



Standing Committee on Community Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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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 2019 to August 2020 of the Sixty-third General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Irving, MLA, Kings South
Chair
Standing Committee on Community Services

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2020

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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-third General Assembly. **Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(e) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly*:**

(e) the Community Services Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters relative to community services, culture, heritage, human rights, municipal affairs, recreation and sports.

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:

Keith Irving, MLA, Chair
Kings South

Brian Comer, MLA
Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg

Rafah DiContanzo, MLA, Vice Chair
Clayton Park West

Steve Craig, MLA
Sackville-Cobequid

Ben Jessome, MLA
Hammonds Plains-Lucasville

Kendra Coombes, MLA
Cape Breton Centre

Bill Horne, MLA
Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank

Lisa Roberts, MLA
Halifax Needham

Hon. Margaret Miller, MLA
Hants East

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Brian Comer, MLA, Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg, replaced Keith Bain, MLA, Victoria-The Lakes, in September, 2019.

Kendra Coombes, MLA, Cape Breton Centre, replaced Susan Leblanc, MLA, Dartmouth North, in May, 2020.

Hon. Margaret Miller, MLA, Hants East, replaced Hon. Gordon Wilson, MLA, Clare-Digby, in August, 2020.

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 Committee Room, Granville Level, One Government Place.

As a result of public health directives issued regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair cancelled the April 7, 2020, meeting. On April 28, 2020, the Chair informed the committee that meetings would be cancelled until further notice.

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 web page 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 web page 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 web page 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 web page at the following address: <https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/reports>

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

LEGAL ISSUES IN CHILD PROTECTION

September 3, 2019

WITNESSES

Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University

Rollie Thompson, Q.C. – Professor of Law

Department of Community Services

Leonard Doiron – Executive Director, Child, Youth and Family Supports

DOCUMENTATION

No documents were tabled or requested.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

There was no committee business.

TRANSCRIPT

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/archive/community-services/cs2019sep03>

POVERTY REDUCTION GRANTS AND AGENDA-SETTING

November 5, 2019

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Joy Knight – Acting Executive Director, ESIA

Bonnie Ste-Croix – Executive Lead, Poverty Reduction

Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage

Natasha Jackson – Director, Communities Nova Scotia

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- Material Deprivation by Community Cluster
 - Tabled by Susan Leblanc, MLA

The committee requested the following information from the Department of Community Services:

- wage exemption policy
- statistics on the number of clients employed and on income assistance

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence was received from:

- Department of Community Services
 - Additional information requested from the May 7, 2019 meeting
- Hon. Kelly Regan, Minister of Community Services
 - Response to committee correspondence with respect to correspondence received from the Benefits Reform Action Group (BRAG)
- Benefits Reform Action Group (BRAG)
 - Request to have Brandon Grant, Executive Director ESIA, appear before the committee as a witness to provide an update on the status of the ESIA Transformation
- Basic Income Guarantee Nova Scotia (BIG-NS)
 - Request to appear before the committee

The committee was presented with the 2019 Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Community Services.

A motion was put forward:

- To accept the annual report to be tabled in the Spring in the House.
 - Moved by Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee then proceeded into agenda-setting discussions.

The following motions were put forward:

- To add the Families Plus program to the agenda. Witnesses will be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel; Leonard Doiron, Executive Director of Child, Youth and Family Services; and Nancy MacDonald, with Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To add Adult Service Centres to the agenda. Witnesses will be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel; and Maria Medioli, Executive Director of the Disability Support Program; Mike Townsend from the DIRECTIONS Council for Vocational Services; and Bob Bennett with Summer Street Adult Services Centre.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To add Employment Support Services to the agenda. Witnesses will be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel; Joy Knight, Acting Executive Director, Employment Support and Income Assistance; Dave Rideout, CEO of MetroWorks; Mary Fox, Executive Director of Community INC and Russ Sanche, Executive Director of the Portal Youth Outreach Centre in Kentville.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To add Child Poverty in Cape Breton to the agenda. Witness: The Department of Community Services and United Way of Cape Breton.
 - Moved by Brian Comer, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To confirm the names of the witnesses: Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel and Joy Knight, and to add a witness: JoAnna LaTulippe-Rochon, the Executive Director of Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre from Sydney; as well Bernie Miller, Deputy Minister of Business.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion (as amended) carried
- To add Affordable Housing to the agenda: Witnesses from Housing Nova Scotia, the Executive Director and CEO; and the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, Claudia Jahn.
 - Moved by Steve Craig, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add Nancy MacLellan, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, and/or designate.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion (as amended) carried

- To add Funding for Community Arts Organizations. The witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Justin Huston and Chris Shore. Also, representatives from 1588 Society, Michael Erwin; the Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative, Sébastien Labelle; the Eyelevel Gallery, Sally Wolchyn-Raab.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried

TRANSCRIPT

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/archive/community-services/cs2019nov05>

**EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR INCOME ASSISTANCE
RECIPIENTS**

December 3, 2019

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Tracey Taweel – Deputy Minister

Joy Knight – Executive Director

Community INC

Mary Fox – Executive Director

MetroWorks

Dave Rideout – President/CEO

Portal Youth Outreach

Russ Sanche – Executive Director

DOCUMENTATION

No documents were tabled or requested.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

There was no committee business.

TRANSCRIPT

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/archive/community-services/cs2019dec03>

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

January 7, 2020

WITNESSES

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Nancy MacLellan – Deputy Minister

Lindsay Wadden – Chief Operating Officer

Brandon Grant – Executive Director, Housing Programs

Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia

Claudia Jahn – Director, Community Housing Development

Jim Graham – Executive Director

DOCUMENTATION

No documents were tabled or requested.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

It was agreed to extend the meeting to finish the committee's business.

The witnesses for the February 4, 2020, meeting were discussed. It was agreed that a designate could appear on behalf of the Deputy Minister of the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage as the Deputy was not able to attend. It was also agreed to have the current executive director appear, as Chris Shore was no longer acting in that position.

A motion was put forward:

- That the time for presentations be limited to twenty minutes total, regardless of the number of presenters, and that the question portion of the meeting commence no later than 25 minutes after the start of the meeting.
 - Moved by Brian Comer, MLA
 - Motion defeated

TRANSCRIPT

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/archive/community-services/cs2020jan07>

FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

February 4, 2020

WITNESSES

Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage

Justin Huston – Deputy Minister

Craig Beaton – Executive Director, Culture & Heritage Development

Chris Shore – Director of Programs (Past Acting Director of Culture & Heritage Development)

1588 Barrington Building Preservation Society

Emily Davidson – President

Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative

Sebastien Labelle – Executive Director

Eyelevel Gallery

Sally Wolchyn-Raab – Artistic Director

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was tabled:

- Magazine entitled, “*Culture in Action: Demonstrating the Social Benefits of Culture*” – Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council 2019
- Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage
 - “*2018 Nova Scotia Culture Survey – Demographic Profile*”
 - “*2018 Nova Scotia Culture Index Study Highlights*”
 - “*2015 to 2017 Economic trends in Nova Scotia Culture and Sport*”
 - Tabled by Justin Huston, Deputy Minister
Department of Communities, Culture and
Heritage

The committee requested the following documentation:

- The funding levels of project and other program funding over a 10-year period for arts and culture organizations.
- How much of the \$62 million to \$94 million went to the arts community?

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

There was no committee business.

TRANSCRIPT

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/community-services/archive/community-services/cs2020feb04>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – DOCUMENTATION

Tabled Documentation:

November 5, 2019

- Material Deprivation by Community Cluster
 - Tabled by Susan Leblanc, MLA

February 4, 2020

- Magazine entitled, *“Culture in Action: Demonstrating the Social Benefits of Culture”* – Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council 2019
- Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage
 - *“2018 Nova Scotia Culture Survey – Demographic Profile”*
 - *“2018 Nova Scotia Culture Index Study Highlights”*
 - *“2015 to 2017 Economic trends in Nova Scotia Culture and Sport”*
 - Tabled by Justin Huston, Deputy Minister
Department of Communities, Culture and
Heritage

Requested Documentation:

November 5, 2019

Department of Community Services

The committee requested the following information:

- wage exemption policy
- statistics on the number of clients employed and on income assistance

February 4, 2020

Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage

The committee requested the following documentation:

- The funding levels of project and other program funding over a 10-year period for arts and culture organizations.
- How much of the \$62 million to \$94 million went to the arts community?

APPENDIX B - MOTIONS

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

November 5, 2019

The committee was presented with the 2019 Annual Report for the Standing Committee on Community Services.

A motion was put forward:

- To accept the annual report to be tabled in the Spring in the House.
 - Moved by Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Motion carried

The committee then proceeded into agenda-setting discussions.

The following motions were put forward:

- To add the Families Plus program to the agenda. Witnesses will be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel; Leonard Doiron, Executive Director of Child, Youth and Family Services; and Nancy MacDonald, with Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To add Adult Service Centres to the agenda. Witnesses will be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel; and Maria Medioli, Executive Director of the Disability Support Program; Mike Townsend from the DIRECTIONS Council for Vocational Services; and Bob Bennett with Summer Street Adult Services Centre.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To add Employment Support Services to the agenda. Witnesses will be the Department of Community Services, Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel; Joy Knight, Acting Executive Director, Employment Support and Income Assistance; Dave Rideout, CEO of MetroWorks; Mary Fox, Executive Director of Community INC and Russ Sanche, Executive Director of the Portal Youth Outreach Centre in Kentville.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried
- To add Child Poverty in Cape Breton to the agenda. Witness: The Department of Community Services and United Way of Cape Breton.
 - Moved by Brian Comer, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To confirm the names of the witnesses: Deputy Minister, Tracey Taweel and Joy Knight, and to add a witness: JoAnna LaTulippe-Rochon, the Executive Director of Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre from Sydney; as well Bernie Miller, Deputy Minister of Business.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion (as amended) carried
- To add Affordable Housing to the agenda: Witnesses from Housing Nova Scotia, the Executive Director and CEO; and the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, Claudia Jahn.
 - Moved by Steve Craig, MLA

An amendment was put forward:

- To add Nancy MacLellan, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, and/or designate.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Amendment carried
 - Motion (as amended) carried
- To add Funding for Community Arts Organizations. The witnesses would be the Deputy Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Justin Huston and Chris Shore. Also, representatives from 1588 Society, Michael Erwin; the Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative, Sébastien Labelle; the Eyelevel Gallery, Sally Wolchyn-Raab.
 - Moved by Susan Leblanc, MLA
 - Motion carried

January 7, 2020

A motion was put forward:

- That the time for presentations be limited to twenty minutes total, regardless of the number of presenters, and that the question portion of the meeting commence no later than 25 minutes after the start of the meeting.
 - Moved by Brian Comer, MLA
 - Motion defeated

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