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## Media Statement

**June 25, 2020**

**For immediate release**

**MOUNT PEARL, NL** – *The following is a statement from Steve Kent:*

Fellow citizens of Mount Pearl

I have served the people of Mount Pearl in a public capacity since I was 19 years old -- first as Deputy Mayor, then as Mayor, and then as the elected Member of the House of Assembly for Mount Pearl North. And almost three years ago I became our City's Chief Administrative Officer.

I have given my entire professional life to our City. That makes it especially difficult for me to let you know that today I am filing a Statement of Claim for Constructive Dismissal and Breach of Privacy against the City of Mount Pearl.

Back in 2017, I was hired with a clear mandate to address productivity challenges, improve performance management, and provide active, hands on leadership in solving problems. I am so proud of the many positive changes I led for our City during my tenure as CAO.

However, what I uncovered also surprised me. I discovered many problems.

Today, I will be respectful of confidentiality. However, I also believe I am ultimately accountable to you, the people of Mount Pearl, as I have always been. What I can tell you today is that if the major problems that have happened at City Hall were happening on my watch as Mayor, I would have told you.

I would explain what happened, what we had done to fix it, and what we were doing to make sure it never happened again.

What I found was certainly disturbing to me as an employee of the City and more importantly, as a citizen. At times, I was not popular with certain members of City staff, as evidenced by the retaliation against me. However, I kept going. I was doing exactly what I was hired to do. What I found was wrong, and I couldn't stand idly by to let it continue.

Last year, it got much more serious. I was surprised to be informed that an investigation was being launched against me. I came to learn in the weeks that followed that a disgruntled former employee, the City's Union leadership, and even the Mayor and Deputy Mayor themselves, had been working behind the scenes to discredit and stonewall me.

On the night of October 1, 2019, Mayor Aker and Deputy Mayor Locke escorted me out of the building.

It took two months to get access to any information whatsoever about the complaints.

To this day I am still fighting for access to enough information to respond. In January 2020, I filed a formal complaint with the Province's Privacy Commissioner to access the necessary information, and have yet to receive a decision.

All I wanted was a fair process. The City has responded with constant obstacles and considerable disregard for my employee rights. CUPE has shown total contempt and disrespect for the ongoing process, including disparaging me publicly. Mayor Aker and the City Council have done nothing about it.

This consistent disregard for a fair process led me to reach out to members of City Council. I was never told not to. I've had multiple interactions with five members of Council over the last eight months. I worked for Council as a whole. Should it become necessary, I will disclose more about the nature of these interactions in the weeks ahead.

Following eight months of being mistreated, it has now gotten even worse. Recently, I learned that my privacy has been actively breached along with that of many others. City employees have repeatedly accessed my private Facebook messages from the iPad I left behind when I went on leave, even though I had logged out and changed my password. They have been looking at the private messages between myself and my family, my friends, fellow residents of Mount Pearl and others.

If you have ever communicated with me through Facebook, it's quite possible that the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, and other members of City Council and certain City staff members have seen our discussion. Therefore, I feel obligated to advise you today that your privacy may have been breached as well.

My employment relationship with the City of Mount Pearl has been irreparably harmed. For this reason, I consider my employment contract to be repudiated. I am left with no choice but to file a Statement of Claim, and I will be suing those involved for Constructive Dismissal and Breach of Privacy.

After months of respecting the process and being quiet, I simply cannot do so any longer. My reputation has been attacked and my privacy has been breached.

There are lots of great people on staff at the City of Mount Pearl. I've truly enjoyed working with many of them. It's heartbreaking that the inappropriate acts of a few have prevented us from doing more great work together at this time.

However, I'm not done working for our city. As I figure out what comes next, please don't hesitate to reach out to me to keep the discussion going. You can email me at [steve@stevekent.ca](mailto:steve@stevekent.ca) or give me a call at 709-745-5368. My love for Mount Pearl and my tireless commitment to our community has not changed. And it won't. I'm still on your side. I always will be!

For updates on this matter, please visit [www.OurMountPearl.ca](http://www.OurMountPearl.ca), where I will continue to do my best to serve my community and stay accountable to you. I will continue to stand up for our city. And I will always stand up for what's right.

Steve