

# BEST MUNICIPAL/CIVIC AFFAIRS STORY

**NUNAVUT** **ᑎᓄᓐᓂᓐ**  
**Tenants slam state of public housing in Cambridge Bay**  
**JANE GEORGE**  
 CAMBRIDGE BAY — Picture shoveling snow out of your house every morning just so you can get outside into the bitter cold where even more snow awaits shoveling.  
 Or using your unheated porch as a bedroom because there's no other space to sleep in your overcrowded home.  
 These are among the many disturbing tales generated by the poor state of public housing in the western Nunavut town of Cambridge Bay, which tenants shared at the Oct. 8 annual general meeting of the Cambridge Bay Housing Authority.  
 The many deficiencies cited at the meeting include broken doors and windows, holes in walls, leaky water heaters, frozen sewage systems, poor insulation and mold.  
 One woman described how the four children who live in her overcrowded unit head into her bedroom in the morning to warm up before they get dressed for school — because the rest of the dwelling is too cold.  
 "We asked and asked and asked for repairs," she said at the AGM, held in the Luke

Novalluk community hall — but nothing has been done, she said.  
 Another young man described how his mother lights candles all over their house when the sewage stench inside gets too strong.  
 But the major problem affecting nearly everyone in public housing remains overcrowding, made much worse by a lack of public housing in Cambridge Bay, where there are only 280 units to go around in the community of about 1,700, where the majority of people still live in public housing.  
 A young man stood up at the AGM to talk about how he's now forced to go from house to house to find a place to sleep because he doesn't have a home of his own.  
 He said he didn't understand why he can't move higher up on the list for public housing after a two-year wait — once he was near the top, then he fell to three and now he's at 11 on the list, he said.  
 That would put him out of the running for a space in a new \$4-million, 10-plex new under construction, whose eight two-bedroom and two one-bedroom units, which will be ready in 2015, won't

go far in solving Cambridge Bay's housing crisis.  
 At the AGM, the housing association, which is ridding a deficit of about \$1.5 million so far in 2014 — and recently received yet another new manager, Sandra Mathers — had its own beads to share: unpaid rent and costly tenant damages.  
 "We're still in the hole quite a bit," Mathers said, referring to a \$2 million-debt owed by the housing association to the Nunavut Housing Corp., which gives the association about \$1.3 million a year for public housing.  
 "Virtually all our debt to the NHC is from tenants and former tenants not paying their rent."  
 The accumulated amount owed by tenants for damages stood at \$165,363 in 2013, according to financial statements discussed at the AGM, with another \$45,000 in damages racked up to date in 2014.  
 Fixing holes in walls and broken doors costs a lot, the housing association manager said. That further limits the ability of the housing association to carry out repairs, although live houses did undergo renovations in 2013.  
 During the lengthy ques-

1

**JANE GEORGE**  
*Nunatsiag News*

The human side of a civic affairs issue is nicely illustrated here with real people with real problems. Bravo.

**THE PAGE THREE STORY**  
**Hudson financially hung out to dry: new audit reveals cumulative deficit**  
**James Armstrong**  
 If Hudson were a company, it would be seeking bankruptcy protection. This was the message Mayor Ed Prévost delivered at the November 18 special budget presentation meeting as the donors of attendees sat in stunned silence while representatives from the accounting firm Goudreau Poirier Inc. presented the news.  
 "The numbers are astounding and they go back to before 2003," said the mayor. The deficit for 2013 is \$1,752,509. "I'd like to remind you that we inherited this situation," he added.  
 "We are quite livid about what former administrations did to rape, pillage... steal, your taxes and our tax money. We will be relentless in our pursuit of justice."  
 The Goudreau Poirier auditors were not prepared to offer an opinion on the town's financial situation, only their recommendations. In their presentation, they noted many inaccuracies and errors that could not be reconciled or explained over the last 10 years.  
 "This could impact the interest rates on any loans, going forward," said Prévost. "The reality of it is, that we are broke." He pointed out that he would be meeting with the National Bank on Wednesday morning to inform them of the town's financial situation. "Once they absorb that information, they could shut out our credit margin, which is \$2.5 million, which would then inhibit our ability to pay our employees later than this week," explained the mayor.  
 Part of the problem is the delayed grants from the federal and provincial governments for the water treatment system due to a detailed audit of the project conducted by the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation

territoriale (MAMOT) because of suspected irregularities. The mayor indicated that some of this money would be forthcoming but not all of it.  
 The worst-case scenario as described by the mayor would be for the province to declare trusteeship of the town. "That is not the province's preferred scenario," said Prévost. The financial report was presented to the town council early last week.  
 "We are in crisis management," said the mayor. "What we have done is meet with our MNA, Marie-Claude Nichol and explained the situation, no holds barred." The town has requested that the subsidies for the water treatment system be released and that a representative application for a grant for the line be considered.  
 The mayor also explained that a long-term debt loan for an extended period of ten years is also a possibility. However, that will require special permission from MAMOT. Further financial help will come from the proposed sale of property owned by the town such as the former medical center on Cameron Street. "These will not be

sold at fire-sale prices," said the mayor. During the question period that followed, concerns were raised about the possibility of amalgamation with other municipalities. The mayor assured everyone that council would do everything in its power to avoid that possibility.  
 Your Local Journal spoke with Mayor Robert Grimaudo of neighbouring St. Lazare on the idea of a municipal merger. "Hudson is a wonderful community," said Grimaudo, who attended a budget meeting. "And St. Lazare will always be there to support and help in any way we can. As for speculation should someone merge, that would require a great deal of reflection, negotiations, and public consultations." Grimaudo went on to say merging would be an extensive process and he and the council have not in any way looked at the possibility.  
 "Mayor Ed Prévost inherited a huge mountain in climb," said Grimaudo, "and what he needs to do might be unsurmountable."  
 When asked if there is any shared responsibility with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for the lack of proper reporting of finances by the town, Prévost replied there is. He explained that although the province had sent letters requesting the information, they had not followed up in a timely manner and previous Hudson administrations did not act on the request.  
 Council was met with several minutes of applause over the course of the meeting with residents expressing to the mayor and council they were happy to finally have the truth.  
 Mayor Prévost also emphasized that the town will vigorously pursue by legal means, the former auditing firm Bourassa Boyer for the amount of their invoice and other costs.  
 Just before going to press, Prévost said Your Local Journal the National Bank will continue to partner with the town and will work with elected officials to see them through until the next taxation year.  
 The 2015 Budget will be presented on Wednesday December 17 at the Stephen E. Shan Community Centre.

2

**KATE ALEY**  
*The Equity*

City mouse country mouse. A nice exposure of what happens when worlds collide. I like that the reporter got the trapper's point of view. Some reporters would not have gone the extra mile and focused too much on the sad demise of the dog.

**ROYALTY**  
 Fenestration | Revêtement | Rénovation  
**SAVE UP TO 20% ON WINDOWS AND DOORS**  
 Visit us For Details  
**WE MANUFACTURE**  
 SHOWROOM: 17 boul. de la Cité des Jeunes, Local 140, Vaudreuil-Dorion, QC J7V 0N3 (East Service Road, West Châteaufort, Vaudreuil)  
 SHOWROOM & MANUFACTURE: 3454 Rue Grifflin, Saint-Laurent, QC H4T 1A7  
**450.218.4411 514.429.1414**  
 Thursday, November 20, 2014 YOUR LOCAL JOURNAL 3

3

**JAMES ARMSTRONG**  
*Your Local Journal*

How often does a city go broke? Well written and lively. You can't invent quotes like those here from the mayor.

# CORRESPONDENT AWARD

QCNA recognizes the following correspondents for their faithful contribution to their newspaper:

*The West Quebec Post*  
**Martha McGinn**

*Your Local Journal*  
**John Jantak**