



PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

TENTH PARLIAMENT
[2011/2012 SESSION]

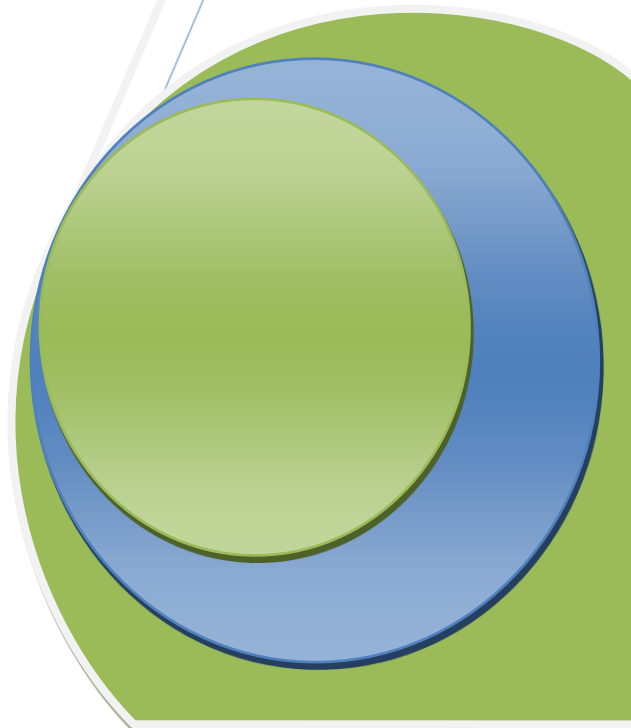
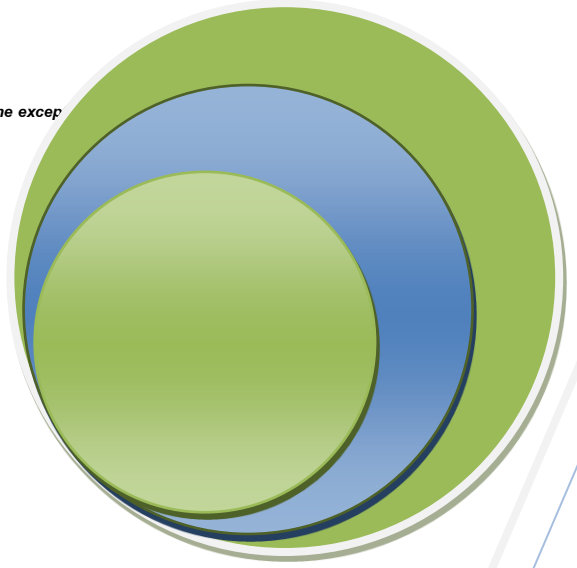
Second REPORT

OF THE
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE
AND REPORT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND
SERVICE COMMISSION WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE
JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION

AN EVALUATION OF
THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF
THE ARIMA BOROUGH CORPORATION

*Together with the Minutes of Proceedings
and Notes of Evidence*

Ordered to be printed by the Houses



**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND
REPORT TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND
SERVICE COMMISSIONS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND
LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION**

SECOND REPORT

**AN EVALUATION OF
THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
ARIMA BOROUGH CORPORATION**

Date Laid: H.O. R. _____

Senate _____

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Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
TTPS	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
PHI	Public Health Inspector
MIC	Metal Industries Company Limited
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme

Executive Summary

The Second Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to inquire into and report on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission encompasses an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arima Borough Corporation.

Chapter 1 of the Report details the mandate and powers of the Committee in accordance with section 66A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the mode of operations.

Chapter 2 of the Report introduces the Arima Borough Corporation. This chapter also itemizes the broad areas of focus, the inquiry objectives and lists the Officials who appeared before the Committee to give oral evidence.

Chapter 3 of the Report is a synopsis of the Evidence garnered at the evaluation.

Chapter 4 of the Report outlines the observations, recommendations proposed by the Committee and gives the conclusion of the evaluation.

Chapter 1

1.1 The Committee

(a) Mandate

In accordance with stipulations at section 66(A) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on September 17, 2010 the House of Representatives and on October 12, 2010 the Senate, agreed to a motion on the subject of the appointment of a **Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission on all matters relating to:**

- **their administration**
- **the manner of exercise of their powers**
- **their methods of functioning; and**
- **any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.**

(b) Powers

Standing Orders 71B of the Senate and 79B of the House of Representatives outline that the Committee is empowered to study and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management and operations of the Ministry or Body assigned to it by the House. In consequence the Committee has the powers inter alia:

- a. to review and report on all matters relating to:
 - the statute law relating to the Ministry/Body assigned to it;
 - the program and policy objectives of the Ministry/Body and its effectiveness in the implementation of same;
 - other matters relating to the management, organization of the Ministry/Body;

In addition, this Joint Select Committee also has power to:

- send for persons, papers and records;
- adjourn from place to place;
- report from time to time;

- appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not otherwise readily available, or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee; and
- meet concurrently with any other Committee for the purpose of deliberating, taking evidence or considering draft reports.

A list of the entities which fall under the purview of the Committee is attached as **Appendix 1**.

(c) Membership

The following Members were appointed to serve on the Committee:

- Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan
- Mr. Elton Prescott, SC
- Brig. John Sandy
- Mr. David Abdulah
- Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe
- Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin, MP
- Mr. Chandresh Sharma, MP
- Mr. Rodger Samuel, MP
- Mr. Prakash Ramadhar, MP
- Ms. Marlene McDonald, MP
- Mrs. Joanne Thomas, MP
- Mr. Devant Maharaj

(e) Secretariat Support

Secretarial assistance was provided by the following officers:

Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip-Stoute	-	Secretary
Ms. Candice Skerrette	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Indira Binda	-	Graduate Research Assistant

(f) Meetings

Your Committee met with Officials of the Arima Borough Corporation at the Office of the Parliament, Tower D, the Port of Spain International Waterfront, #1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain on Friday November 25, 2011.

1.2 Minister's Response

This Report is subject to Standing Orders 71(B)(13) of the Senate and 79(B) (13) of the House of Representatives which state:

“(13) The Minister responsible for the Ministry/Body under review shall, not later than sixty days after a report from a Joint Select Committee, relating to the Ministry/Body, has been laid upon the Table, present a paper to the House responding to any recommendations/comments contained in the report which are addressed to it.

The sixty-day period commences on the date of tabling.

Chapter 2

2.1 Introduction

The Arima Borough Corporation was originally established under the Arima Corporation Ordinance Chap. 39 No. 11 (1950 ed.) In 1990, greater political decentralization was effected with the promulgation of the Municipal Corporations Act, Chap. 25:04, Act No. 21 of 1990. The Corporation is under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government in accordance with Gazette No. 105 of 2011 dated Friday August 12, 2011.

General Information

The 2009 Annual Report of the Corporation was tabled in Senate on 10.12.2010 and the House of Representative on 14.12.2010. The Committee during its consideration of the Report noted that there were areas that required clarification and agreed that an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arima Borough Corporation was warranted.

Broad Areas of Focus

The broad areas of focus identified by your Committee for evaluation were as follows:

- Administrative management for 2008 to 2010;
- Goals and objectives as listed in the 2009 Report of the Corporation;
- Medium-Term Strategic Plan up to 2015;
- Planned Areas of Implementation up to 2015; and
- Legislative and Regulatory adjustments that can enhance the effectiveness of the Corporation.

Inquiry Objectives

Thus, the objectives of the inquiry were as follows:

- (i) to determine how the Corporation expanded its revenue base and the maximized the collection of revenue;
- (ii) to assess how the Corporation developed and maintained the physical infrastructure of the Town of Arima;
- (iii) the extent of development and maintenance of sporting and recreational facilities within the town;
- (iv) the method of promoting primary health care within the Corporation;
- (v) the measures deployed to improve safety and security within the Corporation; and
- (vi) the enhancement of land and building regulations to ensure compliance by burgesses.

Conduct of Inquiry

As part of the preliminary work for the meeting, the ensuing areas were communicated to the Corporation to solicit initial written responses:

- Review of the administrative management from 2008 to 2010;
- Status Report on its objectives and goals listed in its 2009 Report;
- Medium-Term Strategic Plan up to 2015;
- Planned Areas of Implementation up to 2015; and
- Legislative and Regulatory adjustments that can enhance the effectiveness of the Corporation.

The documentation shaped the questions posed at the public hearing which was conducted on Friday November 25, 2011.

At the examination, the Arima Borough Corporation was represented by:

Mrs. Arlene McComie	-	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Ronald Bobb	-	Ag. Chief Executive Officer
Mr. David Williams	-	Ag. Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Kristal Langdon	-	Financial Officer
Ms. Jane Williams	-	Town Assessor II (Ag.)
Mrs. Sharon Stuart-Fraser	-	Corporate Secretary
Mr. Ramesh Nandalal	-	Auditor I
Mrs. Lakhia Ramlal-Singh	-	Ag. Personnel & Industrial Relations Officer
Mr. Winfield Springer	-	Town Superintendent

Ms. Erica Prieto	-	Police Inspector
Ms. Adeeta Ramkissoon	-	Public Health Inspector II
Ms. Chandricka Lalla	-	Ag. Sanitation Foreman III
Mr. Jason Farrell	-	Project Implementation Officer
Mrs. Enla Frederick-Ragoo	-	Accountant II
Mr. Anthony Bridgewater	-	Information Technology Specialist
Mrs. Deborah Mg-Saye Shoon	-	Occupational Health and Safety Officer
Mr. Nigel Mc Carthy	-	Disaster Management Coordinator
Ms. Patricia Medina	-	Acting Accountant II

The Minutes and Verbatim Notes of the Committee's proceedings are attached as **Appendices 2 and 3** respectively.

In accordance with Standing Orders 75(4)(b) of the Senate and 82(4)(b) of the House of Representatives, the Committee at a meeting held on Friday November 23, 2012 considered and adopted this Second Report.

Chapter 3

3.1 The Evidence

In keeping with the areas of focus specified above, your Committee was provided with the following information from the Officials of the Arima Borough Corporation:

The Arima Borough Corporation is a corporate body comprised of the Mayor, Aldermen, Councilors and Burgesses of the Borough.

Vision

The Arima Borough Corporation aims to be the most efficient, proactive and people-oriented City Corporation in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mission

The Arima Borough Corporation is committed to forging partnerships with all stakeholders in creating a unique, modern City that delivers efficient, premium services, whilst preserving its distinct cultural heritage.

Operations of staff of the Corporation

The Corporation's Staff operates from various locations:

- The Town Clerk's Office - Hollis Avenue, Arima
- The Stores Department - Sanchez Street, Arima
- The Town Hall - Sorzano Street, Arima
- The Municipal Police Station - Sanchez Street, Arima
- The Arima Market - Hollis Avenue, Arima
- The Garage Workshop - O'Meara Road, Arima
- The Abattoir - Gordon Street, Arima

Functions

In accordance with the Municipal Corporation's Act No. 21 of 1990, the general functions of the Corporation are as follows:

- The construction and maintenance of all drains and water-courses except main water-courses and highway water-courses;
- The provision, maintenance and control of all Corporation buildings;
- The provision, maintenance and control of such parks, recreation grounds and other public places as the President may from time to time by Order prescribe;
- The promotion of development within the Municipality in accordance with plans prepared by the Minister with responsibility for physical planning;
- The disposal of garbage from public and private property, abatement of public nuisances and dissemination of information for primary health care;
- The co-ordination of local and regional trade fairs, athletic events and cultural displays and entertainment;
- The provision, maintenance and management of the Market and Abattoir;
- The collection and distribution of forms issued by Departments of Government; and
- Such other functions as the President may from time to time by Order prescribe.

Other Services provided by the Corporation include:

- Issuance of Construction Permits;
- Issuance of Removal of House/Building Certificates;
- Issuance of Food Badges;
- Inspection, Registration and Issuance of Certificates for Cinemas;
- Inspection, Registration and Issuance of Certificates for Food Premises;
- Processing of Water Applications;
- Assessment of Properties for payment of Rates and Taxes;
- Issuance of Certificates of Assessment;
- Transfer of Properties; and
- Rental of the Corporation's Facilities and Advertising Space.

Revenue Generation, Taxes and Fees

With effect from January 01, 2010 the collection of Rates and Taxes is no longer the responsibility of the Corporation. This has resulted in a decline in income of \$3.5 million.

The Corporation is in the process of reviewing fees for use of facilities and fees associated with certificates in order to increase internal revenue levels.

Other forms of revenue generation which the Corporation has embarked upon are:

- (i) sale of advertising spaces, such as:
 - a. using the walls of the Velodrome for advertising;
 - b. bill boards; and
 - c. a digital billboard.

Billboards will be located at parks, recreation grounds, major roads and intersections and the premises of the Corporation.

Budgetary allocation for 2010 was insufficient, resulting in the Corporation being unable to develop facilities.

Works/Engineering Department

Strategies are being sought with respect to procurement and stock-piling to ensure timely project delivery.

Efficiency is measured through the submission of monthly status reports on projects from the Town Superintendent's Department to the Council. The cost and time frame for completion of the projects are the two (2) areas against which projects are measured.

Projects are monitored through internal teams that ensure project progress is up to standard as well as through the assistance of the Ministry's Project Implementation Team.

The Design Department within the Ministry has been assisting with analyzing the structure of the Arima Municipal Stadium and ensuring that it is fit for continuous use.

A street signage project is in progress. This project is in the assessment stage, that is, officials are attempting to decipher where new signage is needed.

In the Works Department an Engineer Assistant is required due to the volume of work. A draft note has been sent to the Ministry to create a position of Transport Foreman.

Public Health Department

The Public Health Department functions without a Chief Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Inspectors II.

Food safety

The Corporation has undertaken systematic monitoring of restaurants, cafes and other shops which serve cooked food. Checks have also made checks on roadside vendors and foodstuff offered for sale have been sampled in order to ensure that preparation was done hygienically.

Environmental Health

The Corporation has decided to continue/promote:

- (i) the Insect Vector Control Programme in collaboration with Insect Vector Control Department of the Ministry of Health; and
- (ii) rodents and other pests control programme

In order to deal with excessive waste, the Corporation has implemented continuous clean-up campaigns in collaboration with burgesses and by the establishment of a Bulk Waste Collection Service.

The Corporation frequently monitors vacant lots and other open spaces in order to minimize the incidence of illegal dumping and reduce mosquito breeding spaces. To this end, an Insect Vector/Perifocal Unit was established to monitor and control spraying activities.

Municipal Police Service

Over the past three (3) years the force has increased from thirty-eight (38) to forty-eight (48) officers.

The increased number of officers has been accommodated in an extension to the existing building in the short term. With respect to the long term, accommodation was incorporated into the Plans for the new administration complex.

Training of Municipal Police is conducted by the Ministry of National Security. Approximately \$45,000 is spent on training at the Barracks.

Strategies have been improved to detect crime and protect officers within the Corporation.

The vehicle fleet has been increased to enable greater mobility within the Borough.

Municipal Police are accountable to the Chief Executive Officer.

Disaster Management

Personnel for the Disaster Management Unit within the Corporation have not yet been employed. The Ministry of Local Government has recently approved the use of unspent balances to construct the disaster emergency management building.

Strategic Plan 2010-2012

The strategic plan proposes the way forward for the Arima Borough Corporation over the period 2010 – 2012. The plan also seeks to form partnerships with all of its stakeholders to create a unique, modern Borough that delivers the most efficient, proactive and people-oriented services.

In 2010 teams were assembled to turn the strategic objectives as laid out in the strategic plan into operational plans that could be implemented within the 2010-2012 period.

The Corporation is in the process of finalizing the Strategic Plan for presentation to the Council.

The Strategic Plan lacks objectives for crime and disaster management.

Safety and Security

With respect to safety and security, the Corporation proposes to:

- implement mobile patrols throughout the town;
- improve the lighting at parks and children playfields.

Performance Measurement

Complaints by burgesses are one critical measurement of performance as it is an indicator whether demands and expectations are being met.

Each department has a priority list for the financial year the completion rate of this priority list is used as an indicator of performance.

It was estimated that on average between seventy-five and eighty percent of projects are completed on time and within budget.

There are no mechanisms to gauge the level of satisfaction of burgesses. Communication with burgesses is currently done through flyers and it was the intention of the subcommittee to host town meetings at different locations on a quarterly basis.

New Administrative Complex

In 2005 there was the “turning of sod” ceremony for the construction of a new administrative complex. This project was abandoned.

The authorities resorted to erect the new complex on the site where the Town Hall is located. Building plans have been approved and the Ministry of Local Government has been approached with respect to funding. It is envisaged that with the receipt of all approvals that the structure will be completed within 18 months.

The expected outcome for construction was not achieved. Discussions are being held with the Ministry to have the lease of the premises occupied upstairs FCB Bank extended.

Arima Municipal Stadium

The Corporation is aware of concerns with respect to the maintenance of the stadium.

Maintenance and repair, more specifically electrical works is required on the Arima Municipal Stadium.

The Design Department of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure has been engaged to assist with analyzing the structure in order for repairs to begin.

Sporting Facilities

The Corporation is in the process of refurbishing and repairing basketball and netball courts and constructing additional indoor sporting facilities. In addition to this, community sport competitions will be held in order to deter the youth within the Corporation from engaging in criminal activities.

3.2 Challenges

Personnel Department

There is only one (1) officer in this department responsible for the fulfillment of Human Resource Management needs.

Staff is demotivated and the present method to motivate staff includes fortnightly heads of department meetings with senior officers and meetings of the entire corporation every two (2) months.

Municipal Police Service

There has been a pull-effect of officers to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service because of a more attractive compensation package.

Public Health Department

The Corporation has been without a Chief Medical Officer of Health, PHI II and Sanitation Foreman II (additional person) and this has negatively impacted the performance of this Department.

Works/Engineering Department

Due to staffing constraints businesses are referred to the Ministry of Works Design Department in order to get the requisite approvals.

Audit Department

Additional staff is required to improve checks and balances necessary for internal control.

Strategic Plan 2010-2012

External professional services are not always readily available and can be costly.

Revenue Generation/Cost Cutting Initiatives

Legislation

The existing Public Health Ordinance (1950) is outdated and in need of reform in order to properly enforce current issues within the Borough.

There is a slow process involved in the implementation of legislation as it has to be passed by the Council, taken to the Attorney General by the Ministry and then it is sent to Parliament.

Bureaucracy

The decision-making process with the Ministry of Local Government can be prolonged up to one (1) year as in the case of the approval for the funding of the administration building.

Administrative Reports

The process for the compilation of an administrative report is that each Head of Department does a report with their particular department, a joint session is convened and then the CEO reviews it with one or two senior personnel and then it is printed.

Restoration of the Arima Dial

During November 2011 the Metal Industries Company Limited restored the Arima Dial.

Relationship with the business community

The relationship with the business community is a mixed one. Issues generally arise when businesses deviate from the initial approved plans of Town and Country or open business when approvals are not finalized.

Sporting Facilities

The present level of existing funding of the Corporation can barely maintain sporting facilities. Thus, major works on these facilities is deferred to the Ministry of Sports or other special funding arrangements like the PSIP.

Relationship with the Ministry of Local Government

The Ministry supports fourteen (14) corporations but lacks a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. An overall structure for all corporations is necessary.

A note to create positions of Deputy CEOs for corporations has been sent to Cabinet and internal audits are necessary to ascertain the staffing needs of each corporation.

The Corporation also faces other challenges such as street vending, vagrancy (homelessness), unsatisfactory conditions at the Guanapo Landfill and increased population size.

Chapter 4

4.1 Observations

Although the Arima Borough Corporation was established since 1888, evidence received by your Committee indicates that:

- the Corporation is operating without a full complement of staff which is required to facilitate its efficient and effective functioning. Key positions such as a Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Inspectors II, and Engineering Assistant to name a few are vacant;
- the Corporation lacks a proper Procurement Policy to expedite the delivery of construction projects;
- ABC attempts to generate revenue through the utilization of its facilities;
- ABC lacks the necessary resources and staffing required to manage the increase in population and its impact on the Arima landscape;
- the Corporation Strategic Plan has not been operationalized;
- the Corporation lacks a fully functional Municipal Police Service Unit;
- needs to construct of a new administrative complex;
- the Corporation continues to function with insufficient funding which restricts the development of facilities within the Corporation;
- the ABC has not formulated strategies to deal with traffic control and management, which should include moving maxi taxis to the outskirts of Arima, changes to the transport hub of the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) and complaints by residents
- names of street on street signs within the Corporation are misspelt; and
- the Corporation is in dire need of refurbishing the sporting and recreational facilities, grounds and landscaping

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the evidence received during the evaluation, your Committee wishes to make the following recommendations that would assist in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arima Borough Corporation:

- (a) The CPO's Office should ensure the Personnel Department is provided with the necessary complement of staff of one (1) Clerk IV, three (3) Clerk II's, four (4) Clerk I's and one (1) Clerk/Typist I;
- (b) Initiatives should be introduced to retain Municipal Police within Municipalities. Consideration should be given to parity of compensation with the Police Service;
- (c) The strategic plan should include columns of the intended actions, actual outcomes, reasons projects were not completed and the percentage of projects actually achieved/completed.
- (d) The format of the strategic plan should be more detailed to demonstrate strategies that lead to specific deliverables/actions, plans for programme implementation and approved project plans.
- (e) The establishment of feedback mechanisms on the existing quality of service and expectations of service. This will enable strategy plans to be developed.

4.3 Conclusions

Rapid industrial and commercial development has led to severe congestion, increased crime rates and satellite ghetto communities in and around cities. During this inquiry, your Committee heard that the Arima Borough Corporation has encountered several challenges in its attempts at development. The Corporation is faced with many challenges in adapting to the changing landscape of the Borough. The Corporation is faced with human resource problems, vacancies, insufficient funding from the Ministry of Local Government, and an increase in population growth through housing development schemes.

The Corporation however requires the tools and funding in order to efficiently and effectively move forward in handling the challenges it faces and to facilitate its work.

Your Committee therefore urges that all the relevant authorities take a serious, urgent and concerted look at the service needs of the Borough Corporation as articulated in this Report.

The Committee therefore respectfully submits its report for consideration.

sgd.
Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan
Chairman

sgd.
Mr. Elton Prescott, S.C.
Vice-Chairman

Brigadier John Sandy
Member

sgd.
Mr. Chandresh Sharma
Member

Mr. David Abdulah
Member

sgd.
Mrs. Joanne Thomas
Member

sgd.
Mr. Rodger Samuel
Member

sgd.
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe
Member

sgd.
Mr. Prakash Ramadhar
Member

Ms. Marlene McDonald
Member

sgd.
Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin
Member

sgd.
Mr. Devant Maharaj
Member

**THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT
TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Appendix 1

List of Entities

Areas of responsibility:

- ✚ Police Service Commission
- ✚ Public Service Commission
- ✚ Statutory Authorities' Service Commission
- ✚ Teaching Service Commission
- ✚ Arima Borough Corporation
- ✚ Chaguanas Borough Corporation
- ✚ Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation
- ✚ Diego Martin Regional Corporation
- ✚ Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation
- ✚ Penal/Debe Regional Corporation
- ✚ Point Fortin Borough Corporation
- ✚ Port of Spain City Corporation
- ✚ Princes Town Regional Corporation
- ✚ San Fernando City Corporation
- ✚ Sangre Grande Regional Corporation
- ✚ San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation
- ✚ Siparia Regional Corporation
- ✚ Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation

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Appendix 2

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION HELD IN CONFERENCE ROOM, LEVEL 2 AND J HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2011 AT 9:33 A.M.

Present were:

Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan	-	Chairman
Mr. Elton Prescott, S.C.	-	Vice-Chairman
Mr. David Abdulah	-	Member
Mr. Devant Maharaj	-	Member
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe	-	Member
Mr. Rodger Samuel	-	Member
Brig. John Sandy	-	Member
Mr. Chandresh Sharma	-	Member
Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip Stoute	-	Secretary
Ms. Candice Skerrette	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Indira Binda	-	Graduate Research Assistant

The following Officials from Arima Borough Corporation were also available:

Mrs. Arlene McComie	-	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Ronald Bobb	-	Ag. Chief Executive Officer
Mr. David Williams	-	Ag. Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Kristal Langdon	-	Financial Officer
Ms. Jane Williams	-	Town Assessor II (Ag.)
Mrs. Sharon Stuart-Fraser	-	Corporate Secretary
Mr. Ramesh Nandalal	-	Auditor I
Mrs. Lakiah Ramlal-Singh	-	Ag. Personnel & Industrial Relations Officer
Mr. Winfield Springer	-	Town Superintendent
Ms. Erica Prieto	-	Police Inspector
Ms. Adeeta Ramkissoon	-	Public Health Inspector II
Ms. Chandricka Lalla	-	Ag. Sanitation Foreman III
Mr. Jason Farrell	-	Project Implementation Officer
Mrs. Enla Frederick-Ragoo	-	Accountant II
Mr. Anthony Bridgewater	-	Information Technology Specialist
Mrs. Deborah Mg-Saye Shoon	-	Occupational Health and Safety Officer
Mr. Nigel Mc Carthy	-	Disaster Management Coordinator
Ms. Patricia Medina	-	Acting Accountant II

Absent/Excused were:

Mr. Prakash Ramadhar	-	Member (excused)
Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin	-	Member (excused)
Mrs. Joanne Thomas	-	Member (excused)
Ms. Marlene McDonald	-	Member

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

2.1 The following corrections were made to the minutes:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Pg 2 Item 5.1 | Delete item 5.1 “Other Matters” |
| Pg 3 Item 8.4 | Delete “an area of overlap”
Insert “some issues that could border conflict of interest” |
| Pg 4 Item 8.6 (c) | Insert into the heading “Report on the” after “Performance” and delete the word “of” |
| Pg 5 Item 8.6 (c) | Delete “mechanism” and insert “mechanisms” |

2.2 The “Appeals Tribunal” item listed on page 4 was re-worded to clarify the areas of “Police Service Commission Tribunal” apart from “Commission of Police Tribunal” as follows:

Members were informed that there are two (2) attorneys at law on the Appeals Tribunal of the Police Service Commission, namely: Mr. Martin George and Mr. Addison Khan. There was consensus that in order to properly hear appeals and reduce the number of appeals pending, that the members of the Tribunal should be full time and must be competent in areas specified by law. It was advised that this would require amending the Constitution.

There is an increase in complaints from the Police Social and Welfare Association and individual police service officers. Further, grievances about discipline have also increased. These issues are being handled by the Tribunal.

Once the tribunal set up by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) hears and determines the appeal, then the police officer may come directly to the Appeals Tribunal of the Police Service Commission and file an appeal. An appeal must be filed within fourteen (14) days from the date on which the decision of the Tribunal was received.

In the case of promotional appeals, an officer has the right to request that the Commissioner of Police review same. Subsequent to the review, if he is still dissatisfied, then he may file an appeal to the Appeals Tribunal of the Police Service Commission.

In 2010, five (5) appeals were filed; from 2010 to present eight (8) more appeals have been filed.

2.3 The Minutes of the Eighth Meeting held on June 14, 2011 as amended were confirmed by Brig. John Sandy and seconded by Mr. David Abdulah.

MATTER ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 The Committee discussed whether a committee member's power to examine an entity is limited because of conflict of interest issues as the line Minister. They requested an opinion on "How privilege operates with respect to a Joint Select Committee".

3.2 The Committee directed the Secretary to inquire on the status of the submissions from Police Service Commission (PSC) on its strategic plan.

SUSPENSION/RESUMPTION

5.1 The meeting was suspended at 9:56 a.m.

(Members proceeded to the J. Hamilton Maurice Room on the Mezzanine Floor)

DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS OF THE ARIMA BOROUGH CORPORATION (ABC) ON THE 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

6.1 The meeting resumed in J. Hamilton Maurice Room at 10:03 a.m.

6.2 The Chairman welcomed officials of the Arima Borough Corporation (ABC). Introductions were exchanged.

6.3 On the request of the Committee, the Ag. Chief Executive Officer of the Arima Borough Corporation made opening remarks on the functions and challenges of the Corporation. During his discourse he conveyed that during the past year, the Corporation attempted to fulfill its mandate which is stated in Act No. 21 of 1990, the Municipal Corporation Act. He further stated that despite challenges the Corporation feels that it has carried out its mandate. He added that:

- (i) The only officer in the Personnel Department is the Personnel and Industrial Officer II. However, representations have been made to the Ministry of Local Government and the office of the Chief Personnel Officer for the establishment of a Human Resource Unit.
- (ii) The Municipal Police Department has been functioning well. Its total strength is forty one (41) officers, at present there is thirty eight (38). The vehicle fleet has been increased for greater mobility of the officers; quarters have been extended and the Arima Central Police have been engaged within the Corporation. One major challenge however, is that approximately \$45,000 is spent at any one time to train officers at the Barracks. Subsequently, these officers transfer to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service because of a better compensation package.
- (iii) The Public Health Department functions without a Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) and Public Health Inspectors II. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Health has promised that an appointment will be made shortly.
- (iv) In the General Works Department another Engineer Assistant is required because of the volume of work.

- (v) Due to the growth in the population of Corporation there is a need for increased staff in the Audit Department.
- (vi) The need for increased procurement strategies for efficient project delivery.

6.4 The following issues and responses emanated from discussions with Officials of the Arima Borough Corporation on the 2009 Annual Report:

(a) Collection of taxes

The acting Chief Executive Officer conveyed that the Act was amended three years ago. The amendment removed the facility for collection of taxes from the mandate of the Corporation. The Corporation, based on the amendment, has not been collecting taxes. The Corporation is however in the process of revising fees charged for the use of facilities, in order to generate revenue.

(b) Human Resources

The officials indicated that although the Arima Corporation is the smallest of the fourteen (14) corporations, it is densely populated (population in 2001 census, 32,000, at present it appears to have doubled). Further, it was stated that with the increase in the population the workload has increased and therefore additional resources are required.

Additionally, the officials informed the Committee that in 2007 the Corporation was given two (2) Sanitation Foreman (SF) IIs. However, an additional SF II is needed.

Further the Insect Vector Unit requires a Public Health Inspector II

(c) Implementation of Strategic Plan

The Committee was informed that sub-committees have been set up to implement and operationalize the strategic plan. The plan was put on hold with the appointment of a new council, subsequent to the Local Government Elections.

(d) Municipal Police

With respect to accommodation for Municipal Police Officers, officials indicated that the existing building had been extended. At a retreat in 2011, strategies to improve the level of service to the burgesses were considered. This has resulted in increased patrols and traffic arrangements, the installation of a mobile police unit and joint efforts with Arima police.

Officials also indicated that training of Municipal Police Officers is conducted by the Commissioner of Police and the Ministry of National Security. However, under the Act, the Municipal Police falls under the purview of the Corporation and they are therefore accountable to the Chief Executive Officer. Disciplinary matters are as a result, dealt with by the Corporation.

(e) Strategic Plan 2010-2012

In 2010, the Corporation set up sub-committees to implement and operationalize strategies in the Strategic Plan. Subsequent to the Local Government Elections, a new Council was appointed, who had to be briefed. This resulted in a break of approximately six to eight months in the activities of the sub-committees and a delay of the completion of the Strategic Plan of the Corporation. However, the time was used to become familiar with the way of thinking of the new council.

In 2011, work to operationalize the Strategic Plan recommenced and the Corporation is now in the process of finalizing the Plan for presentation to the Council.

The Strategic Plan should be completed in the first quarter of 2012.

Concerns were raised with respect to the Strategic Plan being void of proposals for crime and disaster management. Officials agreed that these would be considered in the future plan.

(f) New Administrative Complex

In 2005 there was the “turning of sod” for the construction of a new administrative complex. This project was not successful. Plans are presently in place for the new complex to be erected on the site of the Town Hall. Building plans have been approved and the Ministry of Local Government had been approached with respect to funding. It is hoped that construction will commenced soon. It is however envisaged that with the receipt of all approvals that the structure will be completed within 18 months.

(g) Disaster Management

There is a Disaster Management Unit with the Corporation, but prior to the Drafting of the Strategic Plan personnel for this Unit was not yet employed.

(h) Budgetary Allocation and Fees

On the issue of budgetary allocation the officials indicated that the Corporation received an allocation of \$61 million for fiscal 2012. The Officials indicated to the Committee that the funds allocated to the Corporation was insufficient, and it is because of this the Borough has not been able to develop facilities. Such projects could only be undertaken through the Development Programme (DP) and the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

Fees generated through advertising and other activities amounted to \$5 million.

(i) Measurement of Efficiency and Effectiveness

The officials informed the Committed that the success of the Corporation is based on how moneys are spent on the things the Corporation sets out to achieve, such as the acquisition of goods and the delivery of services to the burgesses.

Another form of measurement is based on the number of projects completed out of the project commenced. On a monthly basis, the Town Superintendent Department reports to the Council on status of projects. This is also overviewed by an internal corporation team and the Ministry of Local Government Project Implementation team.

Projects are measured against the expected cost and time frame for completion.

(j) Traffic Management

The officials conveyed that the Regional Coordinating Committee chaired by the Mayor is comprised of personnel from the utilities, Traffic Management and Town and Country Planning departments. This Committee was set up to deal with traffic management issues and complaints by residents. Additionally, strategies were conceptualized to deal with issues of traffic control and management such as moving maxi taxis to the outskirts of Arima and changes to the transport hub of the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC).

(k) Arima Municipal Stadium

The Corporation is aware of concerns with respect to the maintenance of the stadium. The building has not been condemned but needs repair especially the electrical. The Design Department of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure has been engaged to assist with analyzing the structure in order for repairs to begin.

The Corporation is also in the process of repairing basketball and netball courts and developing additional indoor sporting facilities. It is hoped that criminal activities will be minimized through these projects.

The Metal Industries Company (MIC) has been undertaking restorative works to the Arima Dial. These repair works it was envisaged will be completed by the following week.

(l) Street Signs

In response to concerns raised with respect to street signs, the officials conveyed that a massive project to redo street signs that were wrongly spelt and the erection of street signs on streets without signs within the Corporation has been embarked upon.

(m) Sporting Facilities

The officials pointed out that Arima has a very active youth population. In the best interest of the youth, the Corporation has begun refurbishment works on existing sporting facilities and to establish others.

The Corporation is also in the process of improving recreation grounds throughout the Corporation by cutting the grounds, pruning trees and shrubs and paving walkways.

(n) Burgess Satisfaction

Feedback and complaints is one of measurements stated as an indicator of burgess satisfaction. The Committee was informed of plans to have quarterly public meetings at different locations within the Borough in order to gauge the level of satisfaction. It was also suggested, that these meetings would assist with the development of short to medium term plans of the Borough.

It was further pointed out that one of the functions of the sub-committee was to operationalize the communication aspects of the Strategic Plan.

(o) Internal Environment – Weaknesses

With respect to concerns raised on dealing with weaknesses listed on page 14 of the Strategies Plan 2010 – 2012, the Committee was informed that fortnightly, Heads of Departments meetings have been introduced in order to maintain team relations and bring awareness of the work done by each department. This method is also used to treat with internal problems within the Corporation.

Further, every two (2) months there are meeting with all sections of the Corporation.

At times external expertise is required, however this is not always readily available and at times in costly.

(p) Administrative Reports

On concerns regarding the 2010 Report, officials conveyed that the Report compiled by the outgoing Chief Executive Officer was on the desk of the Permanent Secretary for vetting, to ensure the accuracy of information. The Report will then be sent to the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, thereafter to Parliament.

The process for the preparation of yearly administrative reports includes each Head of Department preparing a report on his/her department. Subsequently, a joint session is held with all heads to ensure the information is correct and then the Chief Executive Officer compiles the report.

(q) Legislation

Officials indicated that the Public Health Ordinance was obsolete. They described it as a “toothless bulldog”, meaning it cannot do anything.

(r) Relationship between Corporation and Business Community

The officials described the relationship between the Corporation and the business community as a cordial and mixed one.

6.5 The Committee requested the Permanent Secretary to address a few of the issues which were raised. During her statement she spoke to the following areas:

- (i) The Corporation is on the process of preparing its Strategic Plan.
- (ii) The need to restructure the Arima Corporation.

Training

- (iii) The Ministry of Local Government has worked with the UNDP and has trained a number of project officers in utilizing PRINCE 2.

The Ministry is working with the Central Tenders Board (CTB) to train relevant officers in procurement an area is slow in the Corporation and the Ministry.

Communication

- (iv) To address some of the issues of communication, the Corporation has begun to install an ICT infrastructure. The Corporation can then use the appropriate applications to get financial information. This is necessary because the Ministry and the Corporations always have differing figures. ICT infrastructure will aid with delivery of services to burgesses and the citizens in the area.

Annual Reports

- (v) The Ministry is working assiduously on being up-to-date with the annual reports.

ADJOURNMENT

7.1 The Chairman thanked the Officials of the Arima Borough Corporation and Members of the Committee for their attendance at the meeting and adjourned the meeting to Wednesday December 14, 2011 for consideration of the Draft of the First Report of the Committee.

7.2 The adjournment was taken at 11:59 a.m.

I certify that the Minutes are true and correct.

Sgd.
Chairman

Sgd.
Secretary

November 25, 2011

**THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT
TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Appendix 3

Verbatim Notes

**VERBATIM NOTES OF NINTH MEETING HELD AT MEETING ROOM ON LEVEL 2,
AND THEREAFTER IN THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR,
TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A
WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2011 AT 9.30 A.M.**

PRESENT

Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan	Chairman
Mr. Elton Prescott, SC	Vice Chairman
Brig. John Sandy	Member
Mr. Chandresh Sharma	Member
Mr. David Abdulah	Member
Miss Shamfa Cudjoe	Member
Mr. Devant Maharaj	Member
Mr. Rodger Samuel	Member

ABSENT

Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin	Member [<i>Excused</i>]
Mr. Prakash Ramadhar	Member [<i>Excused</i>]
Mrs. Joanne Thomas	Member [<i>Excused</i>]
Miss Marlene Mc Donald	Member
Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip-Stoute	Secretary
Miss Candice Skerrette	Asst. Sec.
Miss Indira Binda	Graduate Research Assistance

Arima Borough Corporation

Mr. Ronald Bobb	Ag. Chief Executive Officer
Mrs. Arlene McComie	Permanent Secretary
Mr. David Williams	Ag. Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Kristal Langdon	Financial Officer
Ms. Jane Williams	Town Assessor II (Ag.)
Mrs. Sharon Stuart-Fraser	Corporate Secretary
Mr. Ramesh Nandalal	Auditor I
Mrs. Lakhia Ramlal-Singh	Ag. Personnel & Industrial Relations Officer

Mr. Winfield Springer	Town Superintendent
Ms. Erica Prieto	Police Inspector
Ms. Adeeta Ramkissoon	Public Health Inspector II
Ms. Chandricka Lalla	Ag. Sanitation Foreman III
Mr. Jason Farrell	Project Implementation Officer
Mrs. Enla Frederick-Ragoo	Accountant II
Mr. Anthony Bridgewater	Information Technology Specialist
Mrs. Deborah Mg-Saye Shoon	Occupational Health and Safety Officer
Mr. Nigel Mc Carthy	Disaster Management Coordinator
Ms. Patricia Medina	Acting Accountant II

Mr. Chairman: Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen, and welcome to our Ninth Meeting of the Joint Select Committee appointed to enquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions.

I want to warmly welcome this morning, the senior administrative team of the Arima Borough Corporation. This is the first meeting of our committee that was constituted sometime last year, which meets with one of the corporations. And so, I want to especially warmly welcome you, as we start on this series of meetings, starting with you, and going on to some 14 other such entities.

I would like to, first of all, introduce or have members of this committee introduce themselves, then we are going to ask the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Arima Corporation, Mr. Bobb, to introduce his team and thereafter, make some introductory statements about the work of the Arima Corporation, its issues, challenges, and plans. Then we will have an interactive discussion, questions and answers on these various matters in going forward. So firstly, let me ask for introductions on our end here.

Mr. Prescott: Good Morning, Independent Member, Elton Prescott.

Brig. Sandy: Vice-Chairman, Brig. John Sandy.

Mr. Abdulah: Good Morning, David Abdulah—Member.

Mr. Maharaj: Good Morning, Devant Maharaj—Member.

Mr. Sharma: Chandresh Sharma.

Miss. Cudjoe: Good Morning, Shamfa Cudjoe—Member.

Mr. Chairman: And Mr. Bobb.

Mr. Bobb: Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. Let me say it is my pleasure to be here with my management team, to treat with the issues raised in our reports, and answer the questions that are relative to Arima Corporation and its mandate.

Permit me to introduce the members of my team: on my left is the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government, Mrs. Arlene McComie; on my immediate right is my Corporate Secretary, Mrs. Sharon Stuart-Fraser. Next to her, on her right is Mr. Winfield Springer our Town Superintendent. On his right is Mr. Jason Farrell; the Project and Implementation Officer. On his right is, Krystal Langdon, our Finance Officer. On her right is Mrs. Enla Frederick-Ragoo, our Account II now holding the portfolio in the Personnel Department of our Corporation. On her right is Mr. Nigel Mc Carthy, our Disaster Coordinator. And behind her, on my far right, to the back, is Mr. Ramesh Nandalal, our Auditor I. On his left is our Municipal Inspector for this corporation, Mrs. Erica Prieto. On her left is our Town Assessor II, Ms. Jane Williams. On her left is Mrs. Patricia Medina our Acting Accountant II. On her left is, Mr. Anthony Bridgewater; our Information Technology Specialist. On his left is Mrs. Deborah Mg-Saye Shoon; our Health and Safety Officer. On her left is Ms. Adeeta Ramkissoon our Public Health Inspector II. On her left is, Mr. Chandricka Lalla, our Ag. Sanitation Foreman II. I also want to inform the committee that my Acting Deputy CEO, Mr. David Williams, is on Vacation leave and my Acting Personnel & Industrial Relations Officer II, Mrs. Lakhia Ramlal-Singh, is on sick leave.

Having said that, the corporation over the past year had been trying to fulfill the mandate under which we were formed; that is, Act No. 21 of 1990. Despite the challenges we may face, our own assessment internally, we feel that we are carrying out a pretty decent job, in terms of carrying out those functions in all the areas that we have been mandated to do.

To give some details in terms of what we really do and some of the challenges we face: If I am to look at our Personnel Department, that department is responsible for the administration of sick leave, vacation leave, appointments through the SSC and training, industrial relations, et cetera. Even though the department is heavily engaged in those areas, there are some challenges we face, in that, there is only one particular officer in that department, which is the Personnel and Industrial Officer II. We have made some representations to the Ministry and we have been speaking with the CPOs office in the establishment of our Human Resource Unit.

I know some time ago, Mr. Chairman and Members that a decision was taken to establish units within the corporations. From my knowledge, the Port of Spain City Corporation initially had their unit established, but somewhere along the line, things did not seem to work out. We would now be engaging again for establishment of those units, especially in the corporation, as it is critical based upon the demands placed on that particular unit. We are working steadfastly to seek approval to have positions created with respect to Human Resource Officer III, II, and I in that department. But, again, what we have done in the interim is, I have asked the Deputy CEO position to give some assistance to that unit, and I think they are managing so far pretty okay.

If I am to go on to the Municipal Police Department, is headed by our inspector; Mrs. Erica Prieto, and that department has been functioning extremely well. In fact, we have a total strength of 41, in that department; we have about 38 officers at present. However, a couple of them are on vacation leave and, of course, the occasional sick leave. We have tried to facilitate over the years, making them operate at a particular level. For example, we have increased our vehicle fleet whereby they could have greater mobility. We have extended our quarters so that they can be more comfortable in terms of our quarters. Over the past three years we have increased our force from 28 to 38, as I have said earlier on. We have also engaged with our Arima central police, in terms of having exercises, et cetera, within the municipality. And, of course, small as we are, we have formed a task force within the unit to treat with other issues that may arise from time to time.

We have one major challenge in that the Corporation at any given time spends approximately \$45,000 to have our force trained at the Barracks. However, unfortunately, within a year some of those officers ask to be transferred to the TTPS. And of course, they go across there for one basic reason: the compensation package under the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service is better than what the corporation has. And, therefore, it is a pull of officers from the Corporation going across to the TTPS. Therefore, we always have to play catch up, and even though we have officers who have been trained intermittently we could never reach our full strength. Even though our sanctioned strength is 41, based on our demands at the Corporation we would be applying very shortly for an increased strength to 60.

Just recently, the department had a mini retreat in itself to look at strategies for improving the service to the burgesses. One of the negatives, if I may say coming out of that is some officers are questioning why the incentive that was given to the regular police was not extended

to the Municipal Police. And that is something that I think we need to look at, because they have similar functions and duties and they are of the view that they should be given similar treatment. That is something we are looking at and we feel despite those negatives, we have raised the bar in terms of our strategies to detect crime, to protect the officers of the corporation facilities, et cetera. And I think they are doing a pretty good job with the resources that we have given to them.

In respect to our Public Health Department, we are still without a Chief Medical Officer of Health, but we have gotten word from our Ministry that an appointment will be made very shortly and that would be a big plus in terms of raising, of course, again the level of performance under the unit. They have two parts of that unit: one is our sanitation side in terms of the collection of garbage, backhoeing, et cetera. And then you have the public health inspector side which, of course, is to certify businesses do lectures, check the abattoir, in terms of slaughtering facilities, et cetera. However, we are seeking again to increase the staffing there.

As one may recall, we have an industrial estate—a very large one—and we need to have coverage there: We need a Public Health Inspector II. And we also have formed recently an Insect Vector Units/Perifocal Unit which, based upon our regulations, must be headed by another Health Inspector II. So we would be seeking permission to create those additional two positions in that unit to enhance the performance of that unit.

Members, of course, would be aware that we have a dengue situation, and we are of the view in assessing that, this would not go away soon. And that is why we have established the Vector Unit to monitor and control spraying activities, et cetera, to ensure we keep to a minimum that particular epidemic.

10.15 a.m.

Mr. Bobb: If I am to go on to the Accounts department, I think we have the resources quite adequately to function. We are doing our duties on time; we are meeting our deadlines and there is not too much concern in that particular unit.

In our General Works Department, it is headed by our Town Superintendent, and again too, because of the nature and the volume of work now has been bestowed upon the corporation, we are seeking to get another engineer assistant, and we are trying to ensure our department runs efficiently.

One of our negatives is that we are looking to now discussing with that department—I am doing that—to ensure that our deliveries are timely. Of course, projects are always one whereby

we must ensure that they are timely in terms of our delivery, and that we are seeking strategies in terms of procurement, in terms of stock-piling, whereby when we start a project, there will be no hiccups in the system. We are now reviewing that particular development as to ensure that our projects are on time, and there are no hiccups in terms of delivery of these services.

Our Auditing department, again, the corporation expanded. We feel that in beefing up our checks and balances, we need to strengthen our Audit department, and again, we would be asking for additional personnel to beef up those checks within the system.

Our corporate services in terms of corporate services to our Council that is timely in terms of reports, information and meetings—those are ongoing and those are things that are onstream.

I think in a nutshell, I have just given a quick overview of what we are doing and the challenges we face in the corporation. But in terms of our overall assessment, I think we are delivering a pretty good service to the burgesses, and of course, based upon the challenges that we have, we are seeking how we can address those internally while seeking externally to get the necessary equipment and personnel to beef up those areas.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Bobb. Now, the last report that we have had—the Annual Report—of the corporation was 2009—am I correct?

Mr. Bobb: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: In that report, several issues were raised: one the need for additional staff at the sanitation level—a very significant increase; two, that the corporation no longer had the ability to collect taxes, and I would want you to amplify on those areas. We saw as well, some of your strategic plans 2010 to 2012, and I would like you to amplify how much of that plan have you been able to execute—it being two years almost of that plan would have expired at this point in time.

So those three areas I would like you or any member of your team, to amplify upon—first, the question of the collection of taxes; two, the question of the increased complement that was being sought at the time; and three, how far are you along in terms of the execution of your strategic plan 2010 to 2012.

Mr. Bobb: In terms of the collection of taxes, I am sure Members and the committee is aware that for the past two years, based on the Act that was passed three years ago, that that particular provision was removed from the corporation, and therefore, we have not been collecting taxes for the past two years. We are awaiting that transition back to the corporation, and we hope to

get it soon because on an average, we collected between \$3 million to \$3.5 million in rates and taxes per year.

If I am just to add to that, we are also entitled to a package because what had happened since our strategic plan earlier last year, we set up a number of sub-committees to implement and operationalize those issues in the strategic plan. What has happened is that during the course of the year, we had Local Government Elections and we had a new local government council coming into being. It meant that we had to hold on that because it was a new council. We had to do some other work with the council in terms of familiarizing them with certain things, et cetera which ran into this year.

Earlier this year, the CEO, who is now on pre-retirement leave, had started to work with those teams she had set up to implement those areas of the strategic plan, and I am now in the process of tying up to present to the council, going forward what we intend to do to operationalize those plans, so there is where we are with that.

If I am to go back to the area of taxes; in that document which was sent to you concerning revenue generation, we recognized that we were short by the \$3.5 million, and what we have realized is that over the last five years, we have not reviewed our fees for the use of our facilities nor documents that are applied for by burgesses for certain documents like certificates, etcetera. We are in the process of doing that to engage in raising more revenue for the corporation internally.

So that is one of the main reasons why our situation with our taxes is as it is; the legislation is not introduced to pull that information back to the corporation to collect taxes so we are now at a standstill in terms of that. That is why we are going in this area of revenue generation to bring some revenue back into the corporation or additional revenue back into the corporation.

In terms of our human resource, again, we realized that even though we are the smallest corporation of the 14, we are very dense in population. In fact, a census in 2001 said that we have 32,000 people in Arima. We are of the view, that that is close to be doubled at this stage, and of course, more is happening because there is more development taking place both private and public in the borough. Therefore, that means that the workload has become even triple A, even greater, and therefore the resources to treat with those additional requirements are needed. I think I have answered—have I?

Mr. Chairman: Were you able to get any of the additional staff that you would have sought

from your 2009 report in terms of sanitation? I see that you have gotten an increased complement or I think you have gotten an increased complement in terms of security—the municipal police—I believe your figure was 31 the last time—

Mr. Bobb: It is 41 now.

Mr. Chairman: It is now 41, okay. What increases have you gotten to deal with these additional burgesses?

Mr. Bobb: In 2007, I think, we got two additional Sanitation Foreman IIs which, of course, we really appreciated, because we were really strapped for resources. But I think we need at least one more in that particular area, and that is why I indicated earlier that with respect to the other side of the operations in public health where the public health inspectors need to monitor our industrial estate closely, and also the insect vector control unit where we need a PHI II to oversee that based upon our Act. We will be requesting those two officers to beef up that because it is a clear requirement that you need a Public Health Inspector II to head those units.

Mr. Chairman: PHI being Public Health Inspector?

Mr. Bobb: Public Health Inspector.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. I will open it up for questions now. I think Mr. Samuel had a couple of questions.

Mr. Samuel: Mr. Chairman and to the corporation, you talked about the municipal police and that your plan is to have it increased in strength from 41 to 60. I have visited their accommodations where the present municipal police have to accommodate them, and if they cannot even accommodate what there is presently, how do you expect to accommodate 60? That is my first question.

My second question is also on the municipal police. Oftentimes, in the Borough of Arima, we have found on the streets of Arima, burgesses having to rely on the regular TTPS rather than the municipal police. I would like to find out what are your plans to rectify that situation that the municipal police will be a regular thing far more on the streets—24 hours—because part of your plan was that you—reported that they serve 24 hours on patrols, and I think that is something you may want to visit or revisit because after a certain hour, there is no patrol in Arima. So, I would like to find out your views on that and what are the ways that you plan to rectify that?

Mr. Bobb: The Corporation of the last couple of years has recognized the need to increase accommodation for its officers. What we have done in the last two years, we have built an

extension onto the present building that they now occupy to house those new officers. Even though it is comic to say that they are a bit tight; they are pretty comfortable. Now, as you have indicated I would have mentioned earlier on that we want to increase the strength. Now, we have two issues on the table concerning accommodation and let me just take my time to explain.

In 2005, we had turned the sod to build our new admin complex which this committee will know that that did not come off. There are plans to do that presently on the present site of the Town Hall, where it is now. Included in those plans, there is space to house adequately our borough police. We are expecting that very soon that those plans will come to fruition because the plans for the building have been approved and we have already sent through the Ministry of Local Government, the concept of the funding aspect of it.

I know that there are still some concerns as to if we should build on the site and what they want to do is go to a new location. To me, at my level, I think that is a conversation between the Council and the Ministry. Because the Council was quite clear that they want the admin building on the present site. So I think in going forward, there is the confusion between the Council and the Ministry in that regard. But we are hopeful that whatever happens, construction will start soon and they will be able to house all the officers including the police in the new building. Based upon what I have been told, it should take about 18 months, once the plans are approved and all approvals are in place, it should take about 18 months to build.

In terms of our officers being on the beat as it were, just recently, we had, as I indicated earlier on, there was a small retreat we had with our police to look at strategies and improving our service to the burgesses. And you may not or maybe aware that a couple weeks ago, we started an exercise in terms of vendors on the street, etcetera. That exercise has been intensified in terms of patrols, in terms of traffic arrangements; and I indicated earlier, because of our complement, we are also linking with the Arima police in a joint effort to treat with those issues. So that is something that is in place, for example, we have gotten the mobile unit which was placed, you can say, in the heart of Arima close to the market, and of course, all of that will add to the monitoring and looking after those situations on the outside.

Mr. Samuel: Mr. Chairman, could I just continue?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, please. Go ahead.

Mr. Samuel: Thank you. There have been issues in the past and I guess you will understand this whereby with regard to the municipal police and who they are accountable or answerable to, there were situations that I am aware of where the disciplinary process was taking place with

regard to municipal police—the officers—and there was an issue with regard to who they are accountable to—where it is the CEO or they are accountable to the police commissioner. I understand—and I maybe wrong—that there were issues with regard to discipline and officers would go to the CEO and the CEO would then take certain steps. Has that been clarified with regard to the difference between the corporation and the municipal police and whose charge they are under? Has that been clarified?

Mr. Bobb: Well, in my view, for me, I am pretty clear in terms of the different areas of authority. In respect to training, in respect to precepting and those things, fall under the Commissioner of Police, and by extension, the Minister of National Security. Under the Act, the municipal police are under the corporation, and therefore, they are accountable to the CEO. In respect to discipline, it is quite clear, the channels that we have to go which, in fact, in the last three years, we have had disciplinary action taken against officers. And to me, there was never an instance where there was any uncertainty.

So, in my view, is that the clear lines of the authority in terms when we need to check with the commissioner under the police regulations in terms of how they operate.

10.30 a.m.

Mr. Bobb: And in terms of discipline, in the particular instance you mentioned, to me, I have never had an issue that there were differences. We always, through the corporation and the Act, had tribunals, and I have not heard of instances whereby there were major conflicts, in terms of procedure.

Mr. Chairman: I think this might be a good time to raise the question of differences in compensation for the municipal police versus the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. The question has been raised as to accountability. This might be a good time to entertain questions from Brig. John Sandy.

Brig. Sandy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A very pleasant morning to members of the Arima Borough Corporation, with respect to the compensation aspect, a number of members of the Municipal Police and, as well, the SRPs have approached me on that. As a matter of fact, your inspector, on the last occasion, raised it with me. In respect of that, I can tell you that it is with the Minister of Finance and he is the person who would deal with that aspect of it.

Staying with the municipal police—I have perused your strategic plan and while you spoke a while ago about strategies to improve your police service, I have looked at your 12 strategies on pages 8, 9 and 10. I have also looked at your critical strategic issues on pages 6 and

7 and there is nowhere, there any strategy or strategic issue dealing with crime. You know crime is foremost on our agenda, from a national perspective. I would have thought that it would have been one of your strategies or one of your strategic goals, as far as Arima is concerned.

Additionally, that is my first observation and I ask that you advise us on that. My second observation, similarly, your strategic plan is void of any proposal to address disaster management, particularly in the realm of natural disasters. We know within recent times and not only recent times, it is something that we have been looking at. Every year we are faced with flooding and other disasters that require some application from a municipal perspective. I was wondering whether you would want to elaborate on those please.

Mr. Bobb: Thank you very much, Minister. In terms of the strategic plan 2010/2012, I could not really offer an explanation as such as to why there was, maybe, the void of clear goals in terms of security. What I am presently doing, in fact this plan is supposed to be finished next year 2012. I have signalled to the council and they have agreed once the Minister of Local Government has approved a strategic plan very early in 2012, within the first quarter. Because, in terms of when the new cost came into being they were given these documents also and they were of the view that it is a bit deficient in certain areas. Your point, Mr. Minister, is well taken. We are hoping to, once we get approval from the Minister, have our strategic plan session within the first quarter of 2012, and to revise what we have in front of us and to add new strategies with specific efforts, those critical areas that inadvertently may have been left out, in terms of details.

In fact, we are going to plan for it, because we want to ensure that we cover all bases. This for the information of the committee, we are looking at two consultants to treat with our issues. One is Mr. Aubry Armstrong and also Mr. Sylvester. Those are the people we are looking at because we want people to ensure that we do a very holistic plan that we cover all areas of the corporation, especially highlighting those major areas of concern in the present environment.

Mr. Chairman: Disaster management.

Mr. Bobb: We have a disaster management unit. To me, before this plan was prepared that disaster management individual was yet not on board, of course, even though, Arima at times, prone to, and our outlying area, difficulty. Again this is one of the areas, even though it may not be within the thinking, was not properly identified in the report. So, that again, is another deficiency which we again would be looking at in a new plan. We recognize some deficiencies and we want to correct them. Because next year is the end of this plan, we have to start to plan

one time. I think once we have a session, all these areas would be taken on board and clear guidelines, in terms of how we go forward would be addressed. Thank you for pointing that out for us, Mr. Sandy.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Bobb, you said that there was a significant increase in the population in the Arima Borough. Now that the census 2010 has been completed, I believe it has been completed, do you have an exact fix on the population in the borough?

Mr. Bobb: At present, no. It could be available, but I am not aware of the exact figures.

Mr. Maharaj: I would like to find out if the stop notices on the buildings are legal or defective. I understand that the corporation has been issuing notices indiscriminately and without due care and attention in the issuance of these notices.

Mr. Bobb: That has been engaging the attention of the corporation's administrative staff. It has been raised by the council and the council advised even up to yesterday in our staff meeting that I am having discussions with my officers at the corporation. For further details, let me defer this to our Town Superintendent Mr. Springer, who can give more details on that.

Mr. Chairman: Before go on, could you just explain a little bit about what stop notices are?

Mr. Bobb: Stop notices are normally issued when they are not burgesses and people who are constructing buildings, et cetera, do not have the requisite authority to do so, having the plans approved, et cetera, and, therefore, they are building illegally and those notices are to stop construction until such time they have the required approvals to do construction.

Mr. Springer: Just to add to what is being said. First of all, we have to understand that a "stop notice" just by its name alone implies just that. Sometimes the burgesses may not be aware that whatever they are doing really requires Town and County Planning approval or approvals from the Arima Borough Corporation. In case, to be fair to everyone, the building inspectors are doing their job. If they should see any form of development taking place that requires that sort of approval, they will simply give a verbal warning and then provide a stop notice. As to the legality of it, yes, according to the Act they are in their right. They act on behalf of the Town Superintendent in so giving those stop notices.

Mr. Maharaj: I looked at the strategic plan and there is no reference to the issue of traffic management or any sort of traffic planning in the Arima Borough Corporation and that is a particular problem with relation to issues such as the maxi-taxi stand and the effects it has on the residents on Woodford Street. Is the corporation addressing this issue of traffic and the maxi-taxi relocation and the various taxi stands?

Mr. Bobb: Yes, we are. As you may or may not be aware, there is a committee called the Regional Coordinating Committee, which comprise utilities, traffic management personnel and Town and Country Planning personnel, of which the Mayor is Chairman.

Many years ago—that is something that is ongoing, because we have numerous complaints throughout the year about people concerns with traffic. You would recall in the late 1990s, the then Mayor of Arima Councillor Denalli made the Arima Park a roundabout. That was a major change because it was two-way, in the traffic plan of Arima.

Just about two years ago we had the maxi-taxi stand for Port of Spain to Arima in another street and there were complaints by residents. It was moved, because you have understand the corporation is located in a very urban area and, therefore, there would always be complains whereby the burgesses would complain that maxi-taxi are parking on their homes and making noise, et cetera. We are hoping to look at the plan again through the Regional Coordinating Committee as to probably having those taxis on the further outskirts and people can be trafficked in.

As you might be aware, even the Public Transport Service Corporation has now operationalized its operation at the bottom of the bus route near the licensing office. I was talking to one of their dispatchers during the course of the week, I think there are plans—and again we have to work with the Public Transport Service Corporation—in terms of fashioning any new changes towards a transport hub and things like that. You can expect, Mr. Minister, some discussions with the council and your good self on how we can treat with the issue and maybe have people ferried into the City of Arima as we call it, than to have people come directly into the heart of Arima. It is something we have to look at again. We have to talk about traffic management with your Ministry and us to see how best we can work out this system.

But, over time there have been discussions. In fact, the maxi-taxi owners Chairman is normally in that Regional Coordinating Committee and of course, there is some dialogue. That is something that is ongoing, because there are always issues coming up from time to time to treat with.

Mr. Maharaj: The strategic plan also makes mention of a revenue generation exercise, which included advertising on velodrome wall, billboards and digital signs for the period 2010—2012. I would have assumed that you all would have engaged in such activities. Do you have an idea of how many—what was the figure realized during that period?

Mr. Bobb: As I indicated earlier on, one of the subcommittees that was formed by the previous CEO to operationalize the strategic plan was revenue generation. Once you travel into Arima, coming through the railway road by the hospital, you would see a large white wall that has advertisements on it. We normally rent those out to applicants who want to advertise their shows and what else they may have. The intention is also to have a billboard put up.

As I mentioned earlier on, in the coming into being of the new council, there was a break, in terms of those committees being activated as such, because we wanted to know the exact thinking of the new council at the time. Therefore, that lapsed six to eight months into this year. We are now in the process of operationalizing those committees, and in your package, I hope you got it, there was a document on revenue generation, to look at these areas. Hopefully by the beginning of next year, we would review these fees and, of course, go back to council for approval to implement those new structures.

Mr. Maharaj: Is there anywhere in the document that indicates how much revenue was realized between the two-year period?

Mr. Bobb: No, that would be caught up in your annual report under a broad heading under “fees”.

Mr. Maharaj: So, you do not disaggregate it?

Mr. Bobb: Not for this purpose in this report.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Bobb, what was your allocation for the 2012 fiscal year?

Mr. Bobb: \$61 million.

Mr. Chairman: \$61 million. And in terms of fee-generation via advertising and otherwise, what sort of target you had in mind, \$1 million, \$2 million?

10.45 a.m.

Mr. Bobb: That might be kind of optimistic—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so it is not a big part—

Mr. Bobb: About \$.5 million, yes.

Mr. Chairman:—of the discussion which we are going to be having today.

Mr. Bobb: But it is something we want to build on overtime.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Mr. Samuel, you had a question?

Mr. Samuel: With regards to your strategic plan, there are quite a number of things itemized which were supposed to have been completed within six months, within 12 months. Is it possible to give us an update as to what has been achieved, what has been completed? And if

not, why? I am seeing quite a number of things which you have put timeframes too, in your strategic plan. I am on page 24.

Mr. Chairman: Could you repeat the question Mr. Samuel?

Mr. Samuel: In the outline, in their strategic plan 2010/2012, there are quite a number of things which are itemized with regards to timeframes. We are one year and more within that period of time and I would love to find out how far they are with regards to achieving of these things as they were strategically—

Mr. Chairman: Do you want to just highlight one or two of the items to assist Mr. Bobb?

Mr. Samuel: All are itemized, Mr. Chairman, by months and dates on pages 24 and 25, those which I am referring to. For example, engage a reform team at all levels and communicate outcome promptly and efficiently to all affected personnel; you gave six months to do that. I would love to see—a lot of stuff you said which was approved, but there are some other proposals to identify and exploit opportunities, stuff like that. Has it been adopted by the corporation? Things like that.

Mr. Bobb: As I indicated earlier on, most of these plans here came out of our strategic plan session, and when the new council came into being it was prudent to seek the mind of the new councillors; this is what we have, could you look at it and get back to us in terms of if there is a change of thinking with what we have done and, of course, we had to get council to settle into their own new portfolio at the same time. So there was a delay—as I indicated earlier—of between six to eight months, because the new council came into being some of them were pretty green, we had to go through a whole alternative process locally with them, bring them up to speed on what is happening, what is taking place, their roles and functions, how we can interrelate, and what have you; that took some time to get acclimatize for want of a better word within corporation's structure. This document was given to them in terms of getting some feedback as to—this was the outcome of our earlier session earlier in the year and what are your views.

I think by and large—I was telling Dionne—most of them are still in the planning stage, the implementation stage. We have had—as I said before, as long as it could be established—to operationalize these initiatives. Most of the committees have met many times and they are to meet with me before I take it to the council for the final approval, and hopefully that would be done in January. But as I said earlier on based upon some deficiencies we have identified even at this meeting, we want to set a strategic plan meeting in the first quarter of next year, because

there are some things which need to be tweaked and tightened, and it does not make sense proving something that has certain criterion to be taking against it. So yes, there are certain different stages, but most of them based on the delay in the new council coming into being have been delayed.

Mr. Samuel: So what you are actually saying to me is that nothing has happened?

Mr. Bobb: I would not say nothing has happened. I would say that some things have happened, but not holistically. There are certain stages of happenings, for example, the engage in the reform team. Like for instance number one: the engage in the reform team in all levels, that has been done; maintenance of vehicles, we have now asked our Ministry to create a position of transport foreman, because we are using— a number of persons do it, and we are told that we should stop that. The Ministry has a draft note which we have sent to create that position. So there has to be some internal or external restrictions, but all those issues raised in this plan are at different levels of completion, right.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Bobb—

Mr. Samuel: Mr. Chair—

Mr. Chairman: Just hold on for a second.

Mr. Bobb: It would be nice, Mr. Chairman, if you would permit me that the committee member give some specifics, so I can talk about one or two.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Well, we will come to that in a little while. Mr. Samuel will come back in a bit. Mr. Bobb your corporation has been provided with \$61 million of taxpayers' money to provide quality services to the burgesses of Arima. How do you measure the effectiveness of your performance? You are given \$61 million, the previous year \$56 million. How do you measure that performance? What are the parameters by which you measure the quality of service, efficiency of the service and the effectiveness of the service? Do you have a document which says: we set out to do X and we have delivered X, our burgesses are satisfied/dissatisfied/very dissatisfied. Can you amplify on that matter?

Mr. Bobb: Okay. As you may be aware, Members would be aware that we have to submit estimates through our Ministry, to the Ministry of Finance in terms of what we plan to do in the new fiscal year. And, of course, in doing that we will put up a case why we want these moneys and to do what. So there is a plan in place what we are going to do with the money we are asking for.

It is generally known that you would never get what you ask for, so, therefore you have

to prioritize. Our success in terms of if we have spent the money in an efficient and effective manner is in achieving those things we set out to do in each of our areas of the corporation, whether it is security, works, projects, public health and their projects; personnel in terms of making sure that recruitment; efficiency of operations are taken; hiring of personnel; whether it is accounts; timely delivery of the accounts, the payroll et cetera. So all these eight or nine departments have its own template and its own priority listing. The feedback from that is—one of the measurements is the complaints by the burgesses, one of the critical measurements. What would satisfy our burgesses and meet their demands and expectations are our measurement.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. So let me just get a little more specific, because your answers are very good and quite diplomatic, but not necessarily very specific. What is the measure you have? Can you tell me last year whether you completed 80 per cent or 90 per cent of what you set out to do against the budget which you had?

Mr. Bobb: Let me take a department and maybe I can explain briefly. One of our windows to the corporation is our engineering/works department which do projects on the outside, for example, footpaths, drains et cetera. We would have a list of those projects which would need to be completed during the course of the year and, of course, there would be timelines in terms of timeliness each project is to be finished, of course, the amount of money to be spent on each project.

If we have 12 major projects per year, at any given time we would have finish may be 80 per cent of those. There may be some slight overruns, but we would have reasons for those overruns, for example, there might be down time because of rain, because they are working on the outside, et cetera; there would be a shortage of material because they did not expect it from supplier there were delays there. So one or two projects would be delayed or money spent more than was budgeted because of those two issues. From my estimation and an average between 75-80 per cent of the projects are completed on time and within budget. There are a couple, of course, because of the reasons I explained would go over budget or take longer to complete, for example.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Samuel, you wanted to continue with your questioning?

Mr. Samuel: Yes, just on the previous question. I want to draw attention on page 26, the strategic plan. Where was the location of the interim Arima Borough Corporation Administrative building which was completed and ready for occupation? Can you tell me where it is?

Mr. Bobb: Mr. Chairman, and Members of the committee we had applied for use of our unspent balances to construct such a building, because one of our concern was that where we now have rented or leased to us which is upstairs the FCB Bank, we are told that at the end of this year we will have to vacate. We are now discussing through the Ministry to have that lease extended, the reason being that neither our administration building nor this same building which we referred to was able to be on stream, because we were awaiting approval to use the unspent balances. At least just about a month ago or six weeks ago, the Minister did approve the use of the unspent balances to construct the building.

So even though there were some plans drawn up and we identified the funds, we first had to get approval from the Ministry to use the unspent balances. We now have the approval to use such and, therefore, we are going forward with the building. But that building has now been changed from interim to our disaster, emergency management building, we are now looking to house that department in that building while we—on a temporary basis until our administration building is built.

Mr. Samuel: So then the report should be changed, this strategic plan should be changed, because what you said here was that you proposed to construct and commission the interim Arima Borough Corporation Administrative building on time and within budget and the outcome was completed building ready for occupation by the Arima Borough Corporation.

Mr. Bobb: Right. But if you permit me, remember this was the plan at that time, and was it was based on certain expectations, and those expectations did not come to fruition. I mentioned that the key expectation was that we were hoping that we would get permission to use our unspent balances, which I indicated we just got recently. So this particular item in that we were all ready to go but, of course, the major issue was funding and, of course, the request and we appreciate the approval we received recently from the Minister to construct such a building. So these were plans because as you know like budget, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the committee, like a budget, a budget is only an allocation many things might happen during the course of that period to change focus and in this particular instance and case is that what we expected to happen did not happen as timely as we expected and that is why—

Mr. Samuel: Mr. Chairman, I am quite concerned that when this was prepared it said completed and yet, the Acting Chief Executive Officer is now telling me something different.

Mr. Bobb: Well, I am not, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee if you look at the heading under that line it is “outcome”—

Mr. Samuel: Completed—

Mr. Bobb: Outcome is to complete the building in 12 months. So one would have planned and would have had certain expectations and that outcome was to be completed in 12 months the building—

Mr. Chairman: So what you saying basically is that the expected outcome was completion, but that expected outcome was not realized?

11.00 a.m.

Mr. Bobb: Correct, and for the reason I have just indicated.

Mr. Chairman: I want to turn back to efficiency and effectiveness, which is one of the core drivers of this committee. You talk about one area, which is engineering. Do you have one measure which says that, in terms of efficiencies, we operated at 80 per cent—I see you have your Project Implementation Officer—that you completed 80 per cent or 90 per cent of the work? Can you say that definitely? Do you say that in any of your reports? It is not that I have seen any such figure.

Mr. Bobb: Let me defer the question, as you mention projects, to Mr. Farrell, who will give a more clinical response to that.

Mr. Farrell: The question is if we have any specific documents. On a monthly basis, through the Town Superintendent's Department, whatever works are going on, we have reports that go monthly to council that would say the status of any given project at any given time. Those projects would be measured against the expected cost and the expected time frame for those completions. It is based on those that we measure how efficient the project was.

Mr. Chairman: Last year, were you 70, 80 or 90 per cent effective in terms of the projects you set out to do? When you sent your report to the Ministry to make your request for further budgets, you would have sent in something of what you achieved as well as what you plan to do. Is there a figure?

Mr. Bobb: All the projects we set out to do, we completed. All the projects we set out, [*Inaudible*] the infrastructural works and what not; all the projects we have sent to the Ministry, as far as I know, are completed or ongoing.

Mr. Chairman: I want to turn now, unless there are questions from other members—

Mr. Bobb: If you look at our brochure, at page 24, you will see all the projects that were completed.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the 2009 report you are talking about?

Mr. Bobb: 2008 to 2009.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Maharaj, you wanted to ask a question?

Mr. Maharaj: In a related point to the one raised by the Chair about efficiency and about the utilization of taxpayers' dollars, does the corporation have some sort of project monitoring unit to review these various projects listed from page 24 to 26 to see if value for money was given?

You wanted specifics, Mr. CEO. For example, the box drain constructed on Solid Gold Avenue starts in front of a lamp post and end in the middle of nowhere. There is no connecting drain either at the beginning or at the top. There is one at the side and in the middle. When you look at value for money there, it seems a little questionable. It starts right in front of a lamp post on the side of an empty lot.

Mr. Bobb: From what I am aware, we have our own internal team who will visit, like the Town Superintendent, the Project Implementation Officer and our Engineering Assistant. They will visit the project to ensure that the progress is up to standard. We also have assistance from the Ministry Project Implementation team, which, from time to time, will come to the corporation to look at those projects which we have started and need to finish.

Mr. Maharaj: You are saying that both these teams went and saw this drain starting in front a lamp post and agreed that the drain should start right in front a lamp post?

Mr. Bobb: I am not saying that. I am saying that is the process that is engaged. I am sure that if the team came out and saw that, they would make mention of it and take corrective action.

Mr. Maharaj: It suggests there that the team does not inspect all the projects.

Mr. Bobb: I did not say that. What I am saying is that if the team inspects and realizes that some error was made, especially with the assistance of the Ministry officials, it will then take corrective action.

Mr. Chairman: Let us go back to Brig. Sandy for a minute and then you, Mr. Abdulah.

Brig. Sandy: Just one question. I wish to revisit the 2009 report, last page, 70, "Refurbishment of the Arima Municipal Stadium", and speak about, "in the interest of public safety". Is it that the structure is condemned? If so, has that been declared? I am saying that from an interest in

public safety. We probably need to stress this and indicate that we need to repair this as a matter of urgency.

Mr. Bobb: We are aware of the concerns raised over the years with the maintenance of the stadium. Just last week, I got a document from the Ministry, which did some inspection of the facility and is being looked at by the Town Superintendent Department. Let me turn you over to our Town Superintendent, Mr. Springer, to give you a clear update on that.

Mr. Springer: Let me, first of all, clearly say that it has not been condemned. The sort of repairs we are talking about, like everything else here, there are some repairs that are needed, especially when you have electrical works. Notwithstanding that, we have also engaged the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure design department and they have been assisting us in analyzing what has been taking place with this structure. As you well know, it is an [*Inaudible*] to ensure it is stable and fit for continuous use. They have been there a number of times, so we can say it has not been condemned.

Mr. Abdulah: Just following from an earlier point with respect to enabling the committee to better understand and appreciate targets and what would have been achieved with reference to that very page 24 to 26 of the annual report, it would be useful to put another column which would specify the intended or projected plan of action so that we would be able to see both what you had planned to do and what was actually achieved.

This simply says what was achieved, but there is no detail about whether twice as many projects were planned and you only got to 50 per cent; also, in that regard, to state reasons for those you had wanted to do and which were not done. If, for example, it is the lack of financial resources, there could be a better measurement against what would be needed in the community against what was actually delivered. In reporting, another column or two would be useful.

Secondly, with respect to the strategic plan, I was glad to hear that you are coming back to the strategic plan. My concern with the plan, referring to pages 24 to 27, the outcomes basically are plans and proposals. Strategic plans cannot lead to further plans and proposals. A strategic plan must lead to specific detailed actions. So, when you go down the outcomes: approved plans to communicate, proposals for adoption, proposals for bye-laws, approved plan of action, approved annualized maintenance plan, the completed building—that was an action, but that action did not happen because of lack of funds. The next one is, plans for programme implementation, then, approved market to operate plans, and so on. Virtually nine and a half out of 10 are further plans and we would like to see the details.

In other words, what is the approved plan to communicate relevant information and to what extent was that approved plan to communicate relevant information, in terms of details, actually implemented or not and why? What are the gaps in the implementation? If there are gaps, it could be that you do not have the resources, human, financial or physical to implement. Then, at the level of this Parliamentary Oversight Committee, we can then make recommendations to help you close those gaps. I am sure that the Ministry as well, being aware of the gaps in detailed terms, could then also see what resources are available. If outcomes are more plans, then we are really spinning top in mud and talking and talking and not moving to action. That is my major concern.

That is also why it is more difficult to get your approvals for your staffing needs. If your staffing needs are very closely tied to the specific delivery action points on your strategic plan in terms of what has to be implemented, then there is a clearer justification for increasing your staffing needs or getting additional financial resources. So, I certainly hope that the next time we meet we get real detail at the end. We are good at planning, Chair, but planning that leads necessarily to other plans.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Prescott, you wanted to raise a matter.

Mr. Prescott SC: Thank you, Chair. Mr. Bobb, I regard Arima as a very attractive borough and it attracts thousands of people from outside the municipality. This leads to my questions. You may want to take a note of them. Firstly, I have heard it said on many occasions that Arima appears to lack either adequate or enough street signage so that visitors to your borough may have difficulty getting around. I do not see it addressed in any of the documentation. It is probably not a small point, but one you may wish to look at it.

Secondly, throughout the strategic plan there is a linkage made among crime, youth and sport. I welcome some indication from you why the borough views that linkage as strategic; in any event, how, beyond what is shown in the documentation at page 23, “Developing Facilities”—I suspect it is sports facilities—which might assist you. There is reference to facilities being developed. I gather that is how you plan to address those weaknesses. If I am incorrect about the page number—I am sure you can guide me—I need to know how the borough proposes to justify the linkage between crime, youth and sport. I would be happy to hear you on that.

There is a reference at page 4. I am looking at the track plan. Should I have been a bit more careful? On page 16 of this track plan—I am going back to the question of the linkages—you say “Critical Strategic Issue, number 3”. Do you have it, Sir? Page 16 of the Strategic Plan 2010/2012, bullet 3, the strategic issue there is “Respond effectively to the challenges of crime and the corresponding deficiencies of sporting disciplines in the borough”.

There is a proposal, if I may put it this way, to address these deficiencies and they appear in the strategic plan on page 21, Goal 3, “Provide effective support for all relevant initiatives”.—Do you have it?—which will involve the young burgesses in healthy, productive activities. So, I am observing this linkage between youth, sport and crime and I am hoping that you can justify for us why we have been linking them and how you hope to bring about a resolution of whatever issues you perceive in that area.

At page 15 of the strategic plan, under the caption, “Threats in the external environment,” Bullet Point 2, there is a reference to the slow development and implementation of legislation by the central government and I am inviting you to tell us which aspects of legislation, which are at present before the central government, impact on your corporation and what advances are being made in that regard.

In the course of your opening remark, I heard you speak of the current strength of the municipal police as being 45 and the sanctioned strength 41. I could have been mistaken. I wondered how you could be supporting what might not be appropriate. If you have a sanctioned strength of 41, how do you account for those other four and to whom do you account? If the numbers are incorrect, please correct me.

11.15 a.m.

Mr. Bobb: I do not understand the question.

Mr. Prescott, SC: I thought I heard you say in your opening remarks that your current strength of your municipal police is 45. Am I correct?

Mr. Bobb: No, forty-one.

Mr. Prescott, SC: And that your sanctioned strength is 41. Am I correct?

Mr. Bobb: No. You are incorrect. I said the sanctioned strength is 41 and the strength we have now is 38, but there in that 38, there are a couple people who have been on vacation leave and on sick leave, et cetera.

Mr. Prescott, SC: I see. Good. I am grateful for the correction. I thought I heard 45. So those are the three issues that I should like you to address please, Sir.

Mr. Bobb: Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, in response to the questions asked; the streets signs at present we have a massive implementation programme, we are redoing street signs. What we have done, in doing our assessment, we realized some signs were spelt wrong, some areas had no signs. So we are doing a massive project right now in terms of erecting street signs so that is ongoing.

Mr. Prescott, SC: Thank you.

Mr. Bobb: In respect to the linkage between crime, youth and sport, I am sure you are aware that Arima is a very heavy sporting community. We have some greats coming out of Arima. And it has been said by many different experts that there is a linkage when young people have nothing to do, they find other avenues to do it.

We have a very active youth population in Arima and the corporation is of the view that—to minimize such activities that may not be in the best interest of the youths that we embarked upon the refurbishing of our existing sporting facilities and establishing others. Of course, the stadium is one, there is the basketball or netball court which we are now in the process of repairing, there is the indoor ground that we are also developing and there is of course, on the cards an indoor complex that has been proposed. We are looking at other recreation grounds to improve the standard there by cutting, pruning and paving and what have you to improve that activity whereby we could encourage communities to have competitions among themselves, et cetera.

So that is the manner we take to attract youths to these, keep them active in areas that would be productive. And as you know, that sports now is a major player in terms of income generation. And our youths who are very talented, once we can channelled them into those areas, we can see that area of crime being reduced in Arima. I think Arima is now targeted as one of the hot spots and, of course, we double our efforts to minimize [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Prescott, SC: Can I just stick in a word there? I am thinking that there appears to be a great migratory population there. People pass through Arima and that the crime might not be localized to young people in Arima only, that there are people who come into Arima for that purpose. And I wondered whether you have excluded that from your considerations.

Mr. Bobb: Well, Arima in its geographic location is one where it is a transitional area. People come through Arima to go further east and, of course, go west. So we are placed in an area where we always have people passing through Arima. And I am not saying or thought for one minute that Arima, as such is, or the citizens or the burgesses are prone to such. We have

outsiders coming in. But we feel that once we can channel though the activities in a particular direction, it will minimize even the attempt to be caught up in any kind of activities and, therefore, this is our focus. How do we engage our youth in productive activities such as sport?

Mr. Chairman: I think the last question was on the environment.

Mr. Bobb: Legislation. All right! You would see at the back of your brochure we spoke to that—that is page 70, and we highlighted one of the areas in terms of reform. And we talked about our public health ordinance which is—last time, 1950. And year before last we had an incident where, you know there is always a term called the “toothless bulldog”, we have legislation but it does not do anything. For example, there is a paper factory in Arima that was flouting some rules in Arima, when we approached them to rectify the concerns—if we were to implement any action against them or charge them, it was \$50. So we sought the help of the EMA to treat with the issue, which it did. But that is a little example in terms of the reform that we need. We do not have the kind of teeth in our present legislation to treat with issues that may arise. And this is an example of one of them.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Before I go to Miss Cudjoe, I want to just talk a little bit about the question of the satisfaction of the burgesses with the work that you do. You know, we can talk about efficiency ratios and we can speak to effectiveness but the real measure is how well you service the burgesses in your area, of which by my estimate, you said it would have doubled in the past ten years or so, you are talking about 60,000 people. I would hazard a guess, even if you have not.

Have you in the past ten years done something equivalent to a customer satisfaction survey, to go out to the burgesses in a very structured and scientific way, and ask; how did you feel about the corporation, the service of the corporation? How would you rate it from poor, very poor to very good, to excellent? Have you ever done something like that in the corporation?

Mr. Bobb: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. And do you have any intention to gauge the level of satisfaction of you burgesses by doing such a survey?

Mr. Bobb: Yes. Part of our plan was to communicate with our burgesses , in that—part of the short plan this is, to go out to have, what you call, quarterly meetings at different locations within the borough to get from the burgesses what are their concerns—what you call mini town meetings at different locations throughout the corporation. That was the intention by the subcommittee that was set up to operationalize the communications aspect of it. How do we

communicate to our burgesses? Not only by flyers and what have the, but how do we meet and treat with them with the respect to particular issues. And one of the main plans was to go out and have, what you call, town meetings within the corporation at different locations, where we invite burgesses to come, express their concerns and we treat with them.

Mr. Chairman: So are you saying then that you have not done this, before, in a structured way, for example, that you would have ten town meetings as you put it, within a particular year in various locations? You have never done that?

Mr. Bobb: No. That is our intention, coming out of our “stratplanercise” under communication with the burgesses that is what is being targeted, to have town meetings at different locations on a quarterly basis to treat with those issues. Interfacing with the burgesses and to find out exactly what are their situations, their needs, issues they may have.

Mr. Chairman: I think it is important for a modern management to pursue customer service satisfaction surveys, or else you could end up fooling yourself into thinking that you are providing the quality of service that is required or sought in the area, and we might get a miscommunication. So apart from the town meetings, I would like you to consider—not only for your corporation, but certainly for the other municipalities, to consider this question of customer service on an ongoing basis because the kind of feedback that you would get would provide you with pretty good direction as to how you should unroll or develop strategic plans for the short to medium term. But I will turn it over to Miss Cudjoe for her questions.

Miss Cudjoe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My concerns are based on your strategic plans for 2010-2012. Referring to pages 14 and 15, my questions are related to page 14, the weaknesses listed there such as the corporation’s limited ability to effectively motivate staff, the lack of effective communication between staff members, the lack of protocol in the execution of the corporation’s business and conflict between managers leading to inadequate synergy.

I want to know, exactly, what have been your challenges related to these areas and how have you treated with them? If not, how do you intend to treat with them? I guess that you would have—your strategic plan stated that these issues would have been addressed in 12 months, on page 25 under the strategy to undertake a study to identify the critical weaknesses, planning and communication issues and develop and implement recommendations for addressing them. I want to know what have been done or if not, what do you intend to do as it relates to treating with these issues. Because it is one thing to have the number of staff members required to do the work but coordination and getting the people motivated to work is another issue. So

that is one question based on pages 14 and 25.

My other questions are related to page 15. Senior Counsel Prescott would have already highlighted the issues related to the creation and implementation of legislation. My other two questions are based on the difficulties experienced in accessing external professional services due to the existing bureaucracies, what have been your challenges? What do you recommend to treat with this issue in going forward? And my final question is: what have been your specific challenges or problems relating to the existing system of local government, and what do we recommend? So those are my three. Thank you.

Mr. Bobb: Thank you very much. Your first question on page 14 of the “strat plan” that refers to weaknesses, what I have done since September when I began to act as CEO, I have started to call fortnightly heads of department meetings because I saw the need for it. To keep on top of things. To be aware of things before they gets out of hand, every two weeks I have a heads meeting with my senior officers. Why, because there is a need to ensure that all of us are a built team. People have to be aware of what the other departments are doing because each department needs help from another department in one area or the other. For example, the works department wants labour, they need the personnel department. So I have a heads meeting every fortnight to build team and to ensure all of us are on the same page in terms of where we are going.

What I have also implemented is that on a two months basis, and I had one already, that I meet with all sections of the corporation; the police, accounts, public health, works engineering because there are peculiar issues to each of those different sections in the corporation. And therefore I need a time to drill down, so every two months I am having a meeting with those departments and their head of department to drill down. For those three reasons explained in terms of the weaknesses, if I build team of people, I get buy in on the same page, on the same head and, therefore, I will be able to easily treat with whatever resources, problems, difficulties their needs. So that is my approach since I have begun acting as CEO, and so far it is working well. Because people are more appreciative that here it is the CEO can come to a particular level to treat with, at the ground level. [*Inaudible*]

In terms of the external expertise, at times the help you need externally is not always readily available especially who you want. On top of that, at times it can be costly. So those are the two factors we have to weigh in terms of—if you are going that way one, are we going to get the person we need and then, of course, there is the cost factor. So those are the two challenges

we have to deal with all the time to get those external people in to treat with issues that we feel that we need help in. All right!

And the slow implementation of the legislation, first we have to pass it to our council for approval, and, of course, you know to the ministry which will then have to take it to the AG and then to Parliament. Legislation is something that we could only kick off at our level and we need to put up a case through our council then take it to our parent body, our Ministry of Local Government, who will then take it from there in terms of taking it to Parliament to change any kind of Act. So that is the process.

11.30 a.m.

In the corporation, as I said earlier, we have a manpower issue, which we are now seeking to address through our Ministry and the CPO. In terms of physical resources are something that is on-going, based upon the funding situation but, in the meantime, while we are working out that, we are going along with what we have. The constraints that we are faced with, we are looking to develop innovative ways and strategies to combat them and to ensure that our level of service is adequate to our burgesses.

Miss Cudjoe: I have a follow up question. The existing system of local government—that is the trend of the last question—you said, as the government changes—

Mr. Bobb: I said as the environment changes.

Miss Cudjoe: So, what are the challenges that you are faced with now or what are the challenges you have been facing during this time period as it relates to the existing structure? What can be done to make things a little easier for you so that you can get your work done?

Mr. Bobb: Well, again, bureaucracy, how can we get decisions made quickly, and there is a process. At present, all the local government corporations are working with the Ministry because, at present, the Ministry is doing its strategy planning session right now, and we have been called in to assist, because we are part of that bigger picture. Only last Wednesday we were looking at these areas and how best we can meet and treat with what is happening now, and how best we can improve it. So, delivery is more timely and efficient. Again, it is decision-making process. When we asked for a decision, before it gets back to us—A case in point—and no disrespect to any Minister or any PS—is that when we asked to approve the funding for the building, it took almost a year.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. We are fortunate to have the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government here, so we would certainly ask the PS one or two questions, but before I do

that, the reporting of the municipal corporations has been painfully slow in getting back to the Parliament. I could recall some of the municipal corporations being five years and six years late. So, in a way, we want to commend you for being only two years late and ask, what is the status of the 2010 report? We are asking you question, I would dare say, some historical questions. We want to ask you about the future. Where is the 2010?

Mr. Bobb: The 2010 report is now on my desk, because the out-going CEO had compiled it. It is now on my desk, and I am now going through it to ensure, before it goes to the printers, the information is correct. So, more than likely, if not next month, by January for the least, it will be with the Ministry and then on to the Parliament.

Mr. Chairman: Tell me, why it takes so long generally? The taxpayers are passing on moneys to you. I know in other institutions, you need to report to those who pass on money to you within three or four months of the end of the year. Why does it take so long? Just tell me your specific experience in terms of the Arima Corporation, because we will ask these questions to other municipal corporations.

Mr. Bobb: Our process is that we ask each head of department to do a report with respect to his or her department. It may take some time, because the department head, when a report is completed, for example, our units that work on the field like the public health, especially in the heavy season—like for instance, from January—June when projects are really in full swing, they are outside ensuring that things are done, and although that is not a real reason it can slow down the pace.

Mr. Chairman: I agree with you, that is not a real reason.

Mr. Bobb: Secondly, they want to ensure, before it comes to us and before we meet in our joint session, that the information is correct, because you do not want to report and give information that is deficient. So that sometimes hold things back, and then it comes to the CEO who will then now look at it for the last time with one or two senior people and then we will say, “It is okay, it is good to go and send it to the printers.” So, it is just that we need to have clear defined timelines and insist that they are met to deliver that information to you.

Mr. Chairman: Well, through this committee, I want to ask you to take up the challenge to deliver your reports within four months of the end of the fiscal year, because the story on the other side to what you have said is that the longer you wait to collate information the more things you would actually miss and forget. So, it is a challenge and you should give the lead. You being the first municipal corporation here, I think it is something that you should lead your

colleagues in. Mr. Maharaj wanted to raise a question.

Mr. Maharaj: Arima is unique in Trinidad. It is the only Royal Chartered Borough in the country and, I dare say, the western hemisphere, and that uniqueness is personified in the Dial, and the Dial now has been absent in the heart of Arima and, I think, Arimanians all over want to know what is happening to the Dial; what has happened to the Dial and when is the Dial going to be returned.

Mr. Bobb: Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee, permit me if I am longwinded in the answer. When I proceeded on vacation in July 04, this year, I proceeded on two months' vacation, and while in New York checking my email on the Internet, I saw that the burgesses was in a hue and cry, because the Dial was removed without they even being told. I had hoped that on my return in September back to the office that it would no longer be an issue. Unfortunately, on my return, my CEO went on pre-retirement leave and I picked up the mantle. To fast-track, I might see **Melt** Industries Corporation, who is doing the repairs; my latest check is that the repairs are almost complete. Part of the repairs are completed, and it is back with the borough, and we have started to implement restoring the Dial back, and it is proposed by next week, all things being equal, the full Dial would be restored, and I suggested to the Council yesterday that we should have a small simple ceremony to commemorate such an occasion.

Mr. Chairman: And you should invite Mr. Maharaj. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Bobb: Definitely.

Mr. Samuel: Mr. Chairman, there have been much plans over the last 15 to 20 years for the development and the enhancement of the Borough and much have fallen by the wayside. I am not too sure what the present vision is for the expansion and the development of the borough, and which you are adhering to now, because you were saying so many things are on the table. There was something done by, I think, Cariri some time ago, and I am not too sure whether that was adopted either. So, what is the vision to expand the town centre of Arima? That is my first question.

You talked about sport, and over the last 10 to 15 years there has been no development of sporting facilities in Arima, which is still under the purview of the borough. It has been "slitiched", if you could type a word like that, but nothing has happened in Arima for the last 15 to 20 years with regard to the development of sporting facilities. The Arima Velodrome is in its worse condition; very dilapidated at this point in time. I want to know, what are the plans for the revitalization and renovation of the Velodrome and the adjoining grounds that are around it?

You agree that the courts are in a dilapidated condition, the netball court and the long-tennis court. They are in a total mess and that is because of absolute neglect. You mentioned that, because you said that it has to do with the development of youth shifting away from crime and so on, but it is 20 years that we are talking about and nothing has been done for the development of those facilities, so they have run down tremendously in Arima.

Besides the Princes Royal Park for something as large as the borough and the population of the borough, I think much thought has to be given into finding areas to add more recreation not just with respect to the grounds, but there are so many communities that are around and needs to have sporting facilities, and this is something I feel you need to look into—look at the demographics of the borough and how tightly fit the borough is at this point. I wanted to ask you to look into that.

How would you rate the relationship between the corporation and the business community? Oftentimes there are many complaints about how the corporation relates to the business community. We talked about Stop Orders and all kinds of stuff. I want to know if this corporation waits until things get bad and then to treat with them, or if you do not pick these things up—you are talking about people building without the necessary permission and so on—how early are these things taken up and, if not, why are you waiting so long to guide these people in the right direction? I want to know that.

What is relationship between the corporation and the business community, as well as the corporation and the council? I would like to find out that from you. Do political preferences get in the way of operations between the corporation and the council?

Mr. Bobb: Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I would take the question in terms of the relationship with the council and the administration. My view, and as it stands today, I think it is a very cordial one. Like anything else, there will be differences of opinions respectfully but, at the end of the day, I think the corporation understands and the administration understands its mandate which is, they are to advise council and, of course, implement council's policy decisions.

I am of the view that the relationship is a very good one with all the councillors and all the senior heads of the department. Yesterday we had a meeting and when the meeting was finished, we sat and spoke afterwards. So, yes, there will always be times when there will be a

little difference but, respectfully so, we will work it without and move forward.

With respect to the other questions in terms of stadium, the facilities and stop notices, and the relationship with the business community, let me defer that to my Town Superintendent, because he is more in the firing line in terms of treating with the public in that respect, and would be able to give more details in terms of what we are doing to improve these services.

Mr. Springer: We are talking about the relationship with the business community, can I describe it as a mixed one or sometimes a love/hate. Of course, the businessmen are there to make money, and to do business and not often any one would like to be told, “Hold your hand”. As far as they are concerned, time is money, and we are just getting in the way. However, what we have observed—just to go to the point that you are saying whether we wait too long to give these stop notices—a number of these buildings may have had initial approval from Town and Country, the problem come in when they deviate from the approved plan or when those approvals have not been finalized, and they have decided they are going to complete it and open business as usual when that cannot be. So, it is not so much that the building maybe totally unauthorized, but it may have reached a point where maybe amended plans are needed and we need to examine that carefully. I think, at the end of the year, the fact that the business community would send cards for us and invitations says, at the end of it all, we have a good relationship with them. As I said, no one would like in any way for us to slow down, as far as they are concerned, their business operation.

11.45 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: There were two other questions: one had to deal with the expansion of sporting facilities, and the other, the expansion of the town centre. You want to take that now?

Mr. Springer: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Springer: The sporting facilities—can I answer that by asking a question? You said it is 15 years now? Was the Larry Gomes Stadium not constructed within the last 15 years?

Mr. Samuel: Yes, but I am talking about what the borough is doing, that is the Ministry of Sports, that is the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago—but what the borough—

Mr. Springer: The borough itself. The funding that we receive really could barely maintain what we have. That sort of capital expenditure, that sort of exorbitant expenditure, we cannot really afford. So the borough itself, has not been able to develop additional facilities as such, we

could only do it under sometimes what we call the DP, the PSIP funding. We could do some works on that but any major work, we have to defer that really to either the sport ministry or ask for some special financing of such works. And then you would appreciate that such decision will have to be that of the council, the way they are going to spend the limited funds that they have received under the PSIP.

Mr. Chairman: Can we address the expansion of the town centre very quickly?

Mr. Springer: The town center from what I have been told, I have not seen the final draft as yet but they are hoping to expand the town centre. Being an Arabian you will know, I believe it is way down on Pro Queen Street down by the Priority Bus Route. They would like to go there in the south, and of course the north, well almost going up Calvary Hill. That much I could say in terms of expanding the town centre.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Mr. Samuel, one more question.

Mr. Samuel: I am returning to the question on the relationship between the corporation and the business sector, and the question has to do with; is it or is it not a fact that the approval of plans are delayed excessively and that is why you now have to issue all of these stop notices? And is there a problem with regards to business people submitting drawings and plans, and stuff like that, but the timeframe that the corporation takes in issuing the certificates and issuing the approvals it is delayed excessively—are there problems like that?

Mr. Springer: I will say no, and I will say that a lot of this comes from a lot of misinformation and, you know, misunderstanding of the whole system. A businessman prepares himself to go into business, and he makes his plans, he gathers his funds, et cetera, and he wants it executed now for now. The reality is that we have a policy, because as you noticed the matter of staffing, we have a policy that commercial business, public businesses, public forum, these places should go to the Ministry of Works design branch, and that is the policy we have to speed up things.

When they get there, that is where they are going to be held back most likely. The fastest I have heard is six months, some have been there two years. So it has nothing to do with the corporation itself, as long as these things have been approved and they are in order quickly, we could give out all the approvals, but it is not as per se.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, thank you very much. I want to allow just a couple of minutes for the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government to address some of the issues which

were raised by the committee, in a general sense as we move to speak, there are some of the other municipal corporations.

Ms. Mc Comie: Thank you Chair. I am in local government eight months now and a lot of what I have heard this morning, I have been hearing over the period. There are issues and concerns in a number of areas that need to be addressed. What has come out, we are going through the process, as Mr. Bobb indicated, of preparing our strategic plan. What does the Ministry of Local Government need to do to support the 14 corporations, if they are supposed to implement Act 21 of 1990, in its entirety—and we ourselves need a little restructuring.

You spoke to the issue of M&E. We do not have an M&E Unit in local government yet, we have a Planning Research Projects Unit, so that has to be implemented. However, when I say we—local government—over the last few years worked with the UNDP and trained up a number of officers in project management, utilizing PRINCE2. Those officers are scattered, some still within the Ministry, some out of the Ministry, and what we are doing now, since we still have some money with the UNDP, is moving forward to see if we can get those people to really use the skills that they were exposed to, so that—we have the note done—we are in the process of approaching Cabinet for a results-based management framework to be put in for local government, which would mean the corporations, as well as the Ministry monitoring. So that is work in progress.

With respect to staffing, the cities and the boroughs—so you have five, two cities, three boroughs—they have structures—I think with the exception of Chaguanas, it does not have a proper structure—that has been recognized and we have gone to Cabinet. It is a number of things we have to put in, apart from an overall structure which will take some time because you have to do the assessment; we have been trying to identify the gaps that we can fill. So one note has already gone to Cabinet for Deputy CEOs for the regional corporations, and that is nine of them, okay. The others—Arima already has one, but most of the other regional corporations moving from county council to the corporation do not have. The position after the CEO is an AOII, so that the gap is very wide—so that has gone to Cabinet.

The other area that we are working on is—and Mr. Bobb spoke about the Transport Foreman, that will be separate, but I am talking here about all the corporations across the board, looking at where they need positions like Road Officers and County Supervisors, because as I understand it, when there was the change from the County Council to the Corporation, the

County Councils had structures and it was just separated out and three may have like—Is there a County Supervisor III?

Mr. Bobb: [Inaudible]—in the regional corporations.

Ms. Mc Comie: Okay, in the regional corporations. You may have a position of a three in one place and a two in another place, but the two in the other corporation is responsible for all of the three is responsible for, which is an unfair situation and may not have the number of required staff to support the work that has to be done. So that we were working on just trying to fill that need even as we take on the longer exercise, and it will be a while because we are talking about 14 corporations, more than likely we will have to do it in phases—looking at the needs of each corporation with respect to internal audit—is one area that is very weak. Arima is very fortunate, it has its internal auditors, but that is not the case with most corporations. HR: they have a PIRO and clerical staff; the HR is done largely centralized in the Ministry. I think the amount of staff they have they need it closer to where they are. The accounting units have some staff, but that has to be looked at, so it is a number of areas that would need to be addressed to put in the appropriate structure within the corporation.

To address some of the issues of communication, we have begun work and Arima is one of the five that we are working with initially to put it ICT infrastructure, because local government covers the country and, therefore, the ICT I think will help us in our communication. We can then use the appropriate applications necessary to get financial information. Somehow when we come together to discuss things with the Minister, the corporation has one figure and Ministry has another, and the Ministry of Finance has another, so we must be on the same page. So we are working on that.

The ICT infrastructure will also help in the delivery of services to the burgesses and the citizens in the area. So it is a number of things; we are training in procurement because that has been an area that is slow so we are working with CTB to train up the relevant officers. You spoke to the annual reports. In the Ministry we are also outstanding and we are playing catch-up, and I realize it is the same with the corporations, but I think they are all actively working on being up-to-date with the annual reports.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, PS. At least you gave us a flavour of what is the work that needs to be done. Today we spent time as we had invited you, the Arima Borough Corporation, on discussing matters of efficiency and effectiveness within the borough. And this will be the framework that we will use for all of the municipal corporations as we go forward.

It is very important that the taxpayer's money is well utilized in providing the quality of services within the timeframe expected to them, and that is why we asked about effectiveness and we asked about efficiency. And I would hope and look forward to the Ministry itself putting in place—you as the accounting officer, PS—efficiency and effectiveness ratios and measures, so that hopefully one day you can not only look at individual corporations, but rank them as well—rank the effectiveness of the corporations from 1 to 14, so that we can do something about it if it is necessary.

So let me in closing, thank you all very much for sharing with us some of the issues and challenges of the Arima Borough Corporation, and I hope that as we go forward you will be able to address some of these measures and, in particular, the issue of the regulation and legislation that you can bring forward in a more structured manner some of those issues so that these are the issues that would have to be resolved at the level of Parliament. And I hope that working through your PS and your Minister, you would be able to bring these issues forward.

So once again, thank you to all the team members of the Arima Borough Corporation, and thanks to our members for the line of questioning and the answers that we have received. Having said that, I want to declare today's proceedings closed, and this meeting is now adjourned to a date to be fixed. Thank you.

11.59 a.m.: *Meeting adjourned.*