

Response to Applicant - Full Disclosure

March 3, 2020

40 (1)



Dear



40 (1)

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (LAS 003 2020)

On February 26, 2020, The Labrador Affairs Secretariat received your request for access to the following records:

“Any and all briefing notes, hot topic updates, information notes, decision notes, question period notes, key messages, etc for the Spring sitting of the legislature by/for the Minister, and/or Deputy Minister and/or Director of Communications.”

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Deputy Minister responsible for Labrador Affairs Secretariat to provide access to the requested information.

In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed.

Please be advised that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the processing of your access request, as set out in section 42 of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act). A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.

The address and contact information of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John's, NL. A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please contact me by telephone at (709) 896-1780 or by email at chrisgmyrden@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,



Chris Myrden
ATIPP Coordinator

Key Messages
Labrador Affairs Secretariat
February 24, 2020

ISSUE: Elimination of Executive Director position in Labrador West

The Provincial Government confirmed in early January the elimination of the Executive Director position in Labrador West with the Labrador Affairs Secretariat. Labrador West MHA Jordan Brown and community leaders in Labrador West criticized Government for the decision and said the office and the position provided a valuable and necessary service. They called on Government to reinstate the office and position.

ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS:

Why did the Provincial Government eliminate the Executive Director position with the Labrador Affairs Secretariat in Labrador West?

What is the status of the Deputy Minister position for the Labrador Affairs Secretariat?

KEY MESSAGES:

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat realigned its resources to address current challenges and determined the position of Executive Director based in Labrador West was no longer required.

Since the position was created in 2012, the economy experienced a downturn particularly with the closure of the Wabush mine and decreasing ore prices. In 2018, the current administration released its Mining 2030 Plan as part of The Way Forward to help stimulate the Province's mining sector.

The economy of the region has recovered with the reopening in 2019 of the Wabush mine, now operated by Tacora Resources, and other developments in the region.

SECONDARY MESSAGES:

- The Labrador Affairs Secretariat is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of provincial policies and programs respecting Labrador issues.
- There are 10 employees located in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay office. They include the Deputy Minister, Secretary to the Deputy Minister, Director – Communications, Director – Labrador Affairs, Four Senior Analysts, Clerk Typist III, and Trail Inspector (Seasonal)
- The Deputy Minister position for the Labrador Affairs Secretariat, which was created by the current administration, is presently vacant. The Deputy Minister position will be filled and it will remain in place in Labrador.

**QP Issue Note
Labrador Affairs Secretariat
February 24, 2020**

ISSUE: Transient Individuals in Happy Valley-Goose Bay

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay appealed to the Provincial Government earlier this year for assistance in dealing with problems caused by transient individuals in the community. Senior officials of the Provincial Government met with the Town's management and elected officials in July and agreed to jointly proceed with the establishment of a working group to explore ways to address issues which were being experienced in the community.

ANTICIPATED QUESTION:

What was the Provincial Government's response to the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay's call for help to deal with the transient population issue?

KEY MESSAGES:

The Provincial Government and the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay are leading a Senior Officials Working Group to explore ways of addressing issues arising from actions associated with transient individuals.

The group's objective is to identify available supports in the community and highlight the issues that support the safety and well-being of the transient population.

The issue of transient individuals represents a complex problem that ultimately requires the collective involvement of numerous stakeholders, including various levels of government, organizations, citizens and other entities.

SECONDARY MESSAGES:

- The Senior Officials Working Group is co-chaired by the Town Manager, Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and a senior official of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat.
- The Senior Officials Working Group is comprised of representatives from Indigenous Governments and Organizations, the Salvation Army, several Government departments and agencies, Labrador-Grenfell Health, and the RCMP.
- The group held its first meeting on September 26. Participants expressed support for the positive approach and exchanged information and feedback. A terms of reference is being considered for the working group and will be reviewed at a follow-up meeting in the coming weeks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has experienced an increase in both homeless and transient populations in recent years.
- Homelessness is defined as lacking a permanent place of residence, while transient individuals spend short periods of time in a community and typically have permanent addresses elsewhere.
- The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay wrote to Justice and Public Safety Minister Andrew Parsons in June to request a meeting to discuss problems associated with transient individuals. The Town issued a follow-up news release which called on the Provincial Government to “provide adequate resources to address the concerns related to the transient population in the community.”
- In a subsequent interview with CBC’s Labrador Morning show, Mayor Andersen called on Premier Dwight Ball, as Minister of Labrador Affairs, to meet and discuss the transient issue in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.
- Following the death of a Nain woman in a wooded area last November, the Nunatsiavut Government questioned the manner in which the RCMP handled the investigation into the incident and called on the Provincial Government launch an independent police investigation.
- The media reported that the woman was homeless. The RCMP stated the death was not suspicious and asked for the public’s assistance to provide information about the incident.
- The Nunatsiavut Government questioned whether the RCMP had learned anything from the national inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, which they said denounced “decades of police indifference and systemic racism and called for fundamental policing reforms.”
- Last month, police reported that the body of a Natuashish woman was found on a trail frequented by transient individuals. The media is reporting the woman was homeless. The RCMP hasn’t released the cause of death.
- A friend of the deceased woman rallied help from the community to donate sleeping bags, blankets and winter clothing. The donations have been passed out to transient and homeless individuals.
- In a media interview, the individual called on residents of Happy Valley-Goose Bay to provide shelter to people who require help, and urged the community to call 911 if they see someone in distress.
- A Happy Valley-Goose Bay resident, who said she was a friend of the deceased woman, questioned why the Housing Hub homeless shelter in the town maintained a policy of refusing shelter for individuals who were deemed to be intoxicated.
- The Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition has been lobbying the Province to fund an outreach coordinator to assist homeless and transient individuals during the day, and it is seeking additional funding from the Province to extend the hours of operation of the facility during the day.