

**Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (PACAS)  
West Block Confederation Building, St. John's  
June 20 & 21, 2016**

**Meeting Notes**

**In Attendance:**

PACAS

Leo Bonnell – Chair (Clareville)	Maisie Clark (Campbellton)
Cecilia Hickey (Grand Falls-Windsor)	Shirley Boone (Mount Pearl)
Wayde Rowsell (St. Lawrence)	Linda Oldford (Gander)
Winston Childs (Pasadena)	Josephine Waddleton (Trepassey)
Damien Collier (Goulds)	Joan Hutchings (Mobile)
Patricia Burton (Paradise) <i>June 21 only</i>	Suzanne Brake and Pamela Dawe –
Maggie Chambers (Flower's Cove)	SWSD
Shirley Letto (L'Anse au Clair)	

Inter-departmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors (June 20 p.m. session):

Jenny Rocket, OPE	Lisa Ivey, Finance
Cindy Christopher, AES	Natalie Moody ERHA
Mimie Carroll CRHA	

**Regrets**

Inter-departmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors:

Claire Bustin, LAAO	Kim White, LGRHA
Stephen Pretty NLH	Pam Thomas JPS
Renee Luedee Warren WRHA	Wayne Comeau BTCR

June 20

**1.0 Welcome** – Leo Bonnell, Chair

**2.0 Review of Notes: February 8, 2016** – Notes approved as read.

**3.0 Business Arising**

**3.1 Collective Memories Project** – The initiative is moving forward. A planned news release will announce the project and solicit community partners to help make existing oral history collections more accessible to the public, and can help communities start up new oral history projects to interview local seniors. The research and new

recordings collected during this project will form part of a permanent collection with MUN's Digital Archives Initiative. Government has provided \$50,000 to the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador to undertake this work.

**3.2 Flu and Shingles Vaccinations Fact Sheets** – The development of age-friendly facts sheet on vaccinations, housing options, etc. is ongoing. When completed the facts sheet will be posted online, emailed via SWSD's list serve and distributed through the Seniors Resource Centre's Information and Referral System.

**3.3 2015-16 Activity Report** – The 2015-16 annual report for PACAS is being drafted and will be circulated for review shortly.

## **4.0 Updates**

**4.1 Seniors of Distinction Awards** – The 2016 recipients were announced on June 17, 2016. This year's recipients are Gerald Andrews (Carbonear), Alice Blundon (Carbonear), Russ Murphy (Marystown), David Rex (Stephenville) and Reg White (Mount Pearl). The awards ceremony will be in October.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2016/swsd/0617n01.aspx>

**4.2 FPT Activities** – The June 2016 meeting has been deferred to fall 2016 in BC. The Minister of SWSD will present on the outcomes of the Social Innovation Social Isolation Working Group. Activities of working groups (Caregiver Readiness & Social Isolation) are progressing. Some themes which may be considered for 2016-17 work include low income seniors, elder abuse, and social isolation.

## **5.0 Low Income Seniors in NL – Presentation, Poverty Reduction Strategy**

Presentation focused on measures and definitions of low income with emphasis on the NL Market Basket Measure.

ACTION: Council agreed that the presentation was very informative but expressed concern that the income facts/statistics about seniors were still

unclear. SWSD will research income data about precisely what are the incomes and numbers of seniors in various age groups.

## **6.0 Facts Sheets: Levy, Supplement and Benefits – Presentation, SWSD**

SWSD explained/clarified the various benefits, etc. and impacts on seniors. Emphasis was on the new Temporary Deficit Reduction Levy and NL Income Supplement.

### Joint meeting PACAS and Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors (IWG)

## **7.0 Impact of Budget 2016 on Seniors**

- **Budget 2016 - Federal** – The main areas of discussion:
  - Old Age Security (OAS)/Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
    - GIS was increased so eligible single seniors with incomes below \$4,600 will receive an additional \$947 yearly; the benefit phases out as income rises toward \$8,400.
    - the age of eligibility for OAS reverts back to age 65.
  - Housing and Homelessness
    - an investment of \$2.3B over two years, where most will go to provinces and territories (PTs) to identify communities in greatest need of affordable housing.
    - consultation process to develop a National Housing Strategy.
    - \$200.7M over two years under the Affordable Housing initiative to support construction, repair and adaption of affordable housing for seniors.
    - additional \$111.8M over 2 years to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy to support communities to prevent and reduce homelessness
  - Disabled Veterans/Veterans
    - \$5.6B over 6 years to increase disability awards for veterans and to enhance other benefits including indexing some benefits to inflation.
    - increase in the Earnings Loss Benefit from 75% income replacement to 90% of gross pre-release military salary for veterans in rehabilitation and vocational programs through Veterans Affairs

Canada, or who have injuries preventing them from employment. Indexing no longer be capped at 2% and the calculation of the minimum benefit will be based on a senior private's salary instead of a basic corporal's salary.

- Nine veteran services offices will be reopened and a 10th office added. More case workers will be hired to improve front-line services.

- **Budget 2016 - Provincial** – The main areas of discussion:

- Office of the Seniors' Advocate
- Two-hour per day cap on homemaking hours subsidized under the Home Support Program.
- Adult Dental Program – Discontinued for clients using the Access and 65+ Programs
- Removal of OTC drugs on NL Prescription Drug Program and limits to diabetic test strips
- Fees increases and changing ferry schedules and ferry fees – noting that seniors were exempt for motor vehicle & license increases.
- Gas and car insurance tax increases

- **Departmental/Agency Updates**

Discussion about how new initiatives and changes to existing initiatives announced in federal and provincial budgets may potentially positively and negatively affect seniors. Impacts may be direct, such as increases to HST, creation of new incentives, etc., or indirect, such as financial stress maybe contributing to health issues, how increases to taxes on gas and insurance might impact volunteerism, etc.

**8.0 Key and Emerging Issues (Roundtable)** - A number of emerging issues were discussed with a major focus continuing to be on budgetary impacts. Regionalization was again brought up as an area needing further exploration. Members expressed concern about the increasing numbers of scams, frauds, etc. targeting seniors (a presentation on this issue is on June 21 agenda) and the cost of living in privately run personal care homes. The idea of a Power of Attorney Registry was discussed, as well as the difference between regions of wait times for medical results, procedures,

etc. For information on wait times, visit

[http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/wait\\_times/index.html](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/wait_times/index.html)

The Chair noted the great work of the NL 50+ Federation and its membership in reaching seniors throughout NL and addressing their needs.

### June 21

This was National Aboriginal Day and the Chair invited Linda Oldford to open the session by reading a message from Chief Brendan Mitchell, Qualipu First Nations.

**9.0 Impact of Budget 2016 on Seniors in NL – Discussion** – A debrief of the previous day’s budget discussion/roundtable with the IWG.

**10.0 Healthy Eating in NL – Presentation, Healthy Living Division, SWSD**

The main purpose of this session was for Council to give input on the *Everybody Eats* discussion. The *Everybody Eats* Summary and Discussion Guide – given to members prior to the session - offers information about food security in NL and is meant to get people thinking about food security and the food system in our province.

[http://static1.squarespace.com/static/54d9128be4b0de7874ec9a82/t/56572239e4b0b807738c5ad0/1448550969272/Everybody+Eats\\_NL+Discussion+Paper+2015.pdf](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/54d9128be4b0de7874ec9a82/t/56572239e4b0b807738c5ad0/1448550969272/Everybody+Eats_NL+Discussion+Paper+2015.pdf)

**11.0 Discussion with Minister Gambin- Walsh** – The Minister and SWSD Deputy Minister, Brent Meade, joined Council for a portion of the morning session. The Minister expressed her appreciation for Council’s advice on aging and seniors issues. Budget 2016 and its potential impacts on seniors was a major focus of the discussion. As well, there was some discussion of the establishment of the Office of the Seniors’ Advocate. Council reiterated its support for a Senior’s Advocate and interest in learning more as the work progresses.

## **12.0 Seniors and Fraud/Financial Exploitation – Presentation, Service NL**

Focus of the presentation was to help to identify and deal with fraud and exploitive situations.

## **13.0 Age-friendly Updates**

**13.1** Age Friendly NL Program

**13.2** Age Friendly Transportation Pilot

**13.3** Community Healthy Living Grants

In the interest of time, SWSD will compile updates and email to members.

## **13.0 Other Business**

### **Wrap-up and Expense Claims**

Leo Bonnell thanked members for their work and wished them safe travels home. Next meeting is scheduled tentatively for October 4 & 5, 2016 (Seniors of Distinction Awards October 4 @ 10:30 a.m.)

**Prepared By:** P. Dawe/S. Brake

**Approved by:** Leo Bonnell, Chair, PACAS

**Date:** July 8, 2016