



Citizens' Representative's Message

Regional Service Boards (RSBs) have an important and growing impact on the citizens they service. By virtue of the *Regional Services Board Act, 2012*, RSBs have authority over:

- the construction and operation of regional water supply systems;
- regional sewage disposal systems;
- regional storm drainage systems;
- regional waste management systems and including a facility designated in the regulations as a regional facility;
- the provision of regional police services, ambulance services, animal and dog control, and other similar services within a region;
- the operation of a regional public transportation system;
- the determination and change of street and road names in a region so as to avoid a duplication of those names within a region;
- the provision of regional recreational facilities;
- the provision of regional fire protection services;
- the provision of other facilities or services of a regional nature; and
- the charging of fees.

Over the past number of years, we have received concerns from citizens about certain administrative actions of the RSBs. We were unable to investigate these concerns because the RSBs were not scheduled to our Act and therefore we had no legal right to proceed. This changed on March 22, 2017, when Cabinet amended the schedule to our Act to include RSBs. We can, and have recently, accepted and settled a number of inquiries and complaints against RSBs.

Like all of our ombudsman work, it is important that our oversight of the RSBs is limited to the bureaucratic actions of those entities and not the legislation which established them. Citizens with concerns about their interaction with RSBs are invited to contact our Office.



SEE Something?
SAY Something!



Public servants come from a variety of educational backgrounds, but at the OCR we like to think all have the common sense to speak up when something in their workplace doesn't seem right. Professional misconduct, bullying, misappropriation, crime, and threats to public safety are all issues that have no place in the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Service. As the lead investigative agency for wrongdoing in the Public Service, the OCR encourages anyone who is concerned that a wrongdoing has occurred or is ongoing, to visit the "whistleblower" section of our website and/or contact the OCR in confidence. Your identity is protected to the fullest extent possible, and it is an offence under the *Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act* to enact reprisals against anyone who seeks advice or discloses wrongdoing in the public interest.

We have numerous presentations available for public servants and the general public, ranging from public interest disclosure, to our overall mandate, to navigating difficult complaints. Presentations are available by calling (709) 729-7647 or via email at citrep@gov.nl.ca.



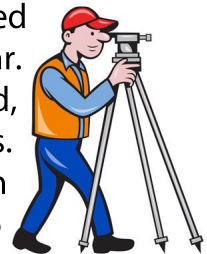
Seeking Fairness

A woman who was owed a considerable sum of money by her ex-spouse contacted the OCR after a Support Enforcement Agency case manager advised her that a cheque they had received for \$1600 could not be released because they had no updated information on her son. The OCR opened a dialogue with the agency, pointing out that it had been advised of the son's address by the university he was attending. Regardless, the amount still could not be released for spousal arrears. Following a discussion of the issue the Director agreed that the money could be released and the woman received the money she was owed.



Finding Solutions

A citizen contacted us about an alleged incorrect address on a deed contained in the Registry in St. John's, and blamed Service NL for the mistake. Inquiring with Service NL, we discovered the deed contained information entered by a registered Land Surveyor and, logically, could not be altered arbitrarily by the Registrar. A viable option existed, however, for both parties. With minor effort an addendum was attached to the deed, reflecting the proper address.



Questions? Comments?

Is your department, agency or community group interested in learning more about the OCR, its services and processes? Do you have a suggestion or question to be addressed in a future edition of *Insights*? Call us at 1-800-559-0079 or (709) 729-7647, or e-mail citrep@gov.nl.ca.

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