

The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

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More Support for Income Assistance Clients

Nova Scotians living on low incomes will get more financial support in 2020. Starting Jan. 1, part two of the Standard Household Rate will be implemented, increasing the amounts people on income assistance receive and making the process simpler.

The Standard Household Rate replaces the Personal Allowance and Shelter Allowance, which currently provide clients with money for housing and basic needs. Some clients do not receive the maximum amount because portions of the assistance are based on actual expenses. Under the new standard rate, all clients' assistance will be raised to the maximum allowable. The amounts under the new standard rate will still differ between clients, based on living situation and family size.

The new rate will also have an additional increase of two per cent or five per cent for all clients. Single clients who own or rent, and, are disabled, fleeing an abusive situation, have a chronic mental, cognitive, or physical condition that limits participation in employment services, are 55 years of age or over or are youth aged 16-18, will see a five per cent increase. All others will get a two per cent increase. The increase will be reflected on Dec. 27 payments. More information on the Poverty Reduction Credit can be found at: <https://novascotia.ca/coms/noteworthy/PovertyReductionCredit.html>

Public Sector to expand accessibility

Nova Scotia municipalities, post-secondary institutions and other public sector bodies will address barriers and improve access for people with disabilities. Beginning April 1, 2020, municipalities, villages, universities, the Nova Scotia Community College and provincial libraries will be designated as public sector bodies under the Accessibility Act. This will require them to establish accessibility advisory committees and prepare and implement plans on how they will meet accessibility standards once they are developed. Additional organizations will be designated beginning April 1, 2021. These include Regional Centres for Education and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK Health Centre.

New agreements with Doctors

New agreements with Doctors Nova Scotia which expire on March 31, 2023 will invest \$135 million more in health care over the next four years, making doctors' compensation more competitive and improving access to care for patients. Under these new agreements, family, emergency and anesthesia doctors will become the top paid in Atlantic Canada, with doctors in other key specialties, including obstetrics/gynecology and psychiatry, very close to the top.

Overall funding will help address some of the most critical needs in the system, including access to primary care and mental health. Highlights include: \$9 million to create new specialist positions to address areas of need; \$2.5 million to double the incentive to attract and retain specialists in rural areas; \$6.5 million to increase hourly rates for emergency department doctors to make compensation competitive and help with recruitment to ensure coverage when Nova Scotians need it; \$4.8 million more (a 38 per cent increase) for hourly rates for psychiatrists in rural regions to improve access to mental health services in rural Nova Scotia; \$11.1 million to increase certain office visit fees, such as geriatric, well baby and prenatal care; \$2.7 million (up to a 70 per cent increase in rates) for doctors who provide in-patient care in larger community hospitals; this will ensure around-the-clock care for all patients, with or without a family doctor, while in hospital; \$7.3 million for a new blended funding model to encourage family doctors to take on more patients, improving access to care and \$2.5 million to strengthen maternity services across the province.

Film funding announcements

NSBI has announced approved productions for funding through the Nova Scotia Film and Television Production Incentive Fund including: Feature film, 8:37 Rebirth, produced by Rebirth Films Incorporated, has been approved for a funding commitment of \$264,765 based on an eligible Nova Scotia expenditure of \$854,083. Television movie, Untitled Chris Watts Story, produced by Interrogation Pictures Inc., has been approved for a funding commitment of \$691,569 based on an eligible Nova Scotia expenditure of \$2,609,693. Documentary television series produced for APTN, Merchants of the Wild - Season 2, produced by Little Bear Big Wolf Pictures and Merchants of the Wild 2 NS Corp., has been approved for a funding commitment of \$31,554 based on an eligible Nova Scotia expenditure of \$121,360. During the series, six Indigenous adventurers embark on the journey of a lifetime, as they spend 25 days on the land, paddling birch bark canoes through the Mi'kmaq territory, Unama'ki (Land of Fog), also known as Cape Breton.

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Code of Conduct in January?

By Maurice Rees

Colchester council is expected to formally adopt the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) version of a Code of Conduct at its January meeting. The matter came to a head at the December 12th committee meeting when Tom Taggart expressed his displeasure at recent activity concerning Colchester's adoption of a Code of Conduct.

At council's committee meeting in November council requested a letter be sent to Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) requesting the date when NSFM's suggested outline of a Code of conduct was sent to the Department of Municipalities.

At that time Taggart asked for the matter come back to council for its December committee meeting, because he would not be attending the November council meeting on November 28th.

During council's committee meeting on December 12th Taggart raised concern the matter was not on the agenda until he persisted about the lack of reporting from staff on decisions taken at the November committee meeting. He started by explaining it was not handled the way he understood and NSFM had not replied indicating the forwarding date. The matter became a point of contention because the Municipal Affairs minister told NSFM delegates at its AGM he was disap-

pointed the federation had not provided an outline of a template as requested. NSFM delegates were astonished because their version had been sent to the Department early in April.

Taggart was upset because NSFM had not corrected the minister's statement at the AGM and the matter seemed to be stalled, but he was insisting he wanted a Code of Conduct implemented soon. He stated if council was not prepared to adopt a code, he would be taking action of at least clear his name.

When Code of Conduct was a hot topic almost two

years ago council had prepared a Code of Conduct template but deferred adoption in favour of considering the version NSFM was preparing. In October Mayor Blair brought to council's attention Municipal Affairs had requested all municipalities were to adopt a code and it was still outstanding.

On motion by Councillor Masters council committee agreed to have the matter brought back to council in January to adopt the NSFM version. He stated it could be revised later, but "At least we will have a Code of Conduct".

RECC Stairs Study to Cost \$100,000

By Maurice Rees

Remediation of the stairs at the RECC will be the focus of a \$100,000 consultant project by CBCL Engineering Ltd. The matter was approved on motions by Councillor Boutillier and Mayor Blair when council committee reconvened into

open session following a fifteen minute "in-camera" session on November 14th.

Council Committee recommended to Council it authorize the Director of Public Works, Paul Smith as Project Manager, and the Solicitor, to negotiate with CBCL to fur-

ther refine the project proposal. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Shoreline Journal is continuing its research to determine if the \$100,000 consultant project is connected to or as a result of a legal action winding through the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia since November 2015, when an action was commenced for injury and damages sustained from a fall on the stairs while attending a hockey game on February 7, 2015.

Climate Change Government's Focus

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Agriculture, will be viewed through a climate change lens. The Prime Minister met with FCM Executive, I am not currently on the exec as, Atlantic Caucus Chair rotates through the four Atlantic caucuses and NFDL is the current member, but the message was the same Climate.

As Vice Chair of the Rural Forum I did get the opportunity to meet with Agriculture Minister Bibeau. I thought it was a good meeting, The Minister spoke about, her belief there is tremendous potential for growth in Canadian Agriculture and Agri Food. I advised that Colchester was home to Dalhousie Agriculture University, Perenia Agri-Food research facility as well as, the value of Agriculture to Colchester and the province. I requested should she be in the vicinity of Colchester that she take the time and I would arrange for tours of our growing farms.

I also had the opportunity to chair a round table discussion with the Rural Forum and Minister of Rural Economic Development, Minister Maryam Monsef. I was very pleased to see the passion she showed when discussing potential Rural Economic Development. By far the vast majority of questions and

comments during the round table were about Rural Broadband and the challenges faced, in attracting any rural development or even retaining residents without an acceptable level of broadband service.

When the meeting was over, I had the opportunity to speak privately with Minister and her Deputy, so I took advantage to brief and Promote our upcoming World UNESCO cliffs of Fundy Geopark and its potential for Rural Economic Development.

FCM has asked that we make contact with our local MP's especially new ones and brief them on FCM and the critical role we play in support of Municipalities across Canada. I have spoken with our New MP, Lenore Zann, and have a tentative meeting set for the week of December 16. I will take advantage of that meeting to promote Local Challenges as well as National Municipal Priorities. Project # 1 will be to enlist Ms Zann's support to invite Minister of Rural Economic Development to tour Cliffs of Fundy World Geo Park sites.

That's it for FCM for now. Next meeting will be in March **Tom Taggart is municipal councillor for Colchester District 10 and one of four Nova Scotians on the national board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.**

The Shoreline Journal

2020 90 & 90+ BIRTHDAY PARTY

We wish to thank all those who attended the 2019 Annual 90 & 90+ Birthday party. We hope you had a good time.

We are planning this year's party and need your help. I ask you to think about friends, relatives and neighbours from our coverage area, who will be turning 90 in 2020. Let's not wait until next year to get them registered.

If you know of someone who turns 90 in 2020, or is over 90 and never been invited, please pre-register them by sending name, mailing address, phone and date of birth so we can invite them to the party being held in Economy on May 9, 2020.

Please send to:

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