

how to do things differently.

As I said, it's the mindset that there is opportunity for continuous improvement within whatever organization that is, whether those improvements are better workspace, work life for employees, or better outcomes for customers. And customers, when we're talking government, are obviously the people of this province.

So it's a mind shift. It's a culture shift. It's a way of doing things differently, of looking at things differently. And I would suggest once this is in place and embedded within ministries, it will just be commonplace practice to come up with new ideas on how to do things differently.

If you're asking about structure, I don't see that it's a structure. A structure would actually negate the whole purpose of lean, because it's not about setting up committees and having more processes. It's doing things differently, and I think it would just be employees coming forward with ideas, whatever they see would be an area for improvement.

Ms. Chartier: — I appreciate that it is about a cultural shift. And I'm not being judgmental here. I really want to know. I've not experienced the lean process myself. In terms of training, I'm wondering. So you're training the trainers in essence right now, but I don't know what the trainers do. I want to know what it looks like when you embark upon this.

Can I suggest something? Perhaps you could invite me out to a lean . . . It's a three-day . . . I'd be interested in knowing what it looks like. So instead of trying to come up with anecdotes or examples, I would love over the course of the summer or when someone is embarking upon it, to come and see what it looks like.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Absolutely. We'll take you up on your offer. I do want to point out from an employee point of view . . . And I know that the previous minister has used this one before, and I think this just gives you an idea of what this process is supposed to be about: employee engagement, doing things differently, asking people for their opinion.

It was an employee in Sask Liquor and Gaming said, I've been here for 28 years and no one has ever asked me for my ideas and how to make things better. And I think that really wraps up the philosophy behind this. It is a philosophy. It's a way of doing things differently, doing things better.

There will be lean leaders within ministries. And I think their role is to make sure that everybody else in those ministries is an active participant in this. We want the opinions of employees. They're the ones who are doing the job every day, and I'm sure if you ask any one of them, they'll be able to tell you how to do it differently or do it better, do it more successfully. And that's what we want is those people engaged in the day-to-day process of how to get the job done.

But happy to take you up on your offer, and we'll check with the folks on a time that would work out because it's . . . I think it would help with just kind of the process of how all of this works.

Ms. Chartier: — That sounds good. And just in terms of the '12-13 numbers when . . . I know that you were going to try to get those. When can I expect to have the '12-13 lean numbers?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — We'll endeavour to get those to you by the beginning of next week. Well it would be all committee members.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. Moving on here, just going to question period on March 6th, 2013. I know in question period, Madam Minister, you had pointed out that the Public Service Commission had a contract with ClimbIT, and I'm wondering what that was for.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Chair, while I'm happy to answer questions about this budget, the member's question has nothing to do with this budget. That contract was let years ago.

The Chair: — Okay. I'll just remind the members, yes, we're just dealing with this year's budget. Okay?

Ms. Chartier: — Historically I think that there's been latitude at estimates to deal with issues that arise in the current year, and this is something that came to light on March 6th, 2013.

The Chair: — I'll leave that up to the minister to decide if she has officials with the information. Sometimes they don't have the information that goes back for years. So I'll leave that up to the minister if she can answer. But if she doesn't have the information, she's not obligated to answer.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — It was for knowledge centre SharePoint site. Contracts through the ministry in '11-12, 47,250; '12-13, there were two, 37,170 and \$1,596.

Ms. Chartier: — Would you mind? I'm a slow writer here, so '11-12 was how much?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — 47,250.

Ms. Chartier: — 250. And then '12-13?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — 37,170.

Ms. Chartier: — 37,170. And then you gave me . . .

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — There's a second amount in '12-13 of 1,596.

Ms. Chartier: — 1,596.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Happy to take these questions in question period if ever anybody would ask me a question there, but we'll do our best here.

Ms. Chartier: — The reason I like estimates is because we can dig down a little bit deeper, and question period doesn't always offer you the opportunity to ask or get detailed questions in, or answers for that matter. So the knowledge centre, you called it knowledge centre share?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — SharePoint service.

Ms. Chartier: — SharePoint service. Can you tell me what these contracts were for?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — It's an information sharing site. It streamlines HR [human resources] forms and services across executive government through the employee service centre.

Ms. Chartier: — In English?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — That was as English-ized as I have it, actually. It's an information sharing site for government employees, HR, that sort of thing, through the employee service centre.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about the original contract. Looking at your response in question period, the original, the '11-12 contract was tendered.

[22:30]

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — The first contract, we have an agency of record that was hired to work on this project, and they subcontracted to ClimbIT for the '11-12 contract which is the one that I had mentioned in question period. That contract was \$71,000. And then the other ones were follow-up to complete the project.

Ms. Chartier: — Sorry, \$71,000 was . . .

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — We have an agency of record that was hired to work on this project. They subcontracted to ClimbIT for a contract of \$71,000. That wasn't contracted through the ministry. That was a subcontract through the agency of record, which was all following all proper rules. The other contracts were follow-up to complete the project. Those were contracted through the ministry, and those are the contracts of the amounts that I told you, the 47,000, 37,000, and 1,500.

Ms. Chartier: — Who was the agency of record?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — The Phoenix Group.

Ms. Chartier: — The Phoenix Group?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. So Phoenix Group contracted in . . . was that in '11-12 as well for the 71? So Phoenix Group contracted 71,000. Was that in '11-12?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — The Phoenix Group contract . . . Sorry. The light, the timing here is not great here. So Phoenix Group contracted with ClimbIT and then to do the initial work through . . . Well that was the subcontract. So for PSC's contracts, were those tendered contracts?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — As I said in my answer in the House during question period that day, the procedures weren't followed for the follow-up contracts. There was a belief within the ministry that because the ClimbIT had already been used that they could just carry on and renew that contract.

If they wanted to do that, they should have issued an ACAN, which is an advanced contract award notice, which basically puts on the website that, by the way, we want to follow up on this contract. Is there anybody else out there who thinks they can do the work, who wants to bid on it as well? If not, we'll just carry on. That wasn't done.

The other way that it could have been done is to put out an RFP for that work to be done and have ClimbIT and anybody else who wanted to be involved bid on that.

Neither of those processes were followed, as I said, because employees at the time thought they could just renew a contract that had already been in place. That is not the way we do things. That is not the way this government operates. And again, as I said in my answer in question period, the employees in the ministry who were part of that contract have been spoken with to make it very clear to them what our rules and procedures are and that those are to be followed. The Deputy Minister to the Premier also sent a letter to all deputy ministers and heads of treasury board Crowns to remind them to remind their employees who are participating in the awarding of contracts, what the rules are and that our expectation is that those rules are followed 100 per cent of the time to the letter.

In this instance, they weren't, and as I said in my answer, I acknowledge that. And we are taking steps to make sure that doesn't happen again. I don't believe that there was any malicious intent involved in the ministry. But we want to be an open and transparent government and allow any company who wants to participate in government contracts to have the opportunity to do so. In this case, those procedures weren't followed, and we are making sure that they are followed in the future.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. So in light of this particular experience, did you have an opportunity then to look back over other contracts? Obviously staff didn't have good information. Did this trigger a review of other contracts? Did you find anything else in a similar vein?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — There was an examination within the Public Service Commission of other contracts to make sure that the rules are followed. And this was an anomaly. There was no other ones that were found to have not followed the appropriate rules and guidelines.

Ms. Chartier: — How far back did the examination go?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — The examination was for anything that was started or finished within the last fiscal year.

Ms. Chartier: — So it was '12-13?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — There was no concern then since this last, the previous contract . . . I guess with the investigations, you have employees who obviously have misinformation. Did you look at specific contracts that those employees had dealt with, or what was involved in the examination?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — As I said the contracts that were looked

at were in last fiscal year which would include contracts that those employees would've been involved in. And again there is no other ones that were found to be outside the rules and guidelines in place.

Ms. Chartier: — Just out of curiosity, one of these, the contract from '11-12 obviously was the year before the examination, so I'm wondering why you chose to just look at '12-13?

Mr. Swan: — What we chose to do is we looked at, we felt '12-13 was a good place to review to see what ones are active contracts or ones that are recent contracts. I think it's also fair to say had we found any anomalies, which we had not, we would have dug deeper, which may have included going into prior years as well.

Ms. Chartier: — And when did you do the examination?

Mr. Swan: — Basically we'd done the examination as soon as possible after we discovered there was an issue, within days basically.

Ms. Chartier: — When did you discover there was an issue?

Mr. Swan: — When did we discover there was an issue? We discovered there was an issue when the minister basically informed, right at that timeframe. When she informed through question period, so that's when we discovered that there was an issue with this particular contract, when we looked at it, because we realized that some of the assumptions made were incorrect.

Ms. Chartier: — So prior to . . . I just want, like, a time frame, end of February or beginning of March 2013. When did the minister, who triggered the review? What happened? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Mr. Swan: — We would've initiated that right at the end of February.

Ms. Chartier: — In terms of the services that ClimbIT provided, the knowledge centre SharePoint. Is that in operation today?

Ms. Heppner: — There is still some work to be done before it's fully operational.

Ms. Chartier: — So the work started in '11-12, and it's not operational yet. When is the expected time of it being operational?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — I don't have an estimated completion date today.

Ms. Chartier: — Who's working on it?

[22:45]

Mr. Swan: — We'll be using our own IT resources within a ministry to bring that to the finish line.

Ms. Chartier: — Can you tell me about . . . I am a bit of a

Luddite. And so knowledge centre SharePoint, is this something . . . How complex is it? Obviously we're in year three of trying to get it up and running. How complex is this kind of project? What does it do?

Mr. Dedman: — Ron Dedman. SharePoint sites are quite common in the Public Service Commission and are used to distribute information. Sort of overarching above the work that was done on this site, we were also looking at how perhaps we can find a better method to deliver a lot of the information that we need to distribute. So there's discussions right now on how we might put that on one site as opposed to a number of SharePoint sites that exist at the moment.

Ms. Chartier: — So this is . . . So just let me get this straight here then. We have spent money on something that isn't operational, and the company that was contracted to set it up hasn't completed the work. And now your staff are going to complete this, or you'll be looking at something else completely different?

Mr. Dedman: — I think we'll complete this site. But at the same time, we're looking at having fewer SharePoint sites than we currently have in the Public Service Commission part of Central Services.

Ms. Chartier: — How much staff time or resources do you anticipate you'll need in order to be able to complete this particular site?

Mr. Dedman: — The technical part of this work is very close to being done. We still have to stream the actual forms and information, which is sort of the communications part of this, to make that site operational.

Ms. Chartier: — So how much in terms of person hours or expenditures in staff do you think it's going to take to get it across the finish line?

Mr. Dedman: — Technically very little, like a week or two. We have two people in ITO that handle that type of SharePoint work. But this SharePoint site . . . And this SharePoint site has the content and the technical operation component. So the technical part is very close. To get it operational, we have to put the content into it.

Ms. Chartier: — Did ClimbIT complete their part of the contract? When did their work stop on this?

Mr. Dedman: — I think it completed about March of this year.

Ms. Chartier: — So they stopped working on it in March of 2013. And why did they stop? Did they fulfill their contract? So they completed their work in March 2013 . . . or stopped working. I won't say completed. They stopped work on March 2013. What led to them not doing it anymore?

Mr. Dedman: — It got to the end of their portion of the contract. So they finished what they were asked to do when they stopped work on this.

Ms. Chartier: — We had talked earlier about these not following proper processes in terms of tendering. Was there a

written contract?

Mr. Dedman: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — So they have completed all the requirements of the written contract?

Mr. Dedman: — Yes.

Ms. Chartier: — Can you tell me a little bit about what you're . . . First of all — again this Luddite in me who doesn't know very much about shared services but — is it usual to have a contractor do this amount of work and then you got your own IT people who do it? Is that a normal way of doing it?

Mr. Dedman: — Well I think as I said, the technical part of this is pretty much finished. It's now the communications part of putting the material into the process.

So under normal circumstances, we would find resources to do this work through the normal process that ITO has to bring contractors on stream. And that wasn't followed because this was kind of a unique thing that started really as a communications with some IT component. And then once the overall communications part was done by that ministry or the agency of record, then the ministry followed up and thought that their process was okay to just have them continue the work. So normally, and now for the Public Service Commission, when they need an IT resource, they would get it through Central Services' procurement process.

Ms. Chartier: — I think my question then is so ClimbIT was contracted to do . . . in a written contract both years — '11-12, '12-13. There was a written contract for both those years?

Mr. Dedman: — Yes, that's my understanding.

Ms. Chartier: — Have you seen the written contract?

Mr. Dedman: — Not personally.

Ms. Chartier: — How are we aware of their existence?

Mr. Swan: — I've seen the contract with ClimbIT and they've completed work for us. That's how I'm aware of their existence.

Ms. Chartier: — May I ask who signed off on the contracts?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Obviously I don't have that information here, but I'm wondering what the purpose of the member's question is in asking what public servant signed off on these contracts. And I'm not saying this to be argumentative. I'm honestly confused as to why that would be an important thing. I'm not about . . . I don't have the information here, as I said previously. None of these have anything to do with the budget that's before us.

Happy to answer the questions. I don't have the contracts here. And I don't have the name of the public servant who signed off on them, and I'm not sure why that would be important. We've already said that those involved made a mistake in the awarding. We've accepted that. We've accepted there was a

mistake made, and we've taken steps to correct that.

Ms. Chartier: — Would it be possible to get a copy of the contracts?

[23:00]

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — We will endeavour to get a copy of that to members of the committee. And I know their next question will be timeline — beginning of next week.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you. So I know you described two pieces: the technical piece and then the communications piece. So in these kinds of contracts, is it normal to break it out where a company would do this part and then your staff would do the rest?

Mr. Dedman: — As a general rule, one way to look at this is that you hire your expertise in development, people that can put it together for you. Then you want to configure it to the Government of Saskatchewan systems so that there are no security concerns and it can fit in with the system. And then into the future, with something like this, you either have internally or by contract the ongoing maintenance of the software that you've developed. So sometimes that's done internally. Sometimes that's done under contract. But the interface to bring it into the system has an IT component of Central Services in it.

Ms. Chartier: — Again forgive my ignorance here, the piece that is left to be complete . . . Then you said communication. So what does that mean?

Mr. Dedman: — It's content that we're talking about.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. And you said that'll be about a week of work for two staff.

Mr. Dedman: — The connecting, the IT component will be a week or so for two staff. The content part, I think it will be ongoing. You'll start with some, and you'll add and you'll add as you go forward. But the SharePoint allows you to put your initial piece on and then to add more to it as you go along.

Ms. Chartier: — And when do you anticipate then that this'll be up and running for your staff to be able to utilize as a SharePoint?

Mr. Dedman: — We don't have an exact date, but it will not be long.

Ms. Chartier: — I don't need an exact date, but just rough. Are we looking at three months, six months down the road? What are you thinking?

Mr. Dedman: — I think certainly by three months it should be fine. Perhaps quicker, but it will an ongoing process.

Ms. Chartier: — Okay. And what exactly is this SharePoint? You've talked about doing a broader SharePoint, and you said there's lots of SharePoint services in PSC and in government in general. What is this particular one about? Or what does it do? So again, forgive my ignorance on this kind of thing, but what