

## **Questions and Answers about SJSEL current situation**

### **Is it true that the Growlers were permanently evicted?**

The Growlers have NOT been evicted. They have been temporarily suspended while allegations of disrespectful workplace conduct are investigated.

### **Why can't you let the games take place while the investigation is underway? Even if you have a safe workplace review underway, can't you bring in other staff?**

Unfortunately, the investigation involves multiple complainants at the former Mile One Centre and are throughout the entire organization, and it involves more than one individual at Deacon Sports and Entertainment Limited (DSE). Once the Board and Council understood the magnitude of the situation, the difficult decision was made to temporarily suspend the sports organization from the stadium to protect employees from further harm. Simply put, too many employees are part of this investigation and organizing staff replacements to allow DSE access is not possible. Like any employer organization, the Board and Council are bound by Occupational Health and Safety legislation to protect employees.

### **What is involved in the investigation?**

The Board of SJSEL has appointed an investigator, who has already begun review of the matter with interviews of complainants and respondents starting this week. The process will allow all complainants and respondents to participate and present their positions to the investigator. While it is difficult to anticipate how long the investigative review will take, the matters are and will continue to proceed as expeditiously as possible, bearing in mind the needs of the complainants.

### **When will the investigation outcome be known? Will it be made public? (Why not?)**

The investigator is working as quickly as possible to conduct this investigation, but we do not have control of the timeline; the investigator is working independently and cannot or should not be influenced by our need to complete this work on a predetermined timeline. While it is difficult to anticipate how long the investigative review will take, the matters are and will continue to proceed as expeditiously as possible, bearing in mind the needs of the complainants.

The investigator will inform the Board via a report that will not be made public due to the need to protect confidentiality.

### **Why can't you name who is leading the investigation? There are rumours as to who it is. Why are you keeping this a secret?**

The Board retained the services of a very skilled and highly reputed independent and experienced individual with extensive labour and employment experience. This person has begun to conduct the independent investigation. It is not necessary for their identity to be discussed so as to protect the integrity of the process; to allow the focus to be on the process.

### **How many employees are allegedly impacted?**

The allegations are from multiple employees and the full number of complaints is part of the investigative process. Out of respect for the process and the need to uphold confidentiality, we will respectfully limit discussing details of this matter.

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### **Why can't you and the Growlers' organization work together to seek a long term solution?**

We certainly want to be part of a solution that will work for both organizations, and we acknowledge that the relationship has not been without its challenges. But right now, we are focused on ensuring a safe workplace and allowing the investigation underway to conclude.

### **Why haven't you enlisted the services of a trained mediator in an attempt to resolve these disputes and get the team back in the building?**

The safety, wellbeing and mental health of our employees must be our first priority. When our employees came forward with allegations of disrespectful workplace conduct, we had to act quickly. We made the difficult decision to suspend the team while the allegations could be investigated; if the investigator recommends a mediation, we will certainly participate in that process.

### **Some are saying that not enough notice was given to the Growlers, this has cost them a lot of money and they plan to sue. What is your response?**

The allegations needed to be acted upon, we took this seriously and moved quickly, as we are legally required to do to ensure employees felt safe and protected.

DSE has filed a Notice of Default and a Notice of Arbitration against SJSEL. Given that this is now a legal matter and will proceed through its own process, we will respectfully limit comment.

### **Some have said that the City Council, Board and/or staff of SJEL are using this as a way to prevent the Growlers from playing games and being part of the stadium – now and into the future. Is this true?**

The Board of SJSEL is mandated to offer entertainment opportunities for the residents of St. John's and the Region. We want to see tenants and promoters succeed in the events they offer. Council invests in the Mary Browns Centre because of the proven economic benefits to the community; having an entertainment centre is important for the City in terms of the value it brings to the local economy. We are a better and stronger city because of the stadium and its organizers and events.

Deacon Sports and Entertainment have chosen to position Council's decision to not give them management or ownership of our facility as an indication that we don't want them in the building. This is not the case. In fact, we have reduced their rent and made other concessions to ensure that they can be a viable operation. All long-term tenants are required to sign fair and reasonable leases and meet their financial commitments; we have a duty to protect the public funds and ensure the Mary Browns Centre operates as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The current suspension of the team has nothing to do with these matters and everything to do with the allegations of disrespectful workplace conduct. Both the lease and safe workplace agreement require a tenant to abide by all workplace legislation, including Occupational Health and Safety, as well all other relevant laws, regulations and policies. And it is our legal duty to take allegations of unsafe workplaces very seriously, which is why we immediately initiated a process to ensure employees felt safe.

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### **Is the relationship between the City, SJSE and the Growlers beyond repair?**

We certainly hope it is not. We want to be part of a solution that will work for all organizations, and we acknowledge that the relationship has not been without its challenges. But right now, we need to allow the ongoing investigation to take place and to then determine next steps.

### **Business and fans are disappointed and frustrated - why can't you find a solution that allows both the Investigation and the games to continue?**

We understand the frustration of fans and we know that businesses are concerned by this decision. At the point that the decision was made, we could see no other solution. We acted quickly to have the matter independently investigated and we hope that it will conclude as quickly as possible to minimize the impacts.

### **Every game night is important to help offset the operating grant (subsidy). Taxpayers are on the hook for this, come budget time. How much do you expect the loss of 6 games will cost taxpayers? What would the loss of an entire season cost?**

We are looking into the economic impact of this temporary situation. No one – not the sports team, not SJSEL, the City, and not the citizens - want to see loss of revenue. Mary Browns Centre is an important asset for our city. It is an economic driver and a prime location for regional entertainment.

### **Have you considered the impact on businesses in the downtown who are hanging on during covid?**

We have often stated the importance of having a vibrant and busy Mary Browns Centre because we know that it has a positive impact on the downtown and more broadly, or community. We regret that this situation is impacting businesses in the downtown and we look forward to resolving this matter as quickly as possible.

As the province continues to reduce Covid restrictions, events are returning to Mary Browns Centre. In mid-November, we look forward to the Fish and Workboat show and regular games for the new NL Rogues Team are set to begin, on schedule, in late November.

### **It has been reported that the St. John's Edge have announced they not playing in the NBLC's upcoming season because they "are currently without a home arena, after a deal to play at the Mile One Centre could not be reached, due to a lease agreement with the ABA's Newfoundland Rogues." Is this true?**

This is inaccurate. The Edge lost their exclusivity to the former Mile One Centre in the spring when they chose to not sign a lease and pay their debts to SJSEL. The deal and lease agreement with the ABA's Rogues was made after the Edge gave up their exclusivity. The Edge have confirmed that they are taking a leave of absence from the league's 10th season. Prior to this, both the Halifax Hurricanes and Moncton Magic withdrew from the league and are no longer playing. The only remaining team in the Atlantic League's Division, the Island Storm will also sit this season out.

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**This must mean the Mary Browns Centre is mostly closed for business. What is this doing to the City and the facility's reputation as a location to invest and attract events and businesses?**

We are not closed for business; operations are ongoing. Recent coverage of the current situation has not been helpful for anyone involved. In the interim, the Mary Brown's Centre remains in operation. While the Growlers' games have been suspended, staff are working towards the North Atlantic Fish & Workboat Show scheduled for November 19 and 20, as well as the inaugural tip off for the Newfoundland Rogues, scheduled for November 27.

Even though this is a difficult time, business at Mary Brown's Centre and the St. John's Convention Centre will continue as close to normal as possible. Even though management staff is currently reduced, additional resources are being utilized to minimize operation issues, and the CEO and remaining staff are working to ensure upcoming events will proceed as smoothly as possible. As always, the SJSEL team is focused on securing longer term events and conventions opportunities.