've studied.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, just on a point of clarity, I think the member said they prove they proved that they pass on the savings. Correct me if I'm wrong, if that's what you said.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Yes, yes.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

But but remember the the point of order that that was misleading because they did not prove, they could not prove that it passed it down because they themselves admitted that they did not pass it on because they did not trust that government will compensate them.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

What is the point of auto?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

OK, how so?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

OK, you've made a point of order saying they both are saying they who are we talking about?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You made the point of order. What is your point of order? You said they were not able to prove that they pass on. Who's that they?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Because there was only one company. He's speaking about one particular company who went to court. There's only one company. I went to court and the judgment didn't rule as he said, one way or the next. But what the judge said is that they needed sufficient time. That government did not provide enough time. So basically go back and prove that you know about what know about a member when hard to say that they proved that they passed on the savings when they add themselves, admitted that they did not pass on the savings because they did not trust that.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

What a judgment are we talking about?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

OK.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But that's what he said, that's what the member just said.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Come and see they. That would reimburse them.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

My speaker they have subsequent.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

To.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

No, but they have success.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member for Rd. So what? So what you both agree on is that the judgment said that they were required to present proof that they pass it on. What you both disagree on is whether or not they proved it or not.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yes, Madam Speaker, you're correct, because they themselves admitted on the record they during that time during the court case, during the court case that they did not pass on the okay.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Members, hold on, hold on. Is this an, is this an active judicial matter? Because if it is an actual active judicial matter, neither of us are able to deal with the point at all. I, I invite the honourable Minister of Finance indicate because there are certain principles of sub judicial matters that we can't rule on. Is this an active matter?

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Invited. Yeah, Yes.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, just by web intervention, the the matter subsequent to the court decision had remained in play in terms of communications and negotiations between the Government of Anguilla and the company. And so it is for all intents and purposes a life matter. I am happy to report that we will bring this matter to an end

during this term of office. And so I would not.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

To go much further into the details of the matter because it we're, we're close to wrapping that up. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

OK, so then I am going to invite the honorable Single Island Electoral District member to withdraw a reference to what was proven or not proven. OK, because it is sub judicial and we don't have a ruling on it. When we do, you can both Duke it out at an appropriate time. Is that fair? Honourable member for finance, member of finance Single Island. OK, proceed.

Member, I yield to you again another 5 or 10 minutes because that was from my clarification whether or not the point of order would be sustained. The member for Rd. South, point of order is sustained. Proceed. You did stop the time. Thank you Clark proceed. Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

You good. Thank you, Speaker. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

That is what I want to ask you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

That is why am I on speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

They were all nice. I can't go off, of course, I don't think.

GENERAL REMARKS

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

They were all nice. I can't go off, of course, I don't think.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Red dress for you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Members.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Good results for your.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

That's not simple. Thank you.

POINT OF ORDER ON JUDGMENT

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, honourable Member. Thank you for your contribution. I recognize there is one point that the honourable member for Rd. South has asked the clock to bring to my attention with respect to the point of order he took on the judgment. He has since provided a copy of the judgment and my ruling does remain the same. Member. I'll just make a reference to why the members are aware of Standing Orders 56 five, which indicates that a member shall not refer to a matter where judicial decision is pending.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

And I think that we had agreed on that, but I think you wanted me to see a particular paragraph of the decision at paragraph 128 of the decision in relation to a judgement provided by the Member for Rd. South Anguilla Building Construction Supplies Limited versus the Minister of Finance of Angola ET al, at the the ultimate paragraph of the rulings the court, among other things, did say that the matter is remitted back to the defendants for consideration in the light of the decision of the court.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

So my position is the same that it is sub judicial and there's no need to talk about it. So I wasn't sure what the provision of it

was, but but it remains the same and it's on the record. Thank you for your contribution.

BREAK ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

At this point, I am going to suggest that we take a short break, about 15 minutes just to refresh, have coffee and regroup. I do want to welcome in the gallery our Spanish speaking community liaison officer. Sorry to surprise you, Mr. Harvey Richardson. Thank you for being present.

And if we do need your support in terms of any translations, of course we'll always call on you. Thank you for coming this. We are going to stand out for 5 minutes. Thank you.

MICROPHONE CHECK

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Testing, testing.

SESSION RESUMPTION

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The setting is resumed. I apologize for our delayed start.

APPROPRIATION BILL DISCUSSION

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Does any other Member wish to speak to the appropriation bill that is on the floor?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The Chair recognizes the single island wide electoral district member Brian.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, honourable Member, appreciate your contribution.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Are there any other contributions? I recognize the single island wide electoral district Member Rogers.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

And I should say good afternoon to the listening public via the various media methods.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Madam Speaker, I'm so proud. We'll be following the youngest member. Parliament a rookie. Forstheimer is Forrest. Presentation and the budget debate. And the to the appropriations bill, Madam Speaker, I'm extremely proud of this entire team. I think that the future for Anguilla. Investing in these young parliamentarians. I believe will only go from strength to strength. Two decades ago, I remember my sitting in this House and first budget contribution.

And I was not as clear and concise as the rookies of today, so I applaud them, each and every one of them. And the entire team.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank you for the patience, the professionalism that you have exerted in your position as speaker.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Because at times, Madam Speaker, parliamentarians sometimes would want to flaunt the rules of this honorable house, and this is this house is honorable. And the behavior of some of us. And here, Madam Speaker, a classic example this morning was less than honorable. But I would want to move on. Madam Speaker, before I utilize much more of my time.

I want to congratulate the Honourable Premier and Minister of Finance for her presentation on this appropriations bill budget address that she delivered. And, Madam Speaker, it was historic in the sense that she's been the 1st female Premier. Our dear beloved. And, Madam Speaker, while females in this honorable house has always been in the minority.

But there are a force to be reckoned with. As a child, Madam Speaker, I remembered the late teacher Albina and the late Mrs. Idelia gums as the first two females who were elected to the honorable House. This facility didn't exist at the time. We were down in the old courthouse where statistics is at the moment and they were giants as well, so I applaud our two female representatives for their presentation.

Madam Speaker, and dishonor of the House.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Madam Speaker, let me start off by dealing with health. And I want to commend the Minister of Health, the Honourable Member for District 7, Mr. Cardigan Khan, and the entire team for giving me the opportunity yet again to be involved and improving the quality of health care in Anguilla.

Madam Speaker, the member it would have been criticized not only in this House, but on the various talk shows in terms of his ability, Madam Speaker, to be the Minister of Health. And he said on a number of occasions that he is fortunate to have someone like me with the experience in health, to be able to advise and assist, not only him but the people of this country in improving the quality of health care. Honest, open and forthright. Nothing to be ashamed of, Madam Speaker.

Because the facts are this administration, Madam Speaker, with the exception of the honorable island wide. Remember, Mr. Brian. And the honourable Member for District 4 Madam Speaker. Would be the two rookies in this House at this time. And Madam Speaker Anguilla would have been blessed to have elected a government,

Madam Speaker, where you would have had the premium. A former minister of Home Affairs. Constitutional Affairs. For five years. And we would have had the former Minister of Economic Development, Fisheries and so on in a previous administration. With ministerial experience being elected. Madam Speaker, you would have had the honourable Member for West End.

And you would have had the island wide member. Mr. Joseph and the Pool. And you would have had my representative from Valley N being elected before. So the point I'm making here, Madam Speaker, I am pro. That the experience that we would have on this side of the aisle and in this administration. The former APM administration, Madam Speaker, cannot claim the same.

Because in 2020 and I respect the wishes and the decisions of the people of Anguilla. 2020. Election the people of Anguilla.

POINT OF ORDER ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I did not indicate that it was OK for us to just have community projects. What I did say in my presentation was it started out as a community project. And since this has been has reached to the point with ethno, we should deliver to the people of Blowing Point their community project. Same as Mr. O'Connor indicated that Western football field is a community project and it's for the community.

I never said it's OK. It's just for communities.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Ma'am, by your response to the Honourable Members indication.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

On the same point of autumn, Madam Speaker, because I too mentioned the area issue of Community Project.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

To the member, the single element.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

What's your point of order?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

My point of order is that there are more than one member in this Parliament, including the honorable Cardigan member for Weston, who said that the Sorry, correct, right, So my.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I'm trying to follow your point of honors. Just let's go slow. I think what the issue before you even say it is that you did member. Can you specify which member said it was a community project? Because I do remember it came from two members on that side.

He's correct. Which one were you referring to?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I was afraid to remember the road law.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

North OK, so Rd. Member for Rd. North answered. I'm glad you clarified because I was wondering. Member for Rd. North said that he did say it was a community project, but I don't think that it.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

It started out as a community project.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Deliver the project so to be clear about what he intended or what he said was it started out as a community project, so deliver it as a committed project rather than it's OK to be just left as a.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, no, this part now this member said that you said it was OK to be just a community project. And So what the member just wants you to clarify is that it wasn't that intended to say it's okay. He just said it started out as a community project, so deliver it as a community project.

Is that fair? We accept your point of order member for Rd. North proceed.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

And Madam Speaker, if I may, because.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Hold on, do you have a point of order? Because he's clarified who he was speaking about?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Do you have? Yeah, I had the same. I had the same point of order. I had the same point of order.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But he wasn't speaking about you, so.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I know, but what my what I'm saying is this the member for what the member for the single member is indicating, what he said was said was actually said by me in terms of I said deliver for the community, deliver for the people of Lowing Point because that is what was the intention. And what we were both saying is that we are not only members who speak.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Mm-hmm.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, but the point of order is just limited. You're interrupting his debate. Complete your debate until he says something that you've said. Member, we can deal with it then, but for now less limited to what he has said. North has said. He's clarified it and he's accepted it. Move on Member Brian. And we have not eroded your time as what has been the practice.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Right.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

What's the point of order?

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

What's the point of order? Just a point of clarity. I don't honestly. I don't want to keep interrupting. Yes.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah, but it is it a point of order?

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

I spoke about demolition because in the Member for West End response to my questions that I asked in this honorable house, it says preliminary works, including demolition of the existing free.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

So I just wanted clarity, Madam Speaker, because I don't want to seem as if I'm just pulling things over. Madam Speaker, Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah, yeah. OK. So just so the members point submission that he's making and let's allow him to make his submission. The submission he's making is that there wasn't going to be any demolition. So proceed and explain the point.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

So what you'll do is make a note to bring it back in questions on another occasion if there is something that arises that doesn't require us to interrupt. You always have the right to come back at another time to question the member. So I see where you're going and I see what the concern is with what member Connor would have said in his answer to questions.

But let's allow him to make his debate. And then later on you can always come back and say, member, can I have a question for you based on what was represented on such and such date?

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Yeah, thank you, Madam Speaker, The the intention was never to interrupt, but it was to bring clarity.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, I understand that. I understand you completely. Don't worry, I understand you. Go ahead, Member Brian.

POINT OF ORDER ON RELEVANCE

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I'm trying to understand irrelevance to the debate in the political speech that a Member is presenting.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Which part of it that you have an issue with under your point of honor? Which statement that he made?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

The entire, the entire introduction about experience and the members and the ministers and so forth, I'm trying to understand the relevance to this particular debate.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But you just joined the chamber, so which part? Something that he just said.

DEBATE INTRODUCTION

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But you just joined the chamber, so which part? Something that he just said.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

No, I didn't just join the chambers over listening all along. What the thing, what he was just saying relating to the previous member, Minister for Ministry of Home Affairs and the member for West End.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

OK.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But he's just introducing his debate. I mean, other members did that yesterday on both sides.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I don't. So you're advocating that your side was relevant to the budget yesterday? Is that what you're saying?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Mr. Mr. Rogers, please proceed.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I won't be deterred by the Member. You can get up as much as you want.

HEALTH BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

And all I was saying is that at the end of the day, the people of Anguilla in 2020 would have elected a government. Madam Speaker, where? None of the elected members who formed the previous administration would have had ministerial experience, matter of fact. So I understand the challenges that they would have had.

And to go back to this budget, Madam Speaker. As I mentioned before. The Member for West End would have been open and honest. And when we compare that, Madam Speaker? And when we look at health. Because health is part of the budget. And we look at. Health over the last.

Four years and eight months, Madam Speaker, the first time in the history of this country and in this honorable House we would have had the most qualified. Medical specialists not only leading. The government business, but also leading the Ministry of Health and Finance. So, Madam Speaker. When we look at the Constitution and. My colleague mentioned 8 out of 11. And the criticisms, Madam Speaker, that would have taken place with respect.

Then the honourable Member for West End. The fact is our constitution only allows for the Premier and for other ministers. And there's 8. About some decide, so some of us will have to advise, some of us will have to do other things, and I'm glad. That they would have reposed in me. Their confidence in order to be able to deal with health. Madam Speaker.

The ill advised decision. To repeal the Health Authority Act, Madam Speaker. And replace it. With the legislation that created the Department of Health Services. Without taking into consideration, Madam Speaker. The difficulties. That are associated, Madam Speaker, with the bureaucracy. Of government. Madam Speaker. The health authority. Was not perfect. And of course. It needed amendments to the legislation.

In order to make it much more efficient and effective. In the delivery of health care in Anguilla. But, Madam Speaker. Reverting it back. So the government, Madam Speaker. Has made it worse. Madam Speaker, that was not the solution. And it will never be the solution when it comes to health care. Under government's control. There was a reason why, Madam Speaker, that health care and the health authority was created in the first place.

The member for Rd. South. Said earlier on one of his point of orders. That public administration is responsible for filling the vacancies. When the honorable minister. Of economic development is speaking about the vacancies in water. And that is true, Madam Speaker, not only for water, but it is also true.

For a Department of Health Services. So if the minister or former Minister of Health wanted more control, Madam Speaker. I would have expected him. To do as the premier said. To pause. Reassess. Not look. For Stacy or anyone else but to look for the vast majority of the people of Anguilla. The relevance, Madam Speaker, is that the health authority.

And which is no longer exist, The Department of Health Services, Madam Speaker. Leaves a light to be designed. It is painful. As it stands, Madam Speaker, but we're not going to run away from it. Madam Speaker. Remember for Rd. South made a comment yesterday. About millions of dollars. Missing or unaccounted for in relation to the health authority.

That being said, Madam Speaker, I don't lend this honorable House, but it was also said. And the APM. Campaign. Leading up to the elections of 2025. But I am saying this, Madam Speaker, I challenge. The deputy governor. Who is responsible for the civil service? And I challenge the PS of finance. Madam Speaker.

To inform the public. With respect to those allegations, because they were they, they would have. The facts. As to what is missing, as to what is accounted for, So I am, I am challenging them, Madam Speaker, they're not. The PS Finance is not a legislator. The deputy governor is.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The member is misleading intentionally. The figure the member knows that there were two reports done, one by BDO which was the official answer, and one by done by a company called The Difference. But these studies reports were done and showed that their monies between 4:00 and $6 million that were unaccounted for not only in one year, but several years ago. Also it was the public account for many levels because then a.

Investigation on this and then the 20/17/2018 and they looked into this and showed that similar cases they were unaudited reports and their reports showed that there was unaccounted by these. This is fact and this is in the public domain. So the points, to be clear, the point of order was in reference to him saying that the governor's office should investigate it or didn't investigate it.

What was this? What was it's very difficult today. The member said. Uh-huh. Remember, remember, what did you see?

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Somebody said let me go back to my notes that I challenged the deputy governor.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

MMM.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

And the permanent secretary of Health. To clarify. The allegations that they were missing or unaccounted for, that is simple.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

So they're two different things. One, your response, honorable members that there are reports in respect of it.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Right.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Challenges that that that but the persons that he's challenging to to find these report investigate are different from the reports that you've said exists. So there are two different things the member I understand is calling on an investigation by two different entities and. When he made the first submission, he said he's calling on them to investigate. Right, the honourable leader, your objection, he did. When you got, when you rose, it was because he said he was calling on these two entities to investigate.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Who did? But he also said that he.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Challenges that that he basically was stating that there was no, no, no, he didn't say that there was well, no, he he didn't say that there was no money. He said which you agreed that I challenged them to investigate and then you rose. So you rose from what I understand on the basis that there is there are reports and you are you said I'm I'm clarifying what you've said because you ought to know that their reports.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Speaker He did say also that his opinion was that I'm paraphrasing now. Because unlikely they've been both single along the way. English is not my second language I'm speaking.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

He did say that. Paraphrasing is opinion on us that will exist.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

His opinion, his opinion can be that the sky is yellow. So I, I think we're all on the same page. I think that the point of order is that you don't agree with him taking an opinion that there isn't a finding. You don't agree with him because there is a finding in your view. But the bemba that he knows about and the member will say to you, well, I don't know about it because I don't have it. So if you want to bring it, you can bring it, but he's entitled to his opinion.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

What he thinks exists or not exists. I think we agree. OK, proceed.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

And and, Madam Speaker, all I'm asking for. Is verification of what was saying.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Remember, from Sandy Hill, I don't know if I'm gonna invite you into the conversation. I think I see your indication, but I think I'm going to not see your indication. Please proceed, Member.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Yes, so, so that's all I'm asking for, Madam Speaker, if it's if it's out there, bring it, you know, whatever reports they are, but. The Member for Island Harbour mentioned about a public accounts report as well. Is that what you said? Good, I hope. Member that you are sitting as the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee now, that you would investigate some of the allegations that were brought forth yesterday. During the presentation of the Member for Valley not and, Madam Speaker, I am putting it on record.

That we intend to ask for that. Audited report or unaudited report. So while there are reports with respect to the health authority, let us be conscious of. The presentation that was made yesterday by my representative in this honourable House, Madam Speaker, of which I will come to some of them a little later on, yes.

So, Madam Speaker. We, the public, needs to know if they're there, let's have them out. Let's do an investigation. When we look back, Madam Speaker. I am not so sure. If. The former Minister of Health. What I've realized how difficult and time consuming. It would be. To fill some of the positions in healthcare, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the health authority wasn't perfect, but at least. It was a human resources department that could address. The frequencies in an expedition man. I was given.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Uh, speaker.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Point of order members also misleading because course seven of the. The act that the Department of Health Services. States that. Department is allowed to make emergency. Recruitment for up to six months. And then can extend at. After that for up to two years. The member would know this if he's ready.

Thank you very much.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The statement that he said that was objectionable. Just so I can which part of it?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Recruit.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

At least late then that because the. And all the health services now the public administration does the hiring. There is a cause in the act of. Allows for help. To recruit without going through their usual public.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But that's what emergencies you said.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

But it's up to six months and then it can be extended to the usual. In terms of getting. Upstairs it is possible to get person.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

So, but I don't think he said anything wrong. I think there are two different things. He's saying that they act no requires recruitment by public admin and you're only adding an extension to that to say that unless in emergency circumstances. So. I yeah, I think, I think if we find everything he debates objectionable, we'll be standing up a lot. These are his interpretation from things that are factual. If it's not factual, then he must withdraw it. But if it's factual but just not a complete point, I think, you know, he he can submit poor head proceed.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Difficulties, Madam Speaker. What is happening? Madam Speaker. The provisions that he mentioned. In the act, Madam Speaker. To this very day. I'm not sure. If that provision. Was enacted because, Madam Speaker, just as an example. It would have taken. At least six months. To fill a position. Or a dental assistant from the time of interview to the time.

Of higher. Madam Speaker. The nursing vacancies that existed, Madam Speaker. Prior to February. 26 Two, 1025, Madam Speaker. Is a classic example. Madam Speaker, that. The provisions. As the member mention. Would not have been adhered to, and I want to make this point, Madam Speaker, I want to make this point because.

March and April this year. The average overtime, Madam Speaker. For nurses. Would have been around 69,000 EC dollars over time. Per month and if the member. As he indicated, spoke about this emergency or urgent hiring. Obviously. The Department of Health Services or whoever in the Department of Health Services.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND EMPLOYEE WELFARE

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

The Department of Health Services or whoever in the Department of Health Services. Probably Madam Speaker was not aware of it and if you're going to have and he knows the members are knows better, member for I'll have it knows better. Because if you are going to have nurses doing a 12 hour shift, 10 or 12 hour shift and then expected to do overtime. They are only human beings, Madam Speaker.

It must affect patient care, the morale, and there is something we call burnout, and the member for Island Harbor knows about that very well, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, was the former Minister of Health. Is government aware of that overtime figure. And this just didn't happen in February and March since this administration took over. And that, Madam Speaker, was just a tip of the iceberg.

Madam Speaker, again, the difficulties that are associated with the Department of Health Services that the minister and the Member would have brought to this House and implement the legislation for the Department of Health Services. Overtime, Madam Speaker. The member spoke about overtime for the folks in water. It is required to do overtime or let me take back the word overtime to do on call.

And any health care facility. And, Madam Speaker, and let me put on record that the employees being paid for their overtime and on call for June and July. It was paid in September and that is under the Department of Health Services. It never occurred under the health authority. Never, Madam Speaker, so again.

An example, and I'm not going to go through all of them. Because we're going to have a time in this House where we'll debate all of those sort of things, Madam Speaker. Never appeared. Don't take my word for it. Find out from the employees who did overtime and on call allowance Not my work. Add my word, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there cannot be a health care system or improvement to quality healthcare and delivery in Anguilla or anywhere else without the staff. Cannot be. And, Madam Speaker, we are going to provide scholarships and training opportunities for our healthcare workers, Madam Speaker, at every level. From housekeeper down to the physicians and specialists. We would have already sent off Madam Fika 3 nurses. One to the UK and two started training in Barbados Community College. September of this year.

And I am saying, Madam Speaker, to the young folks that are out there. And we intend to go into the schools and to the upper forms. To encourage, Madam Speaker, individuals who would be interested in the health care profession. To apply. Make the applications to the various universities once you are accepted, Madam Speaker.

Then you bring it to us and this administration, and we will find Ways and Means to be able to support. Madam Speaker. Our healthcare professionals, we'll find the training. Madam Speaker. Every single one of those for the folks on the opposition side, the members would have echoed their support for the public service. Show the reinstatement of the salary grades to 2008. And I admire that, I support it as well. But, Madam Speaker.

I didn't hear one of them mention anything about the employees of the Department of Health Services or the former employees of the health authority. Madam Speaker, I would be ashamed to have awarded 1. Set up the civil servants and increase restoration of their salaries and salary grades. And neglect, Madam Speaker.

The others and when I say neglect, Madam Speaker, I am saying this because the Department of Health Services employees is still Madam Speaker. Receiving the reduced salaries as a result of the 2000 and eight 2009 reductions. So. Coming from a large family, Madam Speaker. And there's no doubt that my father was a loving man, had a lot of us. When you share your share and share alike. This civil service, Yes. Increase.

Oh. In 2008 salaries. In 2024 January. In 2025 January, civil servants, yes, no problems at all with it. I am not against that. What ho in heavens name? You can do that for one. Side of the eye and not do it for the other. All sorts of stories. They can't find this record, they can't see this. They can't find the, the, the grading. Yeah, gradings in healthcare are different from the civil servant. Do you think? In healthcare that the member for Alabama window personnel to holder.

Lots of stuff. What I'm saying, Madam Speaker, that that in my estimation, was a basic neglect. Madam Speaker of the employees. Of the Department of Health Services. And I'm sure that a number of them. Are listening, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, for this administration is going to do for that.

And there are some discrepancies in terms of salary, grades and so on and so forth. I make no bones about that it was, but they are healthcare workers just like the civil servants are government workers. What we will do, Madam Speaker. Is to make sure. That every single employee. Of the Department of Health Services. Would receive what I term, Madam Speaker, as an appreciation allowance.

An appreciation allowance because it is on record in January 2023 and in January 2024, Madam Speaker. The restoration and increases for the civil servant, you're going to give an appreciation allowance, Madam Speaker. Each employee of the Department of Health Services. Will receive an appreciation allowance. Of $6000. Every single one of them, Madam Speaker and

Madam Speaker. That is what they will receive. And their hands. Some will have different views about it, but it's an appreciation allowance because. There is. An exercise that is being undertaken by PwC Price or a house. With respect to salaries. And then there is another. Exercise that is going on.

In terms of public sector reform. And we expect. That the healthcare employees. Would be looked at differently. And rightfully so, then. The rest of the civil service, Madam

Speaker, appreciation and Madam Speaker, added to that. We are looking at giving a 5%. As of January the January 2026. On the existing salaries until. The reports from PW C.

Andy Expert. With the employees regrading comes through. So we'll we're looking at our at our staff, Madam Speaker. Looking at our staff and we are hoping that this report from PwC. Would be available by February or March 2026. And we are looking at that. Of course, Madam Speaker. We must be able. To improve the quality of health care. And it is the responsibility of us. As elected members, Madam Speaker.

And as legislators to make sure, Madam Speaker. That we use parity. And dealing. With our civil service. Because they are civil servants now, Madam Speaker. It is their responsibility too. Even in these difficult times, Madam Speaker. To exert. The professionalism that they have been trained. Treasure. I know it's difficult, but I'm calling on that.

To do that. Madam Speaker. I go back to. The Premier's address and on page 8, the very final paragraph. And she mentioned Madam Speaker. We have achieved unprecedented levels of investment in healthcare services development, addressing both health infrastructure and equipment to improve patient care. Critical repairs to the Princess Alexandra and Community Health centers have been completed alongside equipment upgrades and the operating theater. NICU another critical areas, Critical units, dialysis machines, ventilators. Endoscopic towers, just to name a few.

And Madam Speaker. I am at the heart. Of improving the quality of health care in Anguilla. An ultrasound machine, Madam Speaker. The latest there is. What, over $100,000? Partial payment has already been made. It's coming from GE. Generally electric and I didn't go to GE alone. I went to Siemens as well as Phillips. Free leading manufacturers. Madam Speaker.

Is coming. Madam Speaker, the C. And the member. Island Harbour. For district one knows. Very well what they are. Is coming. Remember. And remember, I would want. Madam Speaker, I would want to place on record. Not only my profound appreciation. But the appreciation of the entire. Our entire country. Including the government.

To Gary and Connie Shaw. The Leader of the Opposition knows them very well. Because I would have introduced him to them. Profound appreciation, Madam Speaker, for their contribution. To the latest equipment. For mammography studies. On this island. To the tune, Madam Speaker. Of more than. 570,000. U.S. dollars, Madam Speaker, we want to thank them.

I know they wouldn't want their names to be called, but I have to do it and this is not the first. Contribution that they would have made to our beautiful country. I want to thank them publicly and in this honorable host for their continued. Support, Madam Speaker. Of health care in this country. And Madam Speaker, that costs include the purchasing of the equipment.

Five years of manufactured warranty. We want to thank them. There are villa owners in this country and they have been assisting us, Madam Speaker, over the years. The former Minister of Health and Premier could attest to that. Because I'm sure. An MRI machine that is over there. I'm going to come to that in a little bit.

They continued to do that, Madam Speaker. For this country. Madam Speaker. The refurbishing of the second operating theatre over at the hospital. Is in train. The Laminar. I'm sure. A member for Highland Harbour. The Good Duck. You know all about this. There's a theater, the second theater, at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

That we are going to retrofit. Not only for orthopedic surgery, but for ophthalmology as well and to be. A backup for the main theater. Already. In train, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker. Orthopedic equipment. An ophthalmology equipment, Madam Speaker, to the tune of almost a half a million U.S. dollars.

Is being purchased. As we speak, Madam Speaker. I'm not going. To talk very much about the MRI, but I will say this. And I would say this to my classmate and former. Premier. We are glad, Madam Speaker, that we can do Mris. In Anguilla, even though it's limited. I was never. Madam Speaker.

Weightlifter, you know, shoulders are very narrow, so my shoulders may be able to go through that particular. MRI machine, but it is limited. And Madam Speaker. On a visit. To Miami at the Miami Convention Center. That I know that. The member for Island Harbor is very familiar with.

As part of. Displays from all over the world. Every single. Manufacture you can think about. Madam Speaker, was there. People in this country may not know that I. In my early years before I had Gray hair. I would have done by medical engineering as well. So I took the model and serial number.

Of the MRI, the containerized MRI that we have over on the Princess Alexandra Hospital ground. And I went to Phillips because. It was manufactured by Philips. And they put the model and serial number in. Madam Speaker. Next month. Phillips. Is going to cease. Making. Spare parts for that particular model and serial number. We are glad to have it. But again. Foresight.

I don't. Sleeper, yes. They say beggars can't be choosers, but we can always be refusers. If I am in need of a bowl of soup, there is no. That I'm going to accept a bowl of feces. Beggars and our choosers, but they can't be refusers. And while my travel, Madam Speaker?

Folk from the opposition may or may not have said it. Oh, the travelling, the travelling and so on, And that is one of the reasons why, Madam Speaker, that I can stand up here and speak about the equipment that I just spoke about, because I traveled to make sure,

Madam Speaker, that what we are getting here. Is no less than anywhere else. Nothing. OK. My commitment to the people. Madam Speaker. I would want to. Encourage. My classmate and good friend.

HEALTHCARE IN ANGUILLA

Hon.Evans McNiel Rogers:

My classmate and good friend. To get on board with us, because from time to time I'm going to come and ask you your advice about certain things that we are. We will be doing, I have no fear about that, the politics for me. Madam Speaker, is in the past.

It is about the people of this beloved country. And I have no qualms, Madam Speaker, of approaching the leader of government, business and the former premier to talk about health and where we need to go with it? None whatsoever. I'm not ashamed about it and I intend to do it. Because at the end of the day, it's not for me or him. Is for the people of this country and I am hellbent, Madam Speaker, on improving the quality of healthcare available and the delivery to the people of Anguilla.

I asked of the honorable premier to give me that opportunity. The other ministers and assistants and advisors would deal with all the other portfolios. I am specifically dealing leader of the opposition with health and I'm going to be to you. I'm going to come to you and I'm not afraid to do that to get your opinion.

Madam Speaker, we are. We have lots of issues that we have to deal with, Madam Speaker, lots of issues. There is no doubt. That staffing, Madam Speaker, is an issue. Madam Speaker, over the last six months. We would have interviewed a psychiatrist. And OBGYN. A pediatrician. Several medical technologies, a biomedical engineer, a physical therapist, just to name a few.

Would have interviewed them, Madam Speaker. And when we get to the point where we are making an offer, they all have turned it down. So it is an issue we have to pay our healthcare workers. And I don't want to hear anything about civil servants and equipment and stuff like that. We have to pay our healthcare workers. Mosferem, Madam Speaker, and I am patiently awaiting.

The reports. For the salary review and upgrading and whatever else. Along with the public sector reform. Patiently awaiting it, Madam Speaker. We healthcare workers, we are a different species. And while everyone has risks. You have more risks. And all the others. Madam Speaker. We have to address. Not only The Saturdays, but the working conditions. About health care workers. I have no shame.

And approaching individuals, whether we are of the same political persuasions are now none whatsoever. At the end of the day, it is about improving the quality of health care delivery in Anguilla and I said. Previously. That I will be reaching out. The former premier and Minister of Health. In autumn, Madam Speaker, for us.

To be competitive in order for us to. Recruit and retain our healthcare professionals. We've got to become competitive. As they're going to siphon them off away from us. In the United States, and I'm sure that the member from Island Harbour kind of tested this, there are a number of nationalities. And different specialties and professions are all there, always competing, Madam Speaker, and we are no different.

And we've got to be able, in order to improve the quality of health care for all people here in Anguilla, we must be competitive. At one time we were, but everybody has stepped up their game. So we've got to step our game up too. And I would have said this to the Minister of Finance and to my colleagues in Cabinet. That we have to be able. To do that, Madam Speaker, I would have said.

And numerous occasions in the past that we are looking at a modern medical facility, a complex, Madam Speaker, so to speak. I would have said it. Got criticized on the various political platforms for it, but I am sure. That the former Premier and Minister of Health would agree with me that a facility fit for purpose is needed in Anguilla. And I'm gonna reach out to him, too.

To be able to do that because he is an Anguillian. One of us, and as I said, my classmate. So we're going to do it. And it has to be done. There is no. How should I put it? There is no greater investment, whether it's from the dot AI funds than to invest, Madam Speaker.

In healthcare. And educating your people. So if it has to come from the that AI. So be it, but at the end of the day, we must have it done. And Madam Speaker, to that end. As of January 2026. God's Spare life to January 2028. It will be a concerted effort, Madam Speaker, to do the preliminary work.

To make sure. That we have not only a state-of-the-art but a fit for purpose facility in Anguilla, a medical complex of which the hospital would be part of doctor's offices and, and, and the specialists can come and and and and have offices there as well. But it has to be, Madam Speaker, well thought out, well prepared and well planned.

Two years, Madam Speaker. I am giving this and of course one would say, hey, there's not a line item in the budget for it. But there is an item. In the budget capital under health, I believe it's. $13 million, are we going to use some of that? In order to be able to get the studies, in order to be able to do what we have to do and Leader of the Opposition, former Premier Member for Ireland Harbour, you will be contacted.

And I am going to reach out to you in terms of getting what is the best for Anguilla in terms of healthcare. Apolitical, outside of the political sphere. It is for the people of Anguilla, Madam Speaker. In terms of a nursing school, we know that Saint James. It's gone. And Madam Speaker.

The possibility? For a nursing school in Anguilla is real. Organized by a group of Hank Williams and we are working working with them. Of course, the legislation for establishing the nursing council and the regulations has all gone through. And we are going to work with them to make sure.

That we have. In nursing school facility here in Anguilla fully supported. By this government and I'm sure that it will be supported. By the members of the Opposition, at least the Leader of the Opposition, I know for sure will support Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker. I'm going to put a team together. To look at the legislation, Madam Speaker.

Of the Department of Health Services, Vosos. The health

authority. Legislation that was repealed, we got to come up, Madam Speaker. With a formula Love. That would assist us here, Madam Speaker, in providing the quality health care that we need. Not only Madam Speaker, but that we are looking at dental health as well.

And we already, I am already, Madam Speaker. And discussions with individuals so that we can do. Root canals so that we can do removal of. Wisdom teeth. And, and, and all sorts of other things, Madam Speaker, training. And I'm sure that my classmate would agree with me. We've got to come up, Madam Speaker, something.

That is going to have oversight. That would be accountable, Madam Speaker. And would have to continuously assess where we are from a healthcare perspective. But it must be LED. By someone who was committed. To it and your honorable servant, Madam Speaker. As was elected by the island wide electorate will do that. Madam Speaker.

Going on. We will look. From the Anguilla Community College, we've got to, Madam Speaker, invest in it. And we've got to make the programs, Madam Speaker, relevant to our overall development here and as such. We will instill, Madam Speaker, a program that is called soft skills training. And every single Madam Speaker.

Health care worker, It will be mandatory. To go through that training, Madam Speaker. From the physicians up. To housekeeping. Everyone, Varam's bigger must be done, and even if it's challenged in court, Madam Speaker, we will come to dishonorable host and make sure. That is they, they, they. It is passed here so that they'll have to follow it.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we're going to address the salary issues. We have to deal with the working conditions, Madam Speaker, until. The two year period where we're having those discussions in terms of moving forward with a new medical complex, I've said it before. But it's God's willing. It will be reality. And Madam Speaker, the staffing issues.

We improve the quality of healthcare delivery. And, Madam Speaker, we must be working together from a healthcare perspective. We must have a sense of purpose. Not only our employees. Not only for the public that they serve, but there must be a unity of purpose, Madam Speaker. To improve the quality of healthcare. And it's deliberate to the people of Anguilla, perhaps because I have been in this honorable house. For two decades. And I stand.

Here. Take some of the criticisms and the responsibility. But I'm not looking back. I'm looking forward. And the criticisms and experience that I would have had over the years, Madam Speaker, put me in a unique. Position to be able to improve the quality and delivery of healthcare in Anguilla and we have to start with our employees, then we have to deal with our institutions and equipment and instrumentations, instrumentation and then we must move on. Madam Speaker.

Before my time ran out. I would want to make a few comments. In relation to. The presentation by members on the opposite side. And I go back to. The member for. North and he spoke about, he said, 10 months. 95% of the APM budget. I spoke about bucks of frogs. And all sorts of other things. But I'm glad, Madam Speaker.

And I am happy to see. That my good friend really and truly is taking on his role in opposition. As far as I'm concerned, that's my opinion, much more effective. And then he was on this side of the aisle, so we welcome that. He did mention about. A marine and sandy ground, and no one in sandy ground knew about. I don't know. About that, Madam Speaker, that.

Is left to be verified, but I know that I was. In Sandy ground at the Methodist Church on more than one occasion talking about the Marina down there. Quite a lot of objection to it and so on. And so forth. But he didn't mention Madam Speaker. That. Ten months. And mentioned some roads. I suspect in this community.

And there's nothing wrong with that, honourable Member. But you must take into consideration. That your administration was in office for four years and eight months. Right and if your administration. Was in office for four years and eight months. It means then. That when you lead a call election. It was anticipated that you would be returned as a member of government.

Politics. As a strange rate of leveling out things. My brother, don't be that naive. You're going to get, you're going to have experience now and you will grow. Overtime. Rover time you didn't mention about. A 5% cut and I said absolutely or something like that. Hey, if it's a cut, it's a cut.

And if I agree with something, I'll I'll agree with it on a premise, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, someone spoke about electrical electricity credits. You know, I, I. While the electricity credit may be a Band-Aid, Madam Speaker, adoption of. Electricity to the entire. Community, Madam Speaker, to me is much more important than essential, OK?

And while we we will. Do something about that. We are also looking at the long term. Long term. Solution, Madam Speaker, to electricity issues. You mentioned that the purpose of leadership is not to make the present bearable.

LEADERSHIP AND LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

You mentioned that the purpose of leadership is not to make the present bearable but to make the future possible. Wholeheartedly endorsing. Let to make present bearable. But wholeheartedly, and one would ask the question, wait a minute, you're speaking about the roads in North Hill and so on. Four years and eight months, I think it was you all in office. You know. Yeah, and while there were issues with COVID and Hurricane Irma, the remnants of Hurricane Irma and so on, it just didn't exist,

Madam Speaker, for the former administration, you know, it existed for us, too. That's right. So we have to take all of that, Madam Speaker, into consideration, but I must say the member for Rd. North. To be quite frank, I was in this

honorable house 2 years sitting with him and since he's been in opposition. I must admit my admiration for you has gone up five or six notches.

Thank you. Thank you, thank you. Sometimes it takes being in opposition to really unreal who we are, you know, and when I say that, Madam Speaker, when I say that, Madam Speaker, I can speak because I sit on both sides of this aisle. For two decades on both sides of the eye. So I understand the dynamics of it.

But I must say I'm proud you know of the standard you're taking now in the representation. I must, I must say that. Madam Speaker. The former Premier and Minister of Health he thanked the AUF for fully in adopting the APM plan. 5 more minutes. Oh, 15, Thank you. I will wrap on that.

Yes, I do. Yeah. How about I? I said Thank the AUF for fully adapting the APM plan, right? This administration, Madam Speaker, while we are political operatives in this honourable House, we are operatives of the people of Anguilla. If the APM. Its plan? Is worthwhile. If it's going to benefit the vast majority of the people of Anguilla. I have no issue in supporting it, Madam Speaker, none whatsoever.

None and if you think that it is 90% AUA PM plan, then so be it. But I adopt, Madam Speaker, the approach of our honorable leader when she mentioned we must pause, Madam Speaker, we must assess, Madam Speaker, what is happening. That is the responsible thing to do. Rather than. Going ahead with. The plans and the projects that the former administration would have had, we have to, we had to pause.

We had to look back, Madam Speaker, and to see exactly where we are. I thank God, Madam Speaker, for the leader and the team. Is young folks, Madam Speaker. Some of them getting their feet wet for the first time as ministers. I appreciate and applaud you all. It's not going to be easy task, but at the end of the day, I know you all have not only the institutional capacity and the ability to deal with it, you'll get over the rough patches. Opposition will always be opposition and you cannot and will not, Madam Speaker.

Satisfy everyone in public, but you have to lookout for the masses of the people. I am an advisor, Madam Speaker, and I am advising from this House to my colleagues. That is what it is. Madam Speaker. The member. For Ballinard, my representative. And I should say my replacement. Very proud of a Madam Speaker with her presentation.

Factual information. And Madam Speaker. I too was alone. Because we don't share information or attain no preparation, I don't know what. My representative will say, you know, or any other members on this side here. But me too. I was alarmed, Madam Speaker. With the content. Of a presentation, Madam Speaker.

And I believe that the former minister of. Tourism. He too. I wouldn't say be concerned, but he too. Should have a keen look, Madam Speaker, at her presentation. And I am going to. Sponsor, Madam Speaker, and I don't do much of that. At least, Madam Speaker. For her presentation in its entirety. To be paid, to be played, not once, not twice. But several times, Madam Speaker, on public radio to be able.

So that some of our folks can listen to it because it's not everyone is going to hear the. The House of Assembly debates and we're going to move on. Proud of all of them, Madam Speaker. Every single presentation I was proud of Madam Speaker. The banking resolution, Madam Speaker.

The member for Alan Harbour, leader of Opposition, said he hasn't seen it. It's five years gone. He was the chair of the ECCU I believe at one point in time. You can correct me if I'm wrong. So I'm wondering why, in heaven's name he hasn't seen it as yet.

But we heard a lot about that, Madam Speaker. We heard a lot about the junior and senior shield. Through you, Madam Speaker, I would just want to inform the Member. And the rest of the listening public that we are working on that we are not going to be so irresponsible to say, well, because the Farmer administration would have.

You know, instituted it means that we must cast it aside, Madam Speaker. You know. And when we look at, Madam Speaker, you mentioned about the healthcare budget in 2025, two pediatricians, 2 surgeons and and so on and so forth, all of those things. We're going to put in place, but as I mentioned earlier. The challenges in tones of recruiting those in individuals. Right. And you know what it would be, Madam Speaker?

Going forward. Madam Speaker. The Member for Valley North. And her presentation? She spoke about a number of things, some of them. To the general public and some of us alarming in terms of what took place. In the Department of Tourism or the Ministry of Tourism and so on, it is, it is troubling,

Madam Speaker, troubling, troubling, troubling. And I await, Madam Speaker, the response. From the former Minister of Tourism and so on. I am not going to. You know, call him a liar. I, I, I believe that maybe he's mixing up the facts, so to speak. But I will say one thing. That the member for Rd. South mentioned. When he spoke about his civil servants.

I am appealing to the civil servants, Madam Speaker, irrespective of. With your political leanings. You are servants of the people of this country. And it is incumbent, Madam Speaker. Upon the success. Not only of the present are the sitting administration. But the success and progress of the people of Anguilla, you have your own political leanings and so be it.

But at the end of the day, he did mention if you want to get. Something done. You have to sometimes bypass the civil servants, he said. Or use an iron hand or something like that. I feel. I feel aware about that because I used to be a civil servant too. But all I'm saying is that at the end of the day, you've got to understand that the the ministers of government were not there, Madam Speaker, just to glorify what it is we have to work.

They have to work hard, Madam Speaker. And at the end of the day, they need the support of the senior civil servants as

well as the. Entire community. So it's not about a PS, Madam Speaker being successful. A PS Madam Speaker. Goes through a process. And is selected. For a position, I'm just using that as an example. A politician and the minister goes through a process, Madam Speaker, and an election.

That the vast charity of their constituents and the island. Would have supported, so it has to be. A communication. It has to be a sense of purpose and a unity of purpose. For the people of this country, Madam Speaker, that is what it needs to be, Madam Speaker.

Before I wrap up. The member for Rd. South mentioned about his guilty of getting things done. And you know, he's also guilty, Madam Speaker. Mucking things up as well. So when you look, Madam Speaker, and I'm going to read here from a document, Madam Speaker. When you read in a document, and this is in connection with Blowing Point, Madam Speaker.

It says here Executive Council and the Government of Anguilla. Have reconsidered the acquisition of lands from you. It is proposed that the lands previously registered to your client, now registered to the crown be returned to your client. It is proposed that the time of having the said land in Crown's name that interest payment.

On the time example, from the 30th of November 2018 to the 30th of September 2021, Madam Speaker, this is in relation to the Blum point. Port development, you know, this is land, as you see here, was already, Madam Speaker, in the government's name. Giving back the land, Madam Speaker. Meant that there was absolutely no foresight. And we all know what blompoint the situation down there with respective glowing point. And the member said if you have to increase the building or increase the side, so be it.

But I want the people to know. That land that was acquired? By the previous administration of which I was a part of, was given back and, Madam Speaker, development has taken place on that land. And government. Again, we'll have to acquire it at 100 times more than what it was done because there are developments on it. Where, Madam Speaker, was the foresight.

With respect to this. Where? Where? Madam Speaker, it is here quite clear. You're going to give it back. And now you have to reacquire it. And these are things, Madam Speaker, that the general public must know about. The general public was the power. You hear all sorts of things about the the the airport. Minister of Infrastructure and the government, Minister of Minister of Finance is all there. Where was the land? Minister of Economic Development mentioned it this morning, 90 something acres or something like that where it is.

What has become of it? The land that you had in Blowing Point? Madam Speaker, and the maps are here. To show it you gave it back. And now you've got to take it back again, Madam Speaker. And misrepresentation, I see. Now let's speak of the. Member would know that she would know it's getting late so I can.

About figured the land was given back because. And the previous administration procured the land. The land was procured. The land, you know, was determining the. Council members, people. So the member knows that this is happening, he's trying to be political and that is not acceptable then? I think his point is it was taken, it was given back, and I think you agree on it, but you've expanded on why. OK, so the point of order is not accepted because you don't challenge what he said.

It's just that he doesn't have the same reasoning behind it. He can make that statement. Madam Speaker, and what I read from was dated the 11th of November 2021. And it was. Advice given by the Attorney General, not me. So, and I'll read it again for the public. And you were? Member the member. You have to refer to the member. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. And, Madam Speaker, through you, the Member.

For District 1, Island Harbor was the leader of government business at the time. And this is coming from, Madam Speaker, from the AG. At that particular point in time and it says executive council. Of which the Member for District 1 was the leader of government business and this. Document has the signature of the then Attorney General. Executive Council and the government have reconsidered the acquisition of land from you.

LAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Executive Council and the government have reconsidered the acquisition of land from you. Right in the port, in the mouth of the port, Madam Speaker. It is proposed that the land previously registered to your client is writing to the lawyer to your client now registered in the Crown. Be returned to your client. It is proposed that for the time of having the said land in the Crown's name. I didn't say anything about paying in the Crown's name the interest payment on the time that is from the 30th of November 2018 to the 30th of September 2021.

Madam Speaker, I was the Minister of Lands at the time. And this is coming, Madam Speaker, from the then Attorney General. His advice? To the former administration, not me. I didn't say anything about the land being paid for. I just read, Madam Speaker, what was here. So the land, when I said, was given back.

Madam Speaker, it is here, it is clear. In this, the point I am making is where was the foresight, Madam Speaker, in terms of the overall development of Blum Point? Now you have to go back again. This administration will have to go back again and pay 100 times more for it because there are developments on the land now. Didn't have it then. So this is coming from the then Attorney General, not me.

I can't even write a proper sentence, but I'm reading this here. Has reconsidered the government. An executive council has reconsidered the acquisitions of land from you, land that we need now. Madam Speaker, and this is 2021 and we're in 2025. Where do we go from there? Madam Speaker. I would want to go back. I'd go back. I want to move forward a little bit the returning of the lands.

And the member for Rd. Not in his presentation. He would have said that no one, Madam Speaker, would have from this side would have. But that just indicates you have 5 minutes left on the one hour and 15 minute wrap up OK. OK, good. I'll wrap it up. That was the blown point thing I spoke about the member for Rd.

North. In his presentation, he mentioned that no one from the other side. Would have responded to. I can't even remember what it is, the point and he said maybe they didn't do it because they were ashamed. I would be ashamed too, Madam Speaker. If I was a member of an administration. With what I just read. Taken into consideration. Long Point Ferry Terminal as it is.

Would be a shame. Madam Speaker. My representative made mention in her presentation. About the Lonesome Bowl Cultural Center. And Mike, who's involvement in the Ministry of. And she did mention about the overspent, so to speak. It is disturbing, Madam Speaker. What she would have indicated. In her presentation, disturbing. The appropriate approval process, Madam Speaker, the actual. 1,000,001 Point something $1,000,000

Madam Speaker, in terms of of the Lansing Board Cultural Center, I would hope. That the Chairman, Madam Speaker, of the Public Accounts Committee. Would it do the proper thing and investigate all of these? Yes, it may incriminate some of his. Members, but he is. Sorry, Madam Speaker, the Member for District 1.

Is now the cheer. And these are things, Madam Speaker, that needs. To be looked at. The ATB to overspending. The spending of the money before March 2025. As the Member said. See. Stay. See. As a response, Madam Speaker. For spending. Madam Speaker, they spoke about a basketball court. Down in a blowing point, no one would be against basketball courts in Blum Point in Isle Harbour. Just do it the right way. Nobody is. I remember one of our aviators, long time aviators, Mr. Maurice Connor said at at a meeting and all his years.

Flying in those difficult times way back in the 60s and 70s, he had never touched down. On a terminal building yet? The run the runway. Strip pure dirt, mud. I'm sure that the the the member from Island Harbour can attest to this. When we were growing up, Madam Speaker, never.

Was the land acquired? So these are the things, Madam Speaker, that I am so concerned about. Very concerned about. And being concerned about this, Madam Speaker, I would hope. That the people of this country, the electorate of this country. Would make sure. That those individuals from the previous administration making those decisions. Would never.

The scene back in the halls of decision making for the people of Anguilla. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

LANGUAGE SENSITIVITY AND CONDUCT

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, honorable member. I know honorable single item. White has a comment. Go ahead. Personal the member for Island Harvard commented that. Limestone Member Mr. Rajesh. Was presenting that only a single empire wide memory? His first language is English. And it just wanted to express this is your disappointment from a commentary from the.

We have government agreement. They know the need of opposition. Make a comment like that. And if I let this session end without, umm making that comment, I would. Will be Italian. Jewish population in England. When they've been coming through. Rather than a disadvantage, it should be the point of an advantage because people that only speak English can communicate.

Vision when you speak English and. Percent of the world population. OK, so you made a, you're making an observation on something earlier. Remember the honourable Member Brian has made an observation on a point of order that was raised. It wasn't his point of order to make. So I now understand why you stood at this point, but do you have a response for what he made an observation on?

This timing with the with with the statement, the last speaker, he started off by acknowledging the. You know, the liaison to the Spanish speaking community and he said that he came here, he talked about English as a second language and said he when he came here, he didn't speak a lick of English. I was commenting and basically tongue in cheek that unlike him. Love English is not my second language.

And the speaker, I think to for him to make this a big issue. No, no, I don't think he's making it an issue. He's just making an observation that he felt a bit. Characterizes that I am basically, you know, talking about the whole Spanish. It's now become an issue. No, remember, hold on, hold on, hold on. I know we're all hungry, but hold on. I recall the comment because it actually I did, I did hear it and I did make a note of it.

And I think it was a point of order that was raised on member McNeil Rogers and I think it was to clarify something and it might have started something that. Unlike the member single island wide, English is my first language and I think it was to suggest or make an inference that he he wasn't understanding because I think it was a point of clarity. Yes, and we can listen to it at the lunch break. But I think what I understand now, member Brian to see is that from him hearing it being English as his second language, it was a bit, it could be taken, it could be construed in a negative way as to whether or not you're able to understand the way that you understand since English is your first language.

Did I capture that correctly? When the comment was made, it was. Between a point of water between them. I have nothing to do with the understanding of the language of English or not. Which made things like it. It was like, if you don't speak English, people understand, yes, I understand what you're saying. So it isn't that he's making it a big thing.

I think it's just the inference that could be drawn from its perhaps. I, I mean, it's nothing for me to rule on. I think what

it's something for me to do is to encourage members, including all sides, that the rules are for a reason and that we aren't required to refer to anyone personally anyhow, so.

Perhaps I should have been more vigilant and not allow. A lot of exchanges between anybody personally, because then we wouldn't have been made to make a comparative of Mr. Brian's English being his second language. But if it was construed that way, I think that we can be honest enough to say how it was to be construed. It's not that it's a big thing.

I think when we stand down for lunch, this is something that we can just take offline and deal with appropriately if that's OK for both sides. But it is a fair observation to make being the. First Spanish speaking representative and representing your population. And I think just to to ensure that there's no misconceptions, even if he, if Mr. Brian didn't take it that way, he represents an island wide base and he's using his opportunity to clarify something that we might have overlooked because maybe anybody else could have.

It's just about sensitizing and building sensitivity. And I think that is commendable. And I think we can commend Mr. Bryant for for doing that as well. Yeah, honourable member. Sure. Thank you so much for that, Doctor Webster, and thank you for having the courage to do that.

Thank you very much. I think that is a good spirit to end on for the lunch break. I'm going to ask if we could suspend until 2:50. I know it's an odd time, but we just need a little. I don't want to say 3:00. Do I say 2:45? We don't have a long afternoon. What is the pleasure of the what is the pleasure of the members? One hour. It is the consent of the majority that we will convene at 2:45 PM.

This house stands suspended until 2:45.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Good afternoon, Members. This House resumes its sitting. Please take your seats. Are there any other members that wish to to contribute to the debate? At this time, I invite the mover to reply.

BUDGET DEBATE CONCLUSION

Merrick Richardson (Channel 5 is Merrick Richardson):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. My speaker, good afternoon to you. Good afternoon to the members of this honorable House and the listening and viewing public. Madam Speaker, would first like to start off by thanking all of the Members of this honourable House as, based on the presentations made over the last two days, it appears that this budget has the full support of the entire House.

I'm on speaker. I would also like to take this opportunity in particular to thank the elected members of government. I was quite impressed listening to all of their presentations. There was sound, they were thorough, and they truly represented effective representation. For the people of Anguilla. And so thank you to all of the elected members.

Madam Speaker, at times I feel as if I am Mama bear. Where all of these members are very close to me, Mama Bay, including to the member, the single island member, Darwinia Rogers. And the animal called Guncano, member for District 6. What's District 7? But, Madam Speaker, the point is, is that as a team, we have been able to come together.

We've been able to go through the requirements for every ministry and not just personal requirements, mastery for requirements for the people of Angola. What we want to see the vision and the the vision, that was the mandate that was given to us by the people of Anguilla. And so, ma'am, Speaker, I once again thank all of the elected members.

On the government side of the House. Madam Speaker, in 2020, when the APM government at the time presented its first budget, none of the then opposition members objected. And the reason why there were no presentations in the House at that time was because it was. And a UF budget.

2026 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

And a UF budget. It represented the work that the Anguilla United Front at that time would have started. So all of the projects, the school projects, the hospital project, the health services, the health clinics, all of those projects had been started under the previous Anguilla United Front administration.

And so a significant portion of the budget in 2020 would have represented work that was ongoing. And so there was no objection. Too, Madam Speaker, it is my view that this Budget coming to the House represents in large part a number of the projects that have been continued and a number of policy decisions started under the previous administration that we are continuing.

And there are a number of ways in which we have to continue. There could be moral reasons, legal reasons, or practical reasons, Madam Speaker, practical obligations. An example of a legal obligation would be the contract with Identity Digital. Where the contract has been entered into between the former administration and the Identity Digital company and to discontinue that contract would give rise to liability issues. In short, Madam Speaker, the government of Anguilla would be sued.

And so it is a contract that this administration is continuing. We have met with Identity Digital on a number of occasions. We have spoken with them. We have signs where they want to go, they have another sign as to where we want to go as a country and we have been able to form a good collaboration as to how we'll spend the next couple of years working together. Madam Speaker, an example of a moral and practical obligation would be the Blowing Point basketball

court facility.

And I say moral or practical, Madam Speaker, because this facility was built using private donor funds. No monies went through the government coffers. There was no accountability from the government side and the government, this certain government, has no idea in terms of what the arrangement was for the construction of the facility. What the people of Anguilla were told was that this $300,000 facility was fully funded by a private donor and that the Government of Anguilla was not obligated to do anything to be able to utilize or complete this project. So we see today,

Madam Speaker, in this budget we have allocated $215,000 US to be able to complete the basketball facility as a result of what we have inherited and where we see the shortcomings and you have heard the single island where I remember the Honourable Jason Bryan speak more about that. And so,

Madam Speaker, that is a moral and practical obligation because at the end of the day, the basketball facility in Blowing Point is a benefit to the people of Anguilla and to the people in that community. Another example of a moral and practical obligation, Madam Speaker, would be the Landsome Bold Cultural Center.

We know that the cost of building the Lansing Bowl to date was some six million U.S. dollars to build. We were told at the commencement of that project, the people of Anguilla were told that there were no funds that would be coming from the government coffers to build that project. And so today we see that the project is incomplete and the government of Anguilla is not only obligated to pay or reimburse in some way, shape or form the donor company of $1 million, but also we are obligated to complete it.

Because again, it is of a benefit to the people of Anguilla and to the people in the Valley community. And so in this budget you will see a cost of $550,000 in this 2026 budget, which is intended to complete the Lansome Bold Cultural Center. Madam Speaker, many of us would remember when the 2025 budget was being debated that questions were raised by the members of opposition as to why the Lansome Bold Cultural Center was showing up as a line item with the figure of $1.00 next to it, when this was a project that was supposed to have been totally funded from the private donor and the members of opposition at the time were heckled and the questions were dismissed.

But today we see that the cost of $550,000 for this project, which to date had cost 6,000,000 US, still needs to be completed. And just to put that figure in context, Madam Speaker, the Morris Vanterpool Primary School, which comprises two-story buildings, cafeteria, kitchen facility, facilities for administration building cost $4.5 million to build, so the Morris Vanterpool School was built in its entirety for approximately $4.5 million and the Lansome Bold Cultural Center as it stands today costs some six million U.S. dollars and counting.

Again, Madam Speaker, this is a project that is now in our 2026 budget because we are committed to completing the project that was started under the previous administration. Madam Speaker, in the 2025 budget, the capital expenditure at that time was $191,000,000, was budgeted for 191,000,000. And the overall balance for 2025 anticipated a deficit of some $59.72 million. So in the capital expenditure for 2025, $191,000,000 was budgeted and a deficit of $59.72 million was anticipated.

Today in this 2026 budget, the capital expenditure is anticipated to be $233.36 million. And the anticipated deficit is $73,000,000. Madam Speaker, between the 2025 budget and the 2026 budget, there are some projects that have remained in terms of the capital expenditure, the airport development was anticipated to have been completed or was provided for in the 2025 budget.

That is in this 2026 budget for 87,000,000 EC dollars. There is a road development program at 14 million in this 2026 budget. Land for development at 40.5 million. And government accommodations at 19.5 million. And so the road development, the government office accommodations were slated in the 2025 budget and have now come over to the 2026 budget.

Why is that, Madam Speaker? Because at the time when the 2025 budget was passed, the previous administration would have included these sums for 2025. But in fact, the work, a significant amount of the work had not been commenced at that time and still to this date, because of various issues within the various government departments, these projects have not been able to come to reality or come to fruition during 2025. There is a significant amount of work that has to be done, Madam Speaker.

The airport development is simply not just the expansion of the runway, but it also contemplates land for the runway. And so we are talking about a number of parcels of land owned by various people which have to be acquired by the government of Anguilla before you could even start the airport runway extension.

And so as of this date, that work has not been completed and so far into 2026, the government accommodations at the time that it was placed in the 2025 budget, the anticipation was that design plans would have been prepared and work would have been commenced to the tune of $10 million in the 2025 budget.

That has not been done as yet and as we speak we have no final design plans. And so that work in terms of office accommodation, that capital project comes over now into 2026. Madam Speaker, in addition to the priorities that were laid out by the previous administration, this administration is focused on delivering a number of other measures such as the water distribution network.

In the 2025 budget that was slated at 4 million. And you have heard the single line of White member General Kyle Hodge speak to the fact that there was 4 million in the budget for the water distribution network. And he spoke very passionately about the need to be able to move forward with ensuring that our people have a sustainable water supply across the length and breadth of Anguilla. And so that is in the 2026 budget to the tune of $9 million.

The CCTV network as well is in this budget and will fall under the Police Royal Anguilla Police Forces Line Item budget, but it is in fact funded through the Government of Anguilla and the Ministry of Infrastructure has a significant role to play in terms of the CCTV network which is intended to cover Anguilla as well. In the 2026 budget, we've also increased funding for Her Majesty's Prison. And at page 198 of the budget, the Her Majesty's Prison development in 2025 was allocated at $200,000. In 2026 that has been increased to 1,000,000.

And Madam Speaker, we, the members of government, were very fortunate and privileged to have the opportunity to visit Her Majesty's Prison last week, Thursday, and after Executive Council, we all went en masse to the prison and we wanted to see the prison, we wanted to see the conditions under which our inmates are currently occupied.

And Madam Speaker, we all know that while it is that Her Majesty's Prison falls under the auspices of the Governor, His Majesty's Prison falls under the auspices of the Governor. At the end of the day, these are our people. These are our family members, our schoolmates, our cousins and brothers and sisters, etc., who are all in Her Majesty's prison at that time. And so for us, when we visited, we not only had the opportunity to visit the different facilities at Her Majesty's Prison, but also the ability to interact with the persons in the prison, the inmates and be able to understand what they want.

And surprisingly, Madam Speaker, not surprisingly, a number of the issues that came up surround the training and retooling so that when they left that they would be able to take up certain jobs in Anguilla and become upstanding citizens with the opportunity to work, Madam Speaker, in our country.

And so what it did for me was it allowed me to have greater insight and to ensure that as we go through this year of 2026 that we cater to certain areas. And you will see in the 2026 budget that there is a workshop that is contemplated and upgrade to the classroom and the installation of CCTV at Her Majesty's Prison as well. And so,

Madam Speaker, we will continue to pay attention to HMP in addition to all of the other facilities that we can utilize to be able to assist our inmates in becoming reintegrated back into our society and workforce. Madam Speaker, we also would have invested significantly in this 2026 budget in terms of land acquisition.

And so in the 2025 budget, there was some 3.5 million that was allocated for land acquisition and in 2026 it is 40.5 million. And the reason for that, Madam Speaker, is because we are contemplating acquisition of lands for various developments as well as the acquisition of the former NBA building. And Madam Speaker, we know in terms of the latter that this has been a long outstanding matter and we intend once again to bring this matter to a final conclusion during the term of this administration.

So significant funds have been allocated towards land acquisition. We hear over and over again from the people of Anguilla that there is a need for various projects and every time it's the same refrain from every administration. We don't have the land, we don't have the ability, we don't have the resources. And so while we have the opportunity to do so, we intend to acquire the land that is needed for much new development here in Anguilla.

Madam Speaker, for the government office accommodation, we have made mention of the 10 million earlier, but for this year we have allocated 19.5 million and that is for the demolition works, retrofit of rented office space and department relocations, networking infrastructure for new office accommodations, REPF expansion including the retrofit of custody suite, NBA West retrofit and phase construction of the two buildings, government offices.

In terms of the road development, 7 million was allocated in 2025 and in 2026 we've increased that amount to 14,000,000 and that is for completion of the Jeremiah Gums Hwy, Lincoln Sandy Hill Rd, the prioritized Rd program, periodic maintenance such as a Rafael T Leg, Abbott Lake Dr, the Blowing Point Exit Rd, support services and land acquisition at Jeremiah Gomes Hwy, Sandy Hill and Blowing Point Exit Rd.

BUDGET AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

In terms of the road development, 7 million was allocated in 2025 and in 2026 we've increased that amount to 14,000,000 and that is for completion of the Jeremiah Gums Hwy. Lincoln Sandy Hill Rd. the prioritized Rd. program, periodic maintenance such as a Rafael T Leg, Abbott Lake Dr. the Blowing Point Exit Rd. support services and land acquisition at Jeremiah Gomes Hwy.

Sandy Hill and Blowing Point Exit Rd. And Madam Speaker, we all have seen the conditions of our roads and I do believe that it's time that we invest once again in our Rd. network. The last time that there was a major road infrastructure work done was under a previous Anguilla United Front administration. Who were in government between the period of 2000 and 2010 under the leadership of the then Chief Minister, Mr. Husband Fleming. Since the time I'm speaker, our roads have deteriorated significantly and if we were driving from east to West, we can feel every bump and every ditch in the road. And so this administration is committed to revitalizing and redeveloping our Rd. network and developing some new roads as well.

Mom speaker, the health services department. In the 2025 budget, some $4.5 million was allocated. This budget provides for $13 million. And it includes the Morgan MRI waiting room, the hyperbaric chamber, rehabilitation works at Western Polyclinic, roof and plumbing, operating theater, hostile equipment, morgue, laundry equipment, PC upgrade to facilitate health information system, relocation of incinerator, expansion of central sterilization unit, outfitting of psychiatric Ward 3 ambulances. Prioritization round one would be the MRI operating theater, western Poly clinic laundry PC upgrade CSD expansion around 2 would be the incinerator and ambulance speed ma'am speaker we have heard extensively from the single island wide member the honorable Neil Rogers in terms of the work that has to be done what he meant and the work that he is doing in order to be able to bring our health

services to a point where it.

Is fully functioning and operational and there are a number of issues that we met, ma'am. Speaker And I do believe that a large part of the issues also surround the way in which the Health authority was dissolved and brought back under the Government of Anguilla. At the time, questions were been raised by the opposition concerns who have been raised in terms of the difference in the salary scale, for instance, the operations and how things would work. And today we see that there are a number of difficulties where there seems to be an inconsistency in terms of understanding the policies that are supposed to apply the manner in which resources are obtained for the for the hospital and the other health services and just generally.

I'm speaker the, the, the condition of the health services has indeed declined over the years, and this administration's job is to ensure that we bring it back and in fact go beyond what was there before in terms of ensuring that we have a health services system that is fit and proper for the people of Anguilla. Mom Speaker. The in addition to the increased funding for the areas that I will have mentioned, there is also on the recurrence side in the 2026 budget, funds allocated for public sector compensation. And of course, Madam Speaker, that was a project that commenced prior to this administration taking office.

We fully support not just the compensation review for the public sector, but also public sector reform. And so these two projects are undertaken and. In promulgated through the Governor's office and we have set aside the important necessary monies to ensure that once the report comes through and it's ready to be implemented in 2026, that we have the funds and the resources dedicated to it already. Mom Speaker. The. Member for.

In fact, I think I believe all of the Members of Opposition at one time or another during their presentations would have stated or suggested that Districts 15 and 6. Were being ignored or mistreated because they're represented by members of the opposition and Madam Speaker, that couldn't be further from the truth.

The reality is, Madam Speaker, is. That this administration. Has always believed in representation. For everyone, irrespective as a party affiliation, irrespective as to color preference, irrespective as to anything ma'am speaking because at the end of the day, we are one. We came into administration to this government on the basis of unity, unifying all of our people.

Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am wearing a pin that was gifted to me by Miss Avanella Griffith. It was made by her and I worried proudly because it is a pin in the design made locally, in the design of the shape of Anguilla with Anguilla across it and I wear it because it signifies. That we are one. We are not simply divided across political lines, ma'am. Speaker.

And so I refute the statements made by the opposition members to suggest that any particular district is being left out from progress from this administration because of who their representatives are without the party that they are affiliated with. In fact, Madam Speaker. This administration does not believe in political gimmicks and does not believe in trying to rush things through for the sake of saying that you're, you're doing something. We're doing things the right way and we're going to take our time and ensure that it's done properly. And Madam Speaker.

The reality is, is that. This at Anguilla United Front Administration represents a stable administration. One Day is focused and dedicated and steadfast to accomplishing what we need to accomplish for the people of Anguilla. We are united in this shared purpose, Lam Speaker. And not to mention, ma'am, speak on a personal level that I have family in every district that's represented by the members of opposition. I have family members in District one, in District 5 and you hear the member for, for District 5, N Hill referred to me as his cousin and District 6IN Boring Point. And so imagine it is almost as if you were cutting off your nose to spite your face, ma'am Speaker because every single one of us, if you talk about Honorable Carol Hatch is even worse than me.

He probably has family members in every single district across Anguilla. And so at the end of the day, ma'am Speaker the the way in which we decide to administer. The way in which we decide that we are going to operate our government is irrespective as the party color or affiliation. By the end of the day, the intent and the mission is to ensure that all Anguillians succeed, that all residents belong as persons who live in Anguilla are able to succeed. Madam Speaker, in my budget address I will have said that I'm taking office.

This administration took time to assess the ongoing projects and policy directions and readjusted to put in place this administration's agenda of putting people for us. And that is right. In fact, Madam Speaker, it is the right of every administration to do so. In fact, in the Fiscal Responsibility Act, it provides that the Minister of Finance shall, within six months after a general election, calls to be prepared a strategic development plan for the government's term of office relating to the financial, economic and social affairs of the government. So may I have speaker by law?

This provision itself recognizes the need of a new administration within 6 terms in office to look at the at the circumstances, to look at what they've inherited, and to be able to assess and reassess the direction that it wants to go. And so even when we continue. Necessary projects, projects that have been started under previous administration. We retain the right, any new administration coming to office, retain the right to be able to assess and determine the path in which it wants to take the country for the next 5 years. And so we've done that,

Madam Speaker. And the members have stated, the opposition members, that because we exercise our rights to implement our policy of putting people 1st and refocusing our priorities, that we slow down projects. Causing the slowdown of the economy. I'm on speaker. That is simply not true. And the reality is, is that. At the end of the day, when we were reassessing the ongoing capital projects and reparaturizing, we discovered the inescapable truth. That in pausing and

looking at what pertained in the country. It became clear that the private sector was not performing.

And that the country was being propped up through the governments capital projects. And I have significant, Madam Speaker, and the fact that the members of opposition have recognized that there's been a decrease as a result of the capital projects being reassessed or reprioritized, that you have seen the decrease in the economic activity, the decrease in the figures in the budget.

And so, Madam Speaker, what it means is that the private sector was not performing. The way in which it should have performed. And so because of that, all of these projects were essentially covering the truth of the situation. And so. We decided on speaker even before coming into office because we understood that the private sector was struggling. We understood that local businesses were finding it difficult. We understood that private individuals, the average man or woman, will find it hard to make ends meet and that is why we sat down together. We served for committee to look at the goods and services.

Tax structure. And to identify ways in which we could address it. And ma'am, speaker. The reality is, is that the implementation of the imposition, the implementation of the GSC in 2021 and the imposition of it in 2022 did cause an increase in inflation and did increase the cost of living.

And that was set out in the 2023 budget, Madam Speaker, and the budget address that was provided by the now member for Island Harbor, the Leader of the Opposition. And Madam Speaker. The reality is, is that the people of Anguilla had been undergoing severe stress. Continuously as a result of external and internal factors imposed on them.

And so. Local businesses were saying that they were suffering, our citizens were crying out and everyone was complaining about the extent of the over taxation as a result of the manner in which the GST was implemented in 2022. The opposition has been speaking about food vouchers and electricity credits and. They continue to to talk about it, to suggest that they were doing so well for the people of Anguilla and this administration has not been doing the same well,

Madam Speaker. I want to remind the public. Of the fact that the GST was implemented in 2022. And it was only after the implementation of the GST that you saw the electricity credits and the food vouchers. They did not take place before, Madam Speaker. And it is not as if that the administration did not know the stress that the people were under. And I'll go back to the budget as far as 2023, Madam Speaker.

In the 2023 budget. Address, the member for Island Harbor would have said, and I quote. Madam Speaker, inflation has been on an upward trend since the start of 2022. Inflation the Winder Ukraine, which is still ongoing, Madam Speaker. Has amplified these pressures through higher food and energy prices. He goes on to say, Madam Speaker.

That when whilst the energy and food crisis, coupled with underlying international conflicts and uncertain virus mutations, starkly remind us that the Anguillian economy is experiencing a number of turbulent challenges. This administration remains committed to withstanding and recovering rapidly. 2023 budget, now Speaker. And then in the 2024 budget, Madam Speaker.

The Member for Island Harbour as leader of Government Business would have recognised the impact on a different on a number of external factors on the people of Anguilla in relation to the hotels and restaurants. He says this industry suffered a set back in 2020 as a result of COVID-19.

The borders were officially closed in March and reopened gradually with stringent protocols and guidelines.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND GST REFORM

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

The Member for Island Harbour as leader of Government Business would have recognised the impact on a number of external factors on the people of Anguilla in relation to the hotels and restaurants. He says this industry suffered a setback in 2020 as a result of COVID-19. The borders were officially closed in March and reopened gradually with stringent protocols and guidelines. Total contribution to nominal value added is estimated to have been 122.93 million. This industry declines by 71.96% year over year and contributed 10.52% to real economic activity in 2020.

And so, Madam Speaker, there's a recognition that the country was impacted severely. And I'll go on to the 2024 budget, Madam Speaker, where the leader of government principles at the time says Madam Speaker, global living standards declined in 2022 and 2023 as costs rose disproportionately to incomes. The major factors influencing observed prices in Anguilla were rising costs of commodities, higher oil prices, and changes in fiscal policy. It was the implementation of the GST in 2022. These inflationary pressures affecting our island have led to average consumer prices in September 2023 being 1.2% higher than the same period last year and 9.3% higher than the same period in 2021.

So, Madam Speaker, over the series of budgets, it is clear that there was a recognition of a number of external factors and internal factors being the GST imposition affecting the people of Anguilla. And in the 2025 budget? Madam Speaker, the Member for Island Harbour, who was then the leader of government businesses.

However, Madam Speaker, challenges continue to arise and he was speaking about the importance of diversification, economic diversification in the construction sector and a number of initiatives with foreign direct investors etcetera. And he says challenges continue to arise. Climate change continues to pose an existential threat to our beloved island, with hurricanes and rising sea levels endangering lives and livelihoods. And he goes on to state that it is important to invest in resilient infrastructure and climate adaptation. Additionally,

Madam Speaker, Anguilla, like many islands within the ECCU, remains vulnerable to global trends. High interest rates,

inflationary pressures, and potential slowdowns in major economies like the United States and the United Kingdom could severely affect our economy. And so, given the clear knowledge, Madam Speaker, that the external issues that were taking place in other parts of the world were impacting us here in Anguilla.

The then opposition who were now here in government would have advocated for some relief for the people of Anguilla. And that was primarily by way of a GST relief. Those statements, those words of encouragement from the then opposition, now government, fell on deaf ears. The Anguilla Union Front administration in August of 2024 would have released a GST relief plan and we urged the government of the day to take it on board and implement even some, if not all at the time.

And surprisingly, while it is that the leader of the Opposition at the time said that the plan was disgusting, in December of 2024, the previous APM administration would have implemented GST relief in terms of removing GST from all foods. And that was commendable, Madam Speaker, because it was what the Anguillian elephant had been advocating all along, it was in our relief plan and so while we were happy, we determined that we still need to go further if it is that we were going to ensure that our economic activity in Anguilla would be on the increase once again.

And so, when we campaigned, we campaigned on the same GST relief. When we were elected, Madam Speaker, once we came into office, it became the number one priority because guess what? Over the past three from 2023, 2024, 2025, all of these budgets that spoke about inflation, the increased pressures, the marketplace, the global trends and how they were impacting Anguilla and the cost of living in Anguilla, it had not declined. And so we were committed as an administration to ensuring that we would put in place the relief for the people that they were asking for and that they needed.

And so on the 1st of August 2025, this administration would have formally brought into place the GST reform. And the GST reform would have done exactly what we campaigned on, what we released and what we asked the former administration to do. And we knew, Madam Speaker, we knew that they would likely cause a decrease in revenue because guess what, the revenue that was being bragged on and the reserves that were being bragged on as the honourable Member Kyle Hodge said, was being taken off the backs of the people of Anguilla.

And so you cannot continue either had to do one thing or the other, either continue with taking, taking, taking from the local businesses, from the people of Anguilla or giving back expecting that there's going to be a reduction, understanding that there's going to be a reduction because there was a need to ensure that the engine, the economic engines in our country, the private sector could continue to survive and in fact, thrive.

And that was a decision that we made, Madam Speaker, understanding the implications. And we did thoughtfully, we did carefully. We didn't just jump up and put something in place because people were rallying and saying do this and do that. No, we wanted to put something in place, understand what the outcome would be. And in anticipating that by investing back in our people, in allowing our people to retain those monies as opposed to taking it and putting it in reserves and putting it into building infrastructure.

That we made sure that our people were being looked out for at the same time. So when the opposition speaks about electricity credits and when they speak about food vouchers, the people of Anguilla must remember that those things were given when the GST was implemented in the form in which it was in and it received monies over and above what was anticipated.

So for instance in 2023, GST was anticipated to have brought in 90 million. It brought in $155,000,000 Madam Speaker. 155 million, $65 million more than what was anticipated. So, so these are the things that this administration looked at. We would prefer to see that we have a vibrant economy, that our businesses are able to survive, that they're able to generate revenue, that they're able to hire more people, pay better wages. And the government of Anguilla received the indirect benefits of all of that. Rather than squeezing the lifeblood from local businesses and individuals and then say that we're going to give it back by way of electricity credits and food vouchers. Madam Speaker, our people prefer to be able to take care of themselves, and we have no intention of creating a welfare state for our people.

We have no intention of taking the people's money, hoarding it, and then giving it back to them little by little over time, to say that we're doing something for them, No. We want to encourage our people to be able to prosper, to survive, to do more than survive, Madam Speaker, but to be able to be prosperous in this country of this.

We want them to be able to educate their children. We want them to be able to take care of their medical needs. We want them to be able to have savings. We want them to be able to raise their children without having to wonder where they're going to get their next plate of food from.

And Madam Speaker, to those naysayers who say that those circumstances didn't exist, are either blind or foolish. Because Anguillians are very proud people and you only have to knock on the door and sit with them and you will hear the cries of the people. Madam Speaker. And so that is why it was important because those of us on this side of the House would have done the hard work.

We have spoken with the people and when we didn't go to look for them, they came to look for us. So we understood the pain that our people were going through. Madam Speaker. And so I am heartened by the fact that we have been able to deliver on our single largest promise within six months or at the six month mark of being in office.

But that's not, we're not content to stay there Madam Speaker because we have so many other things to do. And you have heard from every member of government, you have heard from every person on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, speak about the plans in the respective ministries.

Some are moving very quickly. Some are going to take a little

time, but we're all committed to ensuring that this plan as set out in this budget comes to fruition. Madam Speaker. The budget is an ambitious project. We thought that the 2025 budget was an ambitious budget plan Speaker, and so this 2026 budget is even more ambitious.

But we made this budget, we passed this budget in the House, understanding the challenges that we have to overcome in order to bring it to fruition. We know that we have to ensure that our various departments have the manpower and have the resources in order to ensure that they can succeed with respect to the agenda in every one of those ministries. We also know, Madam Speaker, that certain projects will have to be brought forward more quickly than others, and that is, for instance, the expansion of the airport runway, the extension that has to be done.

So we have to move quickly towards the land acquisition that was not in place. We have to put it in place and we're committed to doing so. And, Madam Speaker, there is no aspect of this budget that we are shirking away from. We are committed to it. And we intend to move forward as quickly and aggressively as possible. We understand the challenges as well, even in terms of the Attorney General's chambers and the bringing of legislation to the House. And I take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to encourage those persons in the AG's chambers because they're under significant stress there.

There are only a handful of legal drafters and there's many, many pieces of legislation to come forward for from every ministry and so. We understand the difficulties that we're facing. And we understand as well that on some level, the inability for them to be able to generate the type of legislation, the pace that we would like them to also to some extent hampers us in terms of delivering. But we have to work together. So there has to be a collaboration and there is collaborative effort to see how we can find a way forward.

And that includes as well the possibility of outsourcing pieces of legislation. So that it could be done, Madam Speaker, because at the end of the day, the work must go on. The ministers must continue to move forward on their agenda items. Madam Speaker, I am heartened to say that, despite the large capital expenditure anticipated 233,000,000 for 2026.

In 2027, with the completion of many of these projects, we expect the capital expenditure to decrease to 198,000,000 and then in 2028 decrease even further to 178 million. And so this spike in 2026 represents in large part a number of projects that have continued on from the previous administration which we are obligated and we want to continue, we want to continue with the expansion of the airport.

We want to continue with the runway expansion, the buildings. Heaven knows Madam Speaker, how many of our government departments are displaced. And so we are committed to finding not only finding temporary accommodations, but ensuring that there's permanent accommodation or permanent home.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND POLICIES

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Administration which we are obligated and we want to continue, we want to continue with the expansion of the airport. We want to continue with the runway expansion, the buildings. Heaven knows ma'am, because we speak how many of our government departments are displaced. And so we are committed to finding not only finding temporary accommodations, but ensuring that there's permanent accommodation or permanent home.

For our civil servants, our public servants who are working so hard on a daily basis. Mom Speaker. The there was a discussion back and forth and you rightfully did not allow me to speak in terms of the health authority. And so now I take the opportunity to do so.

Certain as the chair of the Public's Account Committee, we had the opportunity to be able to look at the Health authority and the financial statements that we have been brought forward over a period of time and what we found once we can the single island wide member, the Honourable Mr. Evan Mcniel Rogers would not have been a part of the Public Accounts Committee and in fact he was not in government at the time. We found that in fact the monies that the opposition claims were missing were in fact as a result of the transition from one system over to the other.

And so in the transition from 111 comparison system over to the next, there will have been an inconsistency in terms of the monies. And so it reflected initially as if it was funds that were not accounted for. But the accountants thereafter in preparing the financial statements would have clarified in the financial statements that the discrepancy was valves as a result of the change over from one computer system to the next.

These are in the financial statements for the health authority, ma'am. Speaker, so I'm not speaking out of my head and I'm sitting at the chair of the Public Accounts Committee. We looked at it, we examined it and we made a determination that in fact, the allegations that were being made by the then government in terms of now opposition, in terms of quote UN quote missing funds was in fact not the case. And so

I want to put that to rest Mouse, because if any of the members want to have sight of the latest of the health authority financial statements which spoke to that, we can provide it. But I want to put this to bed now because it gives the people of Anguilla the impression that there was something untoward going on in health authority when that was not the case,

Madam Speaker, and so when the accountants tell you in no uncertain terms in their financial report that these are the findings that they have then there's no one else that should be challenging that and to say otherwise I'm speaking. Madam Speaker, the Member, the single and white Member, sorry, the Member for Island Hubble was spoken about the bulk petroleum.

The bulk petroleum levy has an interesting history. And that history started from between 2015 and 2020 when the then

AUF administration in a bid to try to find ways to cover the deficits that would take place at the time. Remember, you had the even from as far back as the economic downturn. Then you had the bank resolution, then you had Hurricane Irma.

And then you had COVID, so from as far back as then. There was identified this proposal to increase bulk petroleum level by charging the bulk fuel suppliers the two bulk fuels for supplies and increasing the amount from 100,000 to $750,000. It remained on the books for five years, non-speaker during the Anguilla Unit 2 point administration. And the reason why it remained on the books for those five years was because we needed to ensure that when those fees were increased, the bulk petroleum, the bulk suppliers did not pass it on to the people of Anguilla. So imagine I was surprised when in the wake of the 2020 general elections, the previous administration brought the proposal forward to implement the increase from 100,000 to 750,000.

The members of opposition at the time spoke up objecting to it. The then government would have said, well, this was from from from the AUF time, so we don't see why they're complaining. And the opposition members are saying no, But it wasn't in place for five years. It was never implemented. And this is the reason now until you find a way to ensure that they do not pass it on to the people of Angola, we implore you not to pass this bill at this time. Despite our cries for it not to be done.

The APM administration put it in place. And I recall specifically the member for Island Harbor stating that they were in discussions at the time that the bill was being passed, that they were in discussions with the bulk suppliers, and that once they were able to finalize discussions, then they will come back and make the adjustment and ensure that it wasn't passed on. We we never saw that that was done ma'am speaking. So we would have experienced the of course the supplies were passed it on to the people of Angola.

In 2024, we saw that the sorry in the 2025 budget, we saw that the APM administration four years later, three years later comes back and says, well we're going to reduce it from the 7:50 to 100 and some thousand just over the $100,000 that they had initially met. So it was run to implement this and then come back later now and take it off.

To provide the ease for the people of Angola. That. Provision or the statements made were settled in the 2025 budget and so the 2025 budget would have shown a reduction in the bulk petroleum levy such that they are not have been passed on in 2025. The difficulty, Madam Speaker, like so many other things that we've heard during the course of these debates over these last two days.

Was that there was no legislation to bring it into effect. And even today, as I made mention about the inability to to of the Attorney General's chambers to be able to move quickly as a result of the being short staffed, not having enough manpower, we still, even though it is on the legislative agenda for this administration, even though I as Minister of Finance would have been pressing for this to be done.

The simple reality is, is that the legislation has not yet been prepared to be able to be implemented. And so while it's almost as if the 2025 budget was a wish list, so that the previous administration had all of these wishes but had done nothing to bring them into fruition.

And so the bulk petroleum levy is still in existence, not because there's any intent to keep it, but because we simply unable to get the legislation prepared. In time to be able to have it done as quickly as possible and the intent ma'am speaker because the promise was made. The wish list was presented in 2025 budget and there has to be some recognition for that when the legislation finally comes into comes comes into being non speaker.

So that is to answer the member for Island Harbors question. In terms of the bulk petroleum levy, there's no intent to to undo what was proposed in the 2025 budget because as far as we're concerned it never should have been increasing the first place. Ma'am. Speaker. In terms of constitutional reform and the member filing harbor, we have also asked for that.

I can assure you that any discussion in terms of. Looking at residents and the way residency and the way in which persons are able to vote in Anguilla will have to be done by consensus across the across the length and breadth of Anguilla. And, Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the Member for Island Harbor could ask about constitutional reform because.

He was the leader of government business for five years. And there was no. No progress in terms of constitutional reform other than having a few consultations. And I know because I was on the committee at the time, there were a number of consultations and it never progressed. And then I recall a question being asked. By the press in terms of constitutional reform and the member for Island Harbor would have said that there is no intention to progress constitutional reform at this time. And that was in 2024 and that was the last that anyone had seen or heard of constitutional reform under the previous administration. That is not the case under this administration.

So what what has happened is, and maybe it is that. The good Lord. Has played to be such as it is. Because the last major constitutional amendments were done while I sat. As Minister of Constitutional Reform, Constitutional Affairs and now today. I stand as Minister of Constitutional Affairs, so the very pieces of legislation and the very documentation and all of the work that was done between 2015 and 2020 under my leadership.

Is now there for me to pick up and move forward with, almost as if the last five years was just a blip in time because nothing has happened in constitution reform during that time. So I appreciate the comments made by by the Member for Island Harbour. I can assure him that the way in which constitutional reform will be done and has always intended to be done, is by way of support. Across the length and breadth of Anguilla and the people of Anguilla will have to decide the direct. Direction that they want to move in terms of whether or not our Anguillians in the diaspora are to be able to vote and how and whether there should be any limits or any any limitations on them, etcetera, and being able to vote. And that is the comment that will come under this term of office, Madam Speaker.

Mom Speaker and Mom Speaker, I must say that if there is the the the selection of the committee was not done by myself. It was chosen the the committee members were chosen by independent persons. And so if it is that the there is an interest by the any member of opposition to sit, then after this House of Assembly sitting, I will certainly reach out to them and ask them to to provide, if not one of themselves, any member that.

Any person that they so choose to sit on the committee, ma'am. Speaker Because we have five years of this, We are the very beginning of it and there is no problem. We're doing that at all, ma'am. Speaker on the Unfortunately, we stand in a position where we have an opposition that did nothing for five years.

PARLIAMENTARY CONDUCT

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Uh, member, I'm so sorry, Member. On parliamentary languages, shut up. It did come through. Pleased with withdrawed and apologized. You referred to the member as red lipstick and you said shut up, please apologize and withdraw it. You up, you said. You referred to the member as red lipstick and you said shut up. I ask you to withdraw it and apologize.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker. Matt, I apologize always right, but I wasn't speaking. Madam Speaker, with all due respect to you, how? With all due respect to you, I ask you to withdraw it and apologize so we can conclude. Madam Speaker. Matt Madam Speaker, I did not address the member who was the the Premier.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Remember you address the member from Valley North. I'm I have very good ears.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I withdraw my statement and apologize.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You don't. No, no, don't. Member. There's no need. For acrimony I have been very respectful and there's no need from from.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Our member? Well then remember, you pointed to her. You referred to her by the name Red Lipstick. I'm not removing you or invoking any rule. I'm simply asking you to apologize and withdraw it.

APOLOGY AND WITHDRAWAL REQUEST

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Our member? Well then remember, you pointed to her. You referred to her by the name Red Lipstick. I'm not removing you or invoking any rule. I'm simply asking you to apologize and withdraw it. That's the least you could do. The least, and if this Member has said anything about you on parliamentary, equally bring it to my attention. I have not heard. I have not heard her say anything, just knowing the Exchange member, Member, I have not.

You have not brought to my attention anything that the member has said on parliamentary. You have not brought anything to my attention in the moment of her saying it.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Map, Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But as I indicated, what did the member say?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, the member is still speaking. You're not here enough, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah, what did the member say? OK. What did the members say that's unparliamentary that you would wish for me to have whole withdrawal?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I withdraw the statement and I apologize.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, no. What did the member say so that I'm fair to you? What did the members say that you would wish for me to bring to heart attention to have her apologize? You can say it. You have privilege. What did she say?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, I don't have any privilege. I am not going to repeat what the Member said. I am going to acquiesce to what you requested.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

So then I can no, no, then I can't deal with what she said and have her remember member. I don't need to hear.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I do not want you to deal.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, I do not want you to deal with what she said.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member Rogers Webster, please go ahead.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, I don't want you to deal with what you said. You asked me to withdraw and apologize, and I say I withdraw and apologize.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

What I did, yeah. Yeah, thank you. But you also said that I haven't disciplined her with respect to things said about you either. So I'm only asking you to say. OK, well OK, well then the point was a non issue then.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member for Sandy Hill. Member for Rd. South, would you are you comfortable remaining for the remainder of this because it has been very interrupting and I wish for her to come. The member to complete. Do you want to remain or no? It's just absolutely absurd to refer to a member in that way. It's absurd. And you're sitting behind a junior clerk, a youth parliamentarian. You're sitting behind a youth parliamentarian.

Whether or not they heard it or not, I heard it. And I'm not making it up. I heard it.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

As. OK, Rise. You've heard things that I've said about you. Proceed, please. Memo from Sandy Hill. OK, we can deal with that in another forum. Proceed Member.

CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I once this session is finished, I will ask through the leader of the Opposition if they have a person or or two who they would like to have sit in the committee. Because at the end the non speaker, the Constitution is for everybody and whether or not we there's no intention to exclude anyone, Madam Speaker.

And so I will certainly welcome the involvement when between 2015 and 2020 was the same thing. There was a member of the opposition who sat and was quite helpful being on the constitutional committee during that time. And we have no difficulty at all inviting other persons to to to be a part of it. And so,

Madam Speaker, there's no need to have any, any disagreement in terms of how much time is. That's one hour you you give me back my time.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Member, you can proceed. We will. No, you have an additional 15 minutes. I think Mr. Proctor did pause in the exchange, but go ahead, you can wrap up.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

I I'll just wrap up my speaker. I just. OK, I, I, I don't need 15 minutes, but I just want to wrap up properly, Madam Speaker, thank you. And so so at the end of the day, ma'am. Speaker, the Constitution of Anguilla and where we go as a country is

for all of us. And so we want to ensure that we have the, the full support of all sides.

And so there's no need. Perhaps we can just simply surprised that after five years of inertia that the members of on the opposition are now claiming or seeking all sorts of questions and and, and interest in terms of constitutional reform when it was in their hands, they did nothing in relation to it. But I I'll move on from that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, my last point is in relation to the, I made mention of electricity credits before and I want to touch base very quickly on the Angler credit. And there are a number of persons, everyone who received it under the previous administration have been happy for it. Who doesn't want electricity credits? Who doesn't want to get something that they don't have to pay for? But the question was because whether it was done in a way in which would have been suitable for the persons who needed it the most, the most vulnerable. And so,

Madam Speaker, the the Anglic, the electricity crates that were given in the past. Unfortunately we were given, yes, there were limitations in terms of you had to be within a certain category of usage, but it it neglected to address the most vulnerable members of society loudspeaker and those people were the ones whose electricity were cut. And so despite the fact that some of us, many of us would have had electricity credits applied to us, to our homes, our partners, etcetera.

The people who had electricity cut the electricity when when are those electricity cuts did not apply to them. And so when we are talking about providing assistance to our vulnerable, we have to understand and we have to take the time and assess what exactly we're doing. We can't just jump up and say we're doing XYZ for political gain, Madam Speaker.

We have to do it in a way in which we are targeting and helping the people in our country who need it the most. And that is why any electricity creates that come forward should be in that vein to help those people because no one wants to have the electricity cut now. Speaker, there are people all across Anguilla who have children, who have elderly and they don't have electricity. So if you're going to give electricity credits, make sure that those people who have been cut, who've been disconnected, who can't afford to keep it on because they're under a certain category of income, et cetera, because they have no income.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, on a point of clarity, clarify for the Member for Sandy Hill.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, no, no. There's no point of clarity. Proceed Memo.

2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, ma'am. Speaking so. So we have to ensure that we look out for the most vulnerable and that whatever programs we put in place are targeted to help the people who need the most in our country, ma'am. Speaker, we all like it, we all love it, but make sure we focus on those persons as well. Ma'am. Speaker. The 2026 budget entitled Moving forward together, People, Purpose and prosperity was in fact and maybe the the member file and Hubble would have thought that it was a a ChatGPT name.

But when you when you talk about moving forward together. For us, it symbolized moving together, moving united, moving together, moving united, Madam Speaker, and that is what we campaigned on. That is what we stand on, and that is what we will deliver on for the next 5 years, for the next 4 years of this administration, Madam Speaker, 4 1/2 years.

And so, Madam Speaker, with that being said, I'd like to present to the House, honourable House the people of Angola, the 20/20/26. Uh, budget entitled moving forward together, people, purpose, prosperity and the and the estimates of recurrent revenue expenditure and capital. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Member. I put the question that a bill shortly entitled A Bill for Appropriation 2026 Act 2025 be read a second time. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say no. The eyes have it. I call upon the clerk to read the bill a second time.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Have to provide for the services and government. As it relates to the Order Paper, the Members would have taken notice that. Section 46 of. The Standing Orders requires that at this stage the bill would, would, would go to the committee stage. The question is that the House do resolve itself now into the committee stage to consider the bill clause by clause with the proviso that we would continue tomorrow morning with the committee stage at 9:00 AM. Those in favor say aye, those opposed say no. The eyes have it. The bill stands referred to the committee stage as a matter of housekeeping, just so that we are all on the same page and so that the public understands.

Part of our circulated schedule involve the attendance of our permanent secretaries and heads of department. In respect of each of the ministry heads covered in the budget, I believe the budget estimates have been published in The Gazette. I will suggest that they be uploaded to the. Site so that the public can follow tomorrow if they so desire, and what the exercise

tomorrow will involve.

Just so that there's no confusion and the members are aware. All of the members will have an opportunity to question the Heads of Government, the permanent secretaries, and the respective minister as it relates to the entries in the estimates that accompany the bill. So we will suspend now and resume tomorrow At 9:00 AM, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9:00 AM.