



Standing Committee on Community Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

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Halifax

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Honourable Kevin Murphy
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Community Services, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the committee for the period from September 2014 to August 2015 of the Sixty-Second General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Arab', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patricia Arab, MLA, Fairview-Clayton Park
Chair
Standing Committee on Community Services

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2015

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INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Community Services, an all-party Committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixty-Second General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(d) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly*:

(d) the Community Services Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Departments and Ministers of Business and Consumer Services and of Municipal Affairs and matters relating to the Human Rights Commission and the Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission.

In 1998, the Speaker, as Chairman of the Legislature's Internal Economy Board, gave the Community Services Committee written permission to also consider matters within the purview of the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services.

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be no more than nine Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to this committee. The current membership of the Standing Committee on Community Services is as follows:

Ms. Patricia Arab, MLA, Chair
Fairview-Clayton Park

Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
Northside-Westmount

Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA, Vice Chair
Halifax Atlantic

Mr. Larry Harrison, MLA
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

Ms. Pam Eyking, MLA
Victoria-The Lakes

Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
Chester-St. Margaret's

Mr. Bill Horne, MLA
Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank

Ms. Lenore Zann, MLA
Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River

Ms. Joyce Treen, MLA
Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Ms. Lenore Zann, MLA, replaced Hon. Gordie Gosse, MLA, in April 2015; Mr. Bill Horne, MLA, replaced Mr. Allan Rowe, MLA, in May 2015 and Ms. Pam Eyking, MLA, replaced Mr. Stephen Gough, MLA, in August 2015.

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Community Services Committee traditionally meets once a month. These meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month in the Legislative Committees Office.

NOTICES, TRANSCRIPTS, REQUESTED INFORMATION, PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

NOTICES

Notices of committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, caucus office staff, legislative staff and Communications Nova Scotia. The notices are also posted in Province House and on the Nova Scotia Legislature website at the following address:

<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/calendar/>

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of all Community Services Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office, or on the Community Services Committee webpage at the following address:

http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/

REQUESTED INFORMATION

On occasions when the committee requests information that is not readily available during a meeting, the witness will be asked to provide the requested information as soon as possible following the meeting. Once the requested information is received and approved by the committee, it is placed on the Community Services Committee webpage and can be viewed at the following address:

http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/

PRESENTATIONS

Witness presentations are distributed to committee members in advance of the meeting date. Presentations are placed on the Community Services Committee webpage after the meeting and can be viewed at the following address:

http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/

REPORTS

All reports of the Standing Committee on Community Services are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded to committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the report, the Chair tables the report with the Speaker of the House of Assembly or with the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Distribution of the report is as follows:

To the Speaker and the Clerk of the House of Assembly; committee members; all witnesses who appeared before the committee; the Nova Scotia Legislative Library; the caucus offices; and the media. This report is available to the general public upon request from the Legislative Committees Office, and is available on the Community Services Committee webpage at the following address: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/reports/community_services

RESEARCH MATERIAL

All research for the Community Services Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk. Research material is compiled in an electronic format and is distributed by the committee clerk prior to the meeting to members, staff, and witnesses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The committee wishes to extend its gratitude to all witnesses for their time and co-operation. Special appreciation is extended to the Legislative Committees Office; Hansard Reporting Services; Legislative Television and Broadcast Services and the Nova Scotia Legislative Library.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

WITNESSES

Community Child Welfare Boards

Ms. Delores Feltmate – Chairwoman, Cape Breton – Victoria Child Advocacy Society

Mr. Cyril Reid – Chair, Provincial Council of Chairs and Cumberland Child Advocacy Board

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Community Child Welfare Boards serve as a link with the Department of Community Services and are the voice for children and families in their communities. They influence policy and legislation relating to children and families, provide public education on child welfare issues and work with partners and the Department of Community Services to support families at risk and ensure safe, permanent homes for children. The Community Child Welfare Boards wished to bring to the attention of the committee the need for changes to the Children and Family Services Act, specifically relating to the definition of a child and the definition of neglect. Community Child Welfare Boards also recommended that a stand-alone child advocacy office be created.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

During the presentation, information was provided to the committee regarding changes to the Children and Family Services Act. As a result of the information provided, a motion was introduced:

- To ask for a status update with a timeline on this particular piece of legislation.
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
 - Motion carried.

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Correspondence from Arlene and Sarah Williams.
 - The committee agreed that the correspondence should be provided to the Ministers of Justice and Community Services, as well as to the Maintenance Enforcement Program, as the issues of concern referenced in the correspondence related to these departments.

The Annual Report of the committee was also reviewed. A motion was introduced:

- To accept the Annual Report as sent out.
 - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion carried

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and has been received from Ms. Delores Feltmate:

- The cost to establish a separate Child Advocacy Office.

TRANSCRIPT

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:
http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2014oct07

**ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES
NETWORK**

November 4, 2014

WITNESSES

Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Network

Mr. Brian Aird – Executive Director

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Network (EDN) appeared before the committee to provide an overview of its organization and services. EDN is a not-for-profit organization that promotes and facilitates entrepreneurship for individuals with disabilities. They advise government and business on how best to serve entrepreneurs with disabilities. EDN is made up of a volunteer board of directors and has 3 staff members. EDN provides one-on-one business counselling, mentoring and networking opportunities, workshops, financing information and assistance and on-going business planning support to disabled individuals who are pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

There was no committee business.

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2014nov04

WITNESSES

Housing Nova Scotia

Mr. Dan Troke – President and CEO

Mr. Ed Lake – Director, Properties and Facilities

Mr. Neil MacDonald – Director, Housing Services

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Housing Nova Scotia (HNS) appeared before the committee to provide an overview of their programs and services as well as information on affordable housing projects in the province. HNS is a provincial government corporation that is responsible for assisting low-to modest- income Nova Scotians with their housing needs and ensuring a range of programs, services and homes are available to Nova Scotians. HNS was created in August 2013 as a result of the provincial Housing Strategy. The operations and priorities of HNS have been reviewed to assist in the creation of a strategic plan, which will be released this year. The 2014/15 budget for HNS was \$194.3 million. It is responsible for \$330 million in fixed assets and \$675 million in financial assets. Five housing authorities located across the province are responsible for managing 11,500 public housing units.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

There was no committee business.

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and has been received from Housing Nova Scotia:

- A copy of the current Household Income Limits (HILs).
- Information regarding the expansion of the Youth Outreach Program.
- The average length of stay for individuals in public housing.

TRANSCRIPT

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2015jan06

WITNESSES

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Shore

Mr. Jamie Irving – President, Board of Directors

Ms. Sandra Murray – Former Executive Director

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Shore appeared before the committee to provide an overview of their organization and its activities. The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters is to “provide friendships that are personally, socially, and psychologically adequate to children and youth and to aid in their development through the provision of professional and volunteer services.” Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Shore has been operating in Lunenburg and Queens Counties for 30 years. Traditional mentor matches are becoming less common and Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Shore are focusing on in-school mentoring matches, where elementary school students are matched with mentors during school time for one hour per week. This program is being offered in 12 schools on the South Shore.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Correspondence from the Face of Poverty Consultation.
- Correspondence from the Department of Community Services providing information requested from the October 7th meeting.
- Correspondence from the Department of Community Services providing a response regarding Arlene and Sarah Williams.
 - It was agreed to defer all correspondence to the next meeting of the committee.

The committee discussed holding meetings while the House was in session. A motion was introduced:

- That this committee not sit during the House Sitting.
 - Moved by Ms. Margaret Miller, MLA
 - Motion carried

During the presentation the witness stressed the importance of continued financial support from not only the Department of Community Services, but also from possibly

the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development relating to the in-school mentoring program. A motion was introduced:

- To request that the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development have a discussion with respect to the possible opportunities of funding for the educational mentor program.
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse
 - Motion deferred

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at: http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2015mar03

WITNESSES

Collaborative Partnership Network

Ms. Janice Ainsworth – Co-Chair (CPN)

Ms. Margaret Matthews – Treasurer (CPN)

Ms. Debbie Cook – Secretary (CPN)

Mr. Marcus Jamieson – Team Work Cooperative, Operations & Systems Manager

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN) appeared before the committee to provide an overview of their organization and its activities. CPN is a not-for-profit agency who works to secure and maintain meaningful employment for persons with disabilities and is made up of nine specialized employment agencies throughout the province. They have been providing collective best practice and employment program expertise in the province for 18 years and secure at least 1,000 jobs each year for people with disabilities.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The following correspondence was received by the committee:

- Correspondence from the Department of Justice providing a response regarding Arlene and Sarah Williams.
- Invitation from the Halifax Society for Children, Youth and Families.
- Correspondence from Housing Nova Scotia providing information requested from the January 6th meeting.
- Correspondence from Delores Feltmate providing information requested from the October 7th meeting.

The Community Services Committee has a practice of posting information that has been requested from witnesses to their webpage once it has been received and reviewed by the committee. The correspondence from Housing Nova Scotia and from Delores Feltmate, both of which provided information requested at previous meetings was reviewed. A motion was introduced:

- To have these responses posted to the website.
 - Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod
 - Motion carried

The following correspondence which was deferred from the March 3rd meeting was reviewed by the committee:

- Correspondence from the Face of Poverty Consultation.
 - It was agreed to send this correspondence to Housing Nova Scotia for response.
- Correspondence from the Department of Community Services providing information requested from the October 7th meeting.
- Correspondence from the Department of Community Services providing a response regarding Arlene and Sarah Williams.

The Community Services Committee has a practice of posting information that has been requested from witnesses to their webpage once it has been received and reviewed by the committee. The correspondence from the Department of Community Services providing information requested from the October 7th meeting was reviewed. A motion was introduced.

- To post this correspondence to our website
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
 - Motion carried

The Hon. Peterson-Rafuse's motion which was deferred from the March 3rd meeting was reviewed by the committee. Discussion was held around the context and intent of the motion. A motion was introduced:

- To bring to the attention of both the Ministers of Education and Early Childhood Development and Community Services, the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the South Shore "In School Mentor Matches" program and ask the departments to advise the committee regarding their awareness of the program and any opportunities for collaboration that may exist.
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee agreed to hold its September meeting on the 15th and that an agenda-setting session would be held at this meeting as well.

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested and has been received from the Collaborative Partnership Network:

- A breakdown of the budget in terms of what each agency receives.

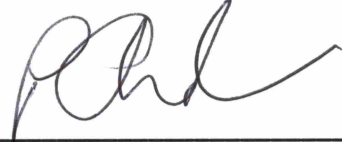
TRANSCRIPT

Full details of this meeting can be found in the transcript which is available online at:
http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/committees/committee_hansard/C6/cs2015jun02

STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

All of which is respectfully submitted to the
House of Assembly this ^{15th} day of ^{September}, 2015



Ms. Patricia Arab, MLA - Chair
Fairview-Clayton Park

I concur



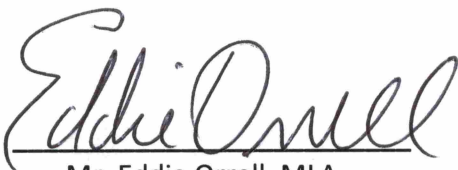
Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA – Vice Chair
Halifax Atlantic

I concur



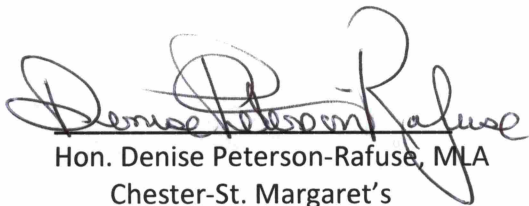
Mr. Bill Horne, MLA
Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank

I concur



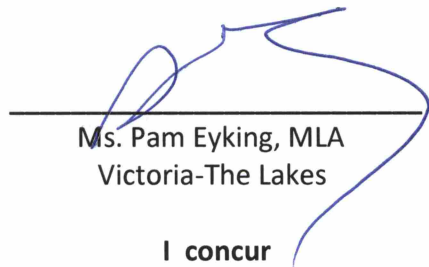
Mr. Eddie Orrell, MLA
Northside-Westmount

I concur



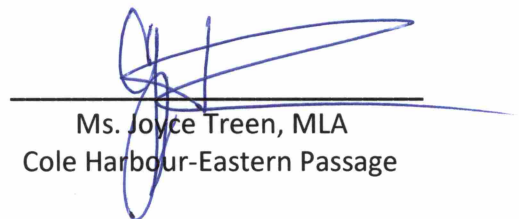
Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
Chester-St. Margaret's

I concur



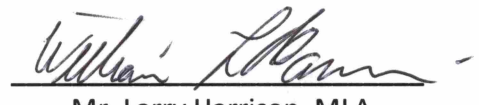
Ms. Pam Eyking, MLA
Victoria-The Lakes

I concur



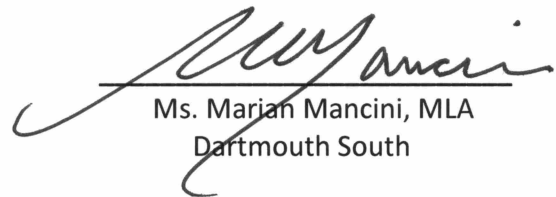
Ms. Joyce Treen, MLA
Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage

I concur



Mr. Larry Harrison, MLA
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

I concur



Ms. Marian Mancini, MLA
Dartmouth South

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – MOTIONS

The following is a list of motions introduced by the Standing Committee on Community Services:

October 7, 2014

During the presentation, information was provided to the committee regarding changes to the Children and Family Services Act. As a result of the information provided, a motion was introduced:

- To ask for a status update with a timeline on this particular piece of legislation.
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
 - Motion carried.

The Annual Report of the committee was also reviewed. A motion was introduced:

- To accept the Annual Report as sent out.
 - Moved by Mr. Brendan Maguire, MLA
 - Motion carried

March 3, 2015

The committee discussed holding meetings while the House was in session. A motion was introduced:

- That this committee not sit during the House Sitting.
 - Moved by Ms. Margaret Miller, MLA
 - Motion carried

During the presentation the witness stressed the importance of continued financial support from not only the Department of Community Services, but also from possibly the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development relating to the in-school mentoring program. A motion was introduced:

- To request that the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development have a discussion with respect to the possible opportunities of funding for the educational mentor program.
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse
 - Motion deferred

APPENDIX A – MOTIONS (cont'd)

June 2, 2015

The Community Services Committee has a practice of posting information that has been requested from witnesses to their webpage once it has been received and reviewed by the committee. The correspondence from Housing Nova Scotia and from Delores Feltmate, both of which provided information requested at previous meetings was reviewed. A motion was introduced:

- To have these responses posted to the website.
 - Moved by Hon. Alfie MacLeod
 - Motion carried

The Community Services Committee has a practice of posting information that has been requested from witnesses to their webpage once it has been received and reviewed by the committee. The correspondence from the Department of Community Services providing information requested from the October 7th meeting was reviewed. A motion was introduced.

- To post this correspondence to our website
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
 - Motion carried

The Hon. Peterson-Rafuse's motion which was deferred from the March 3rd meeting was reviewed by the committee. Discussion was held around the context and intent of the motion. A motion was introduced:

- To bring to the attention of both the Ministers of Education and Early Childhood Development and Community Services, the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the South Shore "In School Mentor Matches" program and ask the departments to advise the committee regarding their awareness of the program and any opportunities for collaboration that may exist.
 - Moved by Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, MLA
 - Motion carried

APPENDIX B - DOCUMENTATION

The following is a list of documents and information requested and received by the Standing Committee on Community Services:

October 7, 2014

Community Child Welfare Boards

The following information was requested and has been received from Ms. Delores Feltmate:

- The cost to establish a separate Child Advocacy Office.

January 6, 2015

Housing Nova Scotia

The following information was requested and has been received from Housing Nova Scotia:

- A copy of the current Household Income Limits (HILs).
- Information regarding the expansion of the Youth Outreach Program.
- The average length of stay for individuals in public housing.

June 2, 2015

Collaborative Partnership Network

The following information was requested and has been received from the Collaborative Partnership Network:

- A breakdown of the budget in terms of what each agency receives.

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