



Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

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Halifax

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Honourable Keith Bain
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Committee for the period from September 2021 to August 2022 of the Sixty-Fourth General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Palmer".

Chris Palmer, MLA, Kings West
Chair
Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2022

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INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, an all-party committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixty-Fourth General Assembly, pursuant to Rule 60(1) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*.

Although there is no written mandate for the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, this report was written with the understanding that the committee is established for the purpose of considering matters pertaining to veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Legion.

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be no more than nine members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to this committee. The current membership of the Veterans Affairs Committee is as follows:

Chris Palmer, MLA – Chair
Kings West

Hon. Ben Jessome, MLA
Hammonds Plains – Lucasville

Danielle Barkhouse, MLA – Vice-Chair
Chester-St. Margaret's

Tony Ince, MLA
Cole Harbour

Larry Harrison, MLA
Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley

Gary Burrill, MLA
Halifax Chebucto

Tom Taggart, MLA
Colchester North

Lisa Lachance, MLA
Halifax Citadel – Sable Island

Nolan Young, MLA
Shelburne

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Gary Burrill, MLA, Halifax Chebucto, replaced Suzy Hansen, MLA, Halifax-Needham, in July 2022. Tony Ince, MLA, Cole Harbour, replaced Ali Duale, MLA, Halifax Armdale, in August 2022.

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Veterans Affairs Committee traditionally meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the Legislative Committees meeting room, Granville Level, One Government Place.

Because of physical distancing protocols observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings on January 18, 2022, and February 15, 2022 meetings were held by video conference.

NOTICES, TRANSCRIPTS 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:

<https://nslegislature.ca/get-involved/calendar/>

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of all Veterans Affairs Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office, or on the Veterans Affairs Committee web page at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/veterans-affairs/archive/veterans-affairs/>

REPORTS

All reports of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs 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 or 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 also available to the public upon request from the Legislative Committees Office and is available on the Veterans Affairs Committee web page at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/veterans-affairs/reports>

RESEARCH MATERIAL

Research material for the Veterans Affairs Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk and distributed to members by the committee clerk. Research material is provided to members and caucus staff prior to the meeting date. A copy of this material is also made available to the witnesses appearing before the committee, to the Legislative Library in Province House and to Hansard Reporting Services.

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

ORGANIZATIONAL/AGENDA SETTING

November 16, 2021

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Agenda-Setting:

Agenda-setting was held. The committee agreed to the following topics as put forward by motion:

- Services Provided by the Foundation
- Update on Current Affairs, Funds, and Services
- Legion Capital Assistance Program
- Women and Gender Diverse Veterans Issues
- Transition from Active Service to Veteran and Homelessness Prevention
- Seamless Canada: Overview of the Organization

Motions:

Topic and presenter organization were discussed:

- That the government gets three topics, the official opposition gets two topics, and the third party gets one topic or emergency topics per six meeting rotation. That the topics be organized as follows: government, the official opposition, government, third party, government, the official opposition; with additional flexibility for the Chair and Committee Staff bearing in mind witness availability.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA
 - Amended by Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Carried

Correspondence:

Acknowledgment of the request for an observer to attend the meeting:

- Email from Bradley LeBlanc requesting that a representative of their organization (Veterans UN-NATO Canada – Nova Scotia) attend the meeting.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard)

**UPDATE ON CURRENT AFFAIRS, FUNDS AND SERVICES –
NOVA SCOTIA/NUNAVUT COMMAND OF THE ROYAL
CANADIAN LEGION**

December 14, 2021

WITNESSES

Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command of the Royal Canadian Legion

Valerie Mitchell-Veinotte, Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions:

The committee discussed renaming one of the PC suggested topics and replacing the witness:

- That the topic name be changed from “Legal Capital Assistance Program” to “Legion Capital Assistance Program” and have the Director of Communities Nova Scotia Natasha Jackson appear before the committee to speak on this topic.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Carried

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard-transcript)

WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSE VETERANS ISSUES

January 18, 2022

WITNESSES

Mount Saint Vincent University

Dr. Maya Eichler, Canada Research Chair in Social Innovation and Community Engagement, head of the Centre for Social Innovation and Community Engagement in Military Affairs at MSVU

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions:

The committee discussed rescheduling the March meeting date to coincide with ‘March Break’:

- That the meeting be rescheduled from the 15th of March to the 22nd.
 - Moved by Larry Harrison, MLA
 - Carried

The committee discussed maintaining virtual meetings in accordance with public health guidelines:

- That the committee remains virtual until Public Health Officials suggest otherwise.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Carried

The committee discussed sending a letter to the Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs:

- That the Chair, with the help of the committee clerk, draft and send a letter to the Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs requesting updates on the progress of the pilot support groups for CAF members and veterans of sexual misconduct during their service.
 - Moved by Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Carried

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard)

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE FOUNDATION

February 15, 2022

WITNESSES

Veterans Legal Assistance Foundation

Peter Stoffer, Board Member

Sandra Goodwin, Executive Director

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Correspondence:

Acknowledgment of the letter sent to the federal Minister of Veterans Affairs:

- The Chair followed up with the committee regarding the letter MLA Ben Jessome requested be sent to Minister MacAulay about updates on the progress of the pilot support groups for CAF members and veterans of sexual misconduct during their service. The letter was sent on January 26th, 2022.

Acknowledgment of a request made by a witness to appear before the next committee meeting virtually:

- The witness, Colonel Stéphane Boucher, requested to appear before the committee virtually.

The committee discussed meeting in person and allowing for a hybrid model for virtual witnesses:

- That the rest of the committee meetings continue to take place in person while allowing witnesses to appear virtually, encouraging the hybrid model.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard)

LEGION CAPITAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

March 22, 2022

WITNESSES

Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage

Bill Greenlaw, Executive Director, Community, Sports and Recreation

Nancy Sheppard, Community Engagement

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions:

The committee discussed rescheduling the following committee meeting based on witness availability:

- That the next meeting be rescheduled in accordance with witness availability
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Carried

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested by the committee and has been received from the Department of Communities, Cultures, Tourism and Heritage:

- MLA John A. MacDonald requested a copy of the organization's last yearly report and guidelines pertaining to Legions and their assistance programs.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard)

**TRANSITION FROM ACTIVE SERVICE TO VETERAN AND HOMELESSNESS
PREVENTION**

May 19, 2022

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Tracey Taweel, Deputy Minister

Joy Knight, Executive Director, Employment Supports and Income Assistance

Halifax Regional Municipality – Emergency Management

Erica Fleck, Assistant Chief

Veterans Emergency Transition Services Canada

Debbie Lowther, Chair and CEO Co-founder

Royal Canadian Legion – Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command

Valerie Mitchell-Veinotte, Executive Director

Ken George, Service Officer

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Minister MacAulay's response to the letter sent by the Chair on January 18th requesting an update on the scope and progress of the initiative to pilot support groups for CAF members and Veterans of sexual misconduct during their service was tabled via motion.

Discussion on the acceptance of the Last Post Fund as a topic during Agenda-Setting.

DOCUMENTATION

No documents/information were requested.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard)

SEAMLESS CANADA: OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION

June 21, 2022

WITNESSES

Seamless Canada:

Col. Stéphane Boucher, Director Personnel Strategy, Director General Military Personnel
Laurie Ogilvie, Vice President Military Family Services

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Agenda-Setting:

Agenda-setting was held. The committee agreed to the following topics as put forward by motion:

- Mental Health Support for Veterans and their families
- Veterans and Families: Importance of Community and Peer Support
- Update on Seamless Canada Agreement
- Impacts on Veterans and Military Families amidst a Cost-of-Living Crisis
- Military Transition into Skilled Trades
- Last Post Fund

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested by the committee and has been received from Seamless Canada:

- MLA Ben Jessome requested a copy of the organization's terms of reference.
- MLA Ben Jessome requested an identified list of high-priority professions with transitional issues.
- MLA John A. MacDonald requested a copy of the witness' opening remarks.
- The Committee was given a link to a research study pertaining to a question.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

[Nova Scotia Legislature - Hansard Transcript \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/hansard)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – MOTIONS

The following is a list of motions introduced by the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs:

November 16, 2021

Topic and presenter organization were discussed:

- That the government get three topics, the official opposition get two topics, and the third party get one topic or emergency topics per six meeting rotation. That the topics be organized as follows: government, the official opposition, government, third party, government, the official opposition; with additional flexibility for the Chair and Committee Staff bearing in mind witness availability.
 - Moved by Tom Taggart, MLA
 - Amended by Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Carried

An agenda-setting was held. The committee agreed to the following topics as put forward by motion:

- Services Provided by the Foundation (LEAF)
- Updates on Current Affairs, Funds and Services (Royal Canadian Legion -Nunavut/NS Branch)
- Legal Capitol Assistance Program
- Transition from Active Service to Veteran and Homelessness Prevention
- Seamless Canada: Overview of the Organization
- Women and Gender Diverse Veterans Issues

See note in meeting portion of report above

December 14, 2021

The committee discussed renaming one of the PC suggested topics and replacing the witness:

- That the topic name be changed from “Legal Capital Assistance Program” to “Legion Capital Assistance Program” and have the Director of Communities Nova Scotia Natasha Jackson appear before the committee to speak on this topic.
 - Move by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Carried

January 18, 2022

The committee discussed rescheduling the March meeting date to coincide with ‘March Break’:

- That the meeting be rescheduled from the 15th of March to the 22nd.
 - Moved by Larry Harrison, MLA
 - Carried

The committee discussed maintaining virtual meetings in accordance with public health guidelines:

- That the committee remains virtual until Public Health Officials suggest otherwise.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Carried

The committee discussed sending a letter to the Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs:

- That the Chair, with the help of the committee clerk, draft and send a letter to the Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs requesting updates on the progress of the pilot support groups for CAF members and veterans of sexual misconduct during their service.
 - Moved by Ben Jessome, MLA
 - Carried
 - Request for information was received.

February 15, 2022

The committee discussed meeting in person and allowing for a hybrid model for virtual witnesses:

- That the rest of the committee meetings continue to take place in person while allowing witnesses to appear virtually, encouraging the hybrid model.
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA

March 22, 2022

The committee discussed rescheduling the following committee meeting based on witness availability:

- That the next meeting be rescheduled in accordance with witness availability
 - Moved by Nolan Young, MLA
 - Carried

June 21, 2022

Agenda-setting was held. The committee agreed to the following topics as put forward by motion:

- Mental Health Support for Veterans and their families

- Veterans and Families: Importance of Community and Peer Support
- Update on Seamless Canada Agreement
- Impacts on Veterans and Military Families amidst a Cost-of-Living Crisis
- Military Transition into Skilled Trades
- Last Post Fund

APPENDIX B – DOCUMENTATION

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

March 22, 2022

The following information was requested by the committee and has been received from the Department of Communities, Cultures, Tourism and Heritage:

- MLA John A. MacDonald requested a copy of the organization's last yearly report and guidelines pertaining to Legions and their assistance programs.

June 21, 2022

The following information was requested by the committee and has been received from Seamless Canada:

- MLA Ben Jessome requested a copy of the organization's terms of reference.
- MLA Ben Jessome requested an identified list of high-priority professions with transitional issues.
- MLA John A. MacDonald request a copy of the witness' opening remarks.
- The Committee was a offered a link to a research study pertaining to a question.

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