

















*For Immediate Release*

## **Port Alberni Shelter Society Receives Notice of Service Termination from BC Housing.**

Port Alberni, British Columbia  
January 9, 2023

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**Media Contact:**

Myron Jespersen  
Chair, Port Alberni Shelter Society Board  
Email: [s. 22](#)

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**From:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX(Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX (Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Dey, Krysta FIN:EX (Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** RE: For Approval: HOUS Media Request: Port Alberni Shelter Society  
**Sent:** 01/10/2023 17:37:31

I think responsibility is better for comms purposes

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**From:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 10, 2023 9:28 AM  
**To:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX <Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca>  
**Cc:** Dey, Krysta FIN:EX <Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** RE: For Approval: HOUS Media Request: Port Alberni Shelter Society

I don't know. It is a term with legal implications – if it did I guess ok to leave it, but if not, we could suggest responsibility instead?

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**From:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX <[Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 10, 2023 9:26 AM  
**To:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <[Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Dey, Krysta FIN:EX <[Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** RE: For Approval: HOUS Media Request: Port Alberni Shelter Society

Looks good. Duty seems like a strong word. Did that come from the Province's legal team or BC Housing's?

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**From:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <[Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 10, 2023 9:24 AM  
**To:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX <[Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Dey, Krysta FIN:EX <[Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** FW: For Approval: HOUS Media Request: Port Alberni Shelter Society

Hi Sarah – this one re: PASS is from the Ministry, but the response is generally based on the approved messaging that BCH is using (since there is legal action, not a lot to say). I re-ordered the messaging but I think it's ok.

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**From:** Paterson, Travis GCPE:EX <[Travis.Paterson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Travis.Paterson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 10, 2023 9:03 AM  
**To:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <[Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <[Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** For Approval: HOUS Media Request: Port Alberni Shelter Society

Hi Sandy

This one didn't make it to you last night. This reporter also got the Port Alberni response that went out but had asked MLA Osborne for a response, which made its way to our ministry. Not too much we can say however.

For your review.

Thanks

Travis

**Reporter**

**Deadline Monday, January 9, 2023 4:00 PM**

## Request

I've just heard from the Port Alberni Shelter Society that BC Housing is looking to terminate its contracts with the society, effective March 31, 2023. They didn't give a reason as to why, given a clause in the contract that allows either party to do so.

The Shelter Society executives say they're shocked and confused, and thought they were on good terms with BC Housing to provide shelter services to vulnerable people in the community. They say they've worked hard since the 1970s to build relationships with community members and run the building, located at 3939 Bth Ave, as effectively as possible, and they say the residents and employees are happy there.

BC Housing says it plans to find a new operator by mid-March.

The Society says by the end of March around 50 employees could be out of a job. They're asking the public, clients, and employees to write to the Province about this for help.

Could the Province answer a few questions by the end of the day, if possible?

- 1) What is the Ministry's general response to the Shelter Society's pleas for help?
- 2) Is there anything the Province could step in to help find space for the Shelter society to continue to operate?
- 3) Would the employees currently working at the shelter site be able to keep their jobs? If not, could the government help them find new employment?
- 4) I gather the Port Alberni Shelter Society runs the main shelter space in town right now. What else is the Province doing to provide enough shelter opportunities in Port Alberni for vulnerable residents?

## Recommendation **Ministry to issue written response**

The Province has confidence in BC Housing's decision and its process as it oversees a transition to a new operator for the Port Alberni Shelter Society building located at 3939 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. The province trusts BC Housing to ensure a steady transition for the tenants. Staffing decisions will be led by the new operator.

## Background

Port Alberni response currently with MO:

**The Province supports BC Housing in their duty to shelter guests and supportive housing residents, as well as the community of Port Alberni to ensure shelters and supportive housing are appropriately operated and that residents and staff are being supported.**

BC Housing has given Port Alberni Shelter Society (PASS) notice that we are ending the operation contracts for the supportive housing and shelter located at 3939 8th Ave., effective March 31, 2023. **BC Housing staff were in Port Alberni last week to notify residents and shelter guests, and to answer any questions they or staff had.**

BC Housing will be seeking a new operator for the supportive housing and shelter located at 3939 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Over the next few months, we will be working with PASS and partners to ensure that this transition is seamless for residents and clients. **Because this matter is being discussed through legal counsel, we cannot comment further.**

s. 13

A Request for Proposals (RFP) to select an operator will be issued in the coming weeks and will prioritize organizations that can ensure safety for women and vulnerable individuals while also respecting the culture and experiences of local Indigenous Peoples. The RFP will include information about submission eligibility and criteria.

**From:** Will, Meghan OHCS:EX(Meghan.Will@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX (Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca); Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX (Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** RE: For Approval: Media Request – The PEAK – Port Alberni Shelter Society  
**Sent:** 01/05/2023 22:05:15

One addition in red.

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**From:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX <Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 5, 2023 1:32 PM  
**To:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca>; Will, Meghan OHCS:EX <Meghan.Will@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** FW: For Approval: Media Request – The PEAK – Port Alberni Shelter Society

Looks good to me. Meghan, any concerns?

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**From:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <[Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 5, 2023 1:21 PM  
**To:** Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX <[Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** FW: For Approval: Media Request – The PEAK – Port Alberni Shelter Society

Hi Sarah – this response looks OK to me. Any concerns?

I think this should go through Meghan for awareness also. I will be sending up to Teri.

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**From:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <[Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 5, 2023 1:18 PM  
**To:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <[Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <[Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca)>; Suddaby, Clay GCPE:EX <[Clay.Suddaby@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Clay.Suddaby@gov.bc.ca)>; Paterson, Travis GCPE:EX <[Travis.Paterson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Travis.Paterson@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** For Approval: Media Request – The PEAK – Port Alberni Shelter Society

Hello Sandra,  
Two outlets with the same request and one response for both, for your approval please.  
Thanks,  
Tasha

**Reporter:**  
Susie Quinn  
Editor, Alberni Valley News  
[susie.quinn@alberniavalleynews.com](mailto:susie.quinn@alberniavalleynews.com)  
Phone: 250-702-6765 (cell) / 778-421-8061 (direct line)

**Deadline:** 4:30pm

**Request:**

It has come to my attention that BC Housing has terminated the contract it has with Port Alberni Shelter Society for operation of Our Home on 8<sup>th</sup> Shelter. I'd like to speak with someone at BC Housing about next steps. Homelessness is a huge issue in Port Alberni and learning that the shelter might close is going to impact a significant portion of our community.

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**Reporter:**



David Wiwchar  
News Director  
93.3 The PEAK (CJAV-FM)  
[David.Wiwchar@pattisonmedia.com](mailto:David.Wiwchar@pattisonmedia.com)  
Tel: 250.723.2455 Cel: 250.731.4728

**Deadline:** 6 p.m.

**Request:**

Will it be possible to speak with BC Housing representatives at their meeting in Port Alberni today regarding shelter administration?

**Background Information for Ministry:**

On Dec. 30, 2022, BC Housing gave Port Alberni Shelter Society (PASS), the operator of supportive housing and shelter space at 3939 8th Ave. in Port Alberni, written notice to advise that the operation contracts will end on March 31, 2023.

BC Housing has received numerous complaints from clients, community members, First Nations leaders, the Health Authority, and PASS employees regarding the conduct of PASS leadership and operations. Issues raised include allegations of bullying by some members of PASS senior leadership towards PASS staff and residents of the housing and shelters they manage; discrimination; anti-Indigenous racism; and failing to provide trauma and culturally informed care.

In March 2021, BC Housing had an external party complete an operational review of PASS due to concerns. That review resulted in recommendations that PASS was asked to address. Despite BC Housing's ongoing efforts to support the Board in implementing the recommendations, many of them remain unaddressed.

**Suggested Response – BCH to provide a statement:**

BC Housing has a duty to shelter guests and supportive housing residents, as well as the community of Port Alberni to ensure shelters and supportive housing are appropriately operated and that residents and staff are **safe and** supported. We have notified Port Alberni Shelter Society (PASS) that BC Housing will be seeking a new operator for the supportive housing and shelter located at 3939 8th Avenue. Over the next three months, we will be working with front line staff at PASS and partners to ensure that this transition is seamless for residents and clients. Because this matter is being discussed through legal counsel, we cannot comment further.

**From:** Dixon, Alanna FIN:EX(Alanna.Dixon@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Will, Meghan OHCS:EX (Meghan.Will@gov.bc.ca); Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX (Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca); Gurney, Taro OHCS:EX (Taro.Gurney@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** FW: For Approval: BCH IN\_Port Alberni Shelter Society  
**Sent:** 08/29/2022 17:02:48  
**Attachments:** PASS board letter - Aug. 24\_GCPE edits.docx, IN\_PASS Review Update Aug 24 2022\_V2.docx

Hey folks – just following up on this – please let me know of any edits/concerns ASAP – thanks!

**Alanna Dixon**  
250 216-1638

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**From:** Dey, Krysta FIN:EX <Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** August 25, 2022 10:58 AM  
**To:** Will, Meghan OHCS:EX <Meghan.Will@gov.bc.ca>; Petrescu, Sarah OHCS:EX <Sarah.Petrescu@gov.bc.ca>; Gurney, Taro OHCS:EX <Taro.Gurney@gov.bc.ca>  
**Cc:** Dixon, Alanna FIN:EX <Alanna.Dixon@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** FW: For Approval: BCH IN\_Port Alberni Shelter Society

Hi Meghan, Sarah, & Taro,

Could you please review the attached IN and corresponding draft letter and let me know if you have any additional comments/concerns?

I'm hoping it can be ready for Alanna's review when she's back from vacation tomorrow.

Thanks,  
~Krysta

**Krysta Dey**  
Senior Advisor, Engagement and Communications  
Crown Agencies Secretariat | Ministry of Finance  
778-698-2038













**From:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX(Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Collins, Teri OHCS:EX (Teri.Collins@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Ruscheinski, Bonnie OHCS:EX (Bonnie.Ruscheinski@gov.bc.ca); Will, Meghan OHCS:EX (Meghan.Will@gov.bc.ca); Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX (Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** Fwd: For Approval: IN: Port Alberni PASS  
**Sent:** 12/30/2022 19:32:33  
**Attachments:** IN\_Port Alberni\_PASS\_Dec\_29\_22\_V2.docx

Hi Teri - for approval - updated version of the IN re BCH notice to the Port Alberni Shelter Society. This has been reviewed by program area and no concerns. Updated from the version you approved last week with specifics regarding timing.

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**From:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 29, 2022 4:47 PM  
**To:** Maxson, Sandra OHCS:EX <Sandra.Maxson@gov.bc.ca>  
**Cc:** Dey, Krysta FIN:EX <Krysta.Dey@gov.bc.ca>; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** For Approval: IN: Port Alberni PASS

Hi Sandra,  
An issue note for approval. Tomorrow, Dec. 30th, BC Housing will give Port Alberni Shelter Society (PASS), the operator of supportive housing and shelter space at 3939 Ave. in Port Alberni, written notice to advise that the operation contracts will end on March 31, 2023. Notice must be given to PASS no later than Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022. <sup>s. 13</sup>

Thanks,  
Tasha

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Tasha Schollen | Communications Manager  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Housing  
Cell: 250-889-1121

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|--|--|
| <b>ISSUES NOTE</b><br><b>Ministry:</b> Housing<br><b>Date:</b> Dec. 29, 2022<br><b>Minister:</b> Ravi Kahlon | <b>Port Alberni Shelter Society<br/>Issues</b> |
|--|--|

## ISSUE SUMMARY:

On Dec. 30, 2022, BC Housing will give Port Alberni Shelter Society (PASS), the operator of supportive housing and shelter space at 3939 Ave. in Port Alberni, written notice to advise that the operation contracts will end on March 31, 2023. Notice must be given to PASS no later than Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022. BC Housing expects PASS may take legal action it receives notice.

BC Housing has received numerous complaints from clients, community members, First Nations leaders, the Health Authority, and PASS employees regarding the conduct of PASS leadership and operations. Issues raised include allegations of bullying by some members of PASS <sup>s. 22</sup> towards PASS staff and residents of the housing and shelters they manage; discrimination; anti-Indigenous racism; and failing to provide trauma and culturally informed care.

In March 2021, BC Housing had an external party complete an operational review of PASS due to concerns. That review resulted in recommendations that PASS was asked to address.  
<sup>s. 13</sup>

## KEY MESSAGES:

- BC Housing will be seeking a new operator for the supportive housing and shelter located at 3939 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Over the next three months, we will be working with front line staff at PASS and partners to ensure that this transition is seamless for residents and clients.
- BC Housing will be working with PASS as they continue to operate their shelter at 3987 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### ***If asked – why aren't you renewing the contracts?***

- BC Housing has a duty to shelter guests and supportive housing residents, as well as the community of Port Alberni to ensure shelters and supportive housing are appropriately operated and that residents and staff are being supported.
- Because this matter is being discussed through legal counsel, we cannot comment further.

## BACKGROUND:

BC Housing has received numerous complaints about PASS. Allegations include the use of racist language, inappropriate language, and failure to implement trauma-informed processes

that support a healthy and safe environment for staff and residents. There are also governance issues with the Board. Recently, BC Housing learned of similar service delivery issues at the Island Health-funded building PASS operates and that allegations of racism there have resulted in a Human Rights Tribunal complaint being filed.

Recently, the number of complaints BCH has received has increased in number and severity. Some examples are provided below:

- s. 22 BC Housing received a report alleging serious bullying and harassment s. 22, a BC Housing-funded supportive housing building. The deputy director attempted to address this behaviour by encouraging trauma-informed best practices. However, they were not supported s. 13, s. 22
- On Nov. 8, 2022, BC Housing was informed by the City of Port Alberni that bylaw staff and the fire department had identified concerns about a lack of a business license, life safety systems, and occupancy limits during inspections of the Emergency Weather Response (EWR) that PASS was operating at 3978 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. BC Housing contacted the executive director to discuss s. 13, s. 22  
The EWR was closed and moved to another location operated by The Bread of Life Centre.
- On Nov. 18, 2022, BC Housing's regional director, Vancouver Island Regional Operations issued a letter to the PASS Board Chair expressing concerns over site operations, staff conduct and Board governance, and requested a meeting before Dec. 9, 2022. s. 13, s. 22

## Recommended Approach

- s. 14, s. 17
- Notice to end the shelter and supportive housing operational contracts at 3939 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., will be given to PASS on Dec. 30, 2022.
- BCH is prepared to directly manage the building as an interim measure if needed and as a last resort. There are also several potential operators who have capacity and who would deploy quickly.
- BCH will draft an implementation plan that covers:
  - A review of information and data about the service needs of those accessing shelter and supportive housing to be used in the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new operator. s. 13
  - Communications strategy with stakeholders, shelter guests and supportive housing residents is planned. The Minister and MLA Osborne have been briefed.
  - Engaging procurement on development of an RFP for new operator with a goal of posting in early 2023.