

**All Party Committee on Basic Income**

Meeting #7 Minutes – May 26, 2023

9:30am – 11:30 am

West Block, Confederation Building

**In attendance:**

Hon. John Abbott, Minister, Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD), Chair

Hon. Bernard Davis, Minister, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Jim Dinn, MHA, St. John's Centre

Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA, Placentia-St. Mary's

Craig Pardy, MHA, Bonavista

Scott Reid, MHA, St. George's-Humber

Aisling Gogan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Prevention and Early Intervention, CSSD

Scott Fleming, Policy Analyst, Third Party Caucus

Bradley George, Executive Assistant, CSSD

Renee Ryan, Director, Social and Economic Well-Being, CSSD

**Guests:**

NLHC Community Centre Executive Directors

**In person:**

- Jim Crockwell, MacMorran
- Bonnie James, Buckmaster Circle
- Enid Pendagast, Froude Avenue
- Lilly Lush, Rabbittown

**Via Zoom:**

- Darrell Jackman, Smallwood Crescent
- Mike Kearley, Vine Place
- Gail Thorne, Exploits

**Agenda Items:**

**1. Discussion with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation Community Centre Executive Directors**

- The Chair gave a brief overview of the purpose and work of the Committee. He then welcomed comments on a basic income approach, as well as feedback on how the committee can best engage people with lived / living experience.
- EDs spoke about the needs they are seeing with the individuals and families they work with. Highlighted issues:
  - The increased cost of living has made it even more difficult for people to make ends meet and is particularly impacting ability of afford food.
  - Lack of dental care has a significant impact on well-being and employment.
  - Both dental and vision care are out of reach for many.
  - Low Income Support rates that have not kept pace with cost of living increases.
  - The lack of coordination of programs and supports makes it difficult for individuals to access the benefits they need, when they need them. Programs and benefits across Departments and levels of Government need to be coordinated.
  - Importance of government communicating with community partners both for government to ensure an accurate picture of how programs and services

are working and for community partners to understand government programs so they can best support clients.

- Particular challenges with supporting families that are struggling and may be involved with child protection services were highlighted – specifically that privacy means communication only goes one way and this at times undermines the ability of community centre staff to best support children and families and provide preventative supports.
- People on Income Support find it extremely difficult to leave the program because of the benefits associated with the program (particularly NLPDP) and the risk of challenges getting back on income support if they leave for work makes work risky.
- Programs need to be “loophole proof” and focused on those who really need them.
- The lack of affordable transportation makes it difficult for people to access services and work.
- It is difficult for people with no fixed address to access necessary services and benefits.
- There was a discussion on the importance of hearing directly from people with lived experience. Executive Directors shared that based on their experience, people with lived experience would appreciate being heard first-hand. Executive directors indicated they would be pleased to help arrange sessions with the committee.
- Committee members thanked the guests for their valued input, for agreeing to help the committee connect with people with lived experience and for their ongoing commitment to supporting individuals and families.
- CSSD staff will work with EDs to arrange consultation sessions in the coming weeks.

Guests left.

## **2. Continued Discussion about Consultations**

- Committee members discussed remaining consultation, including:
  - arranging regional lived experience consultations, including in Labrador;
  - contacting Indigenous leads to see if they have any feedback beyond what was provided during the Social Well-Being Engagement process/ if they would like to discuss Basic Income with the committee;
  - similarly, contacting the Disability Network to see if members would like to provide specific feedback beyond what was provided during the Social Well-Being Engagement process; and
  - Contacting the NL Federation of Labour and Employers’ Council to seek input.
- CSSD staff will draft materials, including letters described above, for the committee’s consideration.

## **3. Approval of minutes from May 19, 2023**

- Minutes were approved as presented and will be posted online.

## **4. Updates:**

- The letter to Minister Karina Gould that all members signed was sent to Minister Gould and a copy of the signed letter was emailed to all members.

**5. Next Steps and Scheduling of next meeting**

- CSSD staff will be back in touch with the committee with a proposed plan for engagement activities discussed at this meeting.
- Once lived experience sessions are planned, the next regular meeting will be scheduled.

Renee Ryan, Recorder

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