

INCIDENT REPORT Friday, September 7, 2017

OVERVIEW

Situation: Interference at Red Cross evacuee shelter by elected officials, causing a disturbance with the evacuees and verbally abusing Red Cross volunteers and staff.

The situation was created by Kildonan-St. Paul MP MaryAnn Mihychuk, her staff, and Kewatinook MLA Judy Klassen.

Firstly, Mihychuk and her staff broke protocol for visiting a Red Cross shelter by not reaching out to the Red Cross vice-president or the government relations team, as other elected officials have since the shelters were opened. Instead, she sent a staff member to the shelter to tell volunteers that Mihychuk, along with Klassen, would be showing up later in the evening.

Mihychuk verbally abused Red Cross volunteers and staff at the shelter and on the phone, using abusive and bullying language.

Mihychuk and Klassen then tried to dictate that evacuees would be taken to hotels, in the evening, to the town of Selkirk, a location that the leadership of Garden Hill First Nation had already rejected multiple times. They attempted to do this, even though they were told that Red Cross support would not be available in Selkirk at the time.

The chaos caused by Mihychuk's inappropriate behaviour and the fallout from that with the First Nation, forced the Red Cross to waste a great deal of time and effort in dealing with it.

For the evacuees, many of whom had just arrived from another shelter, the chaos and confusion caused by Mihychuk and Klassen stirring up the evacuees and misleading them about hotel rooms, only caused to multiply the stress the evacuees are already under. This late-night situation left many evacuees with a much higher stress level, at a time when the Red Cross is working hard to reduce that stress level as much as possible.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS – SEPT. 7, 2017

Time of Events – September 07, 2017

11:11 - INAC approved holding of hotel rooms outside of Winnipeg although not utilized.

16:30 – Representative of Mihychuk's staff visited shelter, telling a volunteer that Mihychuk would be coming to the shelter at 18:30 but staff member did not follow protocols by contacting vice-president or government relations lead.

19:08 – Judy Klassen (MLA) sent a text requesting a phone call in return.

19:10 – Cailin Hodder (PDCT Lead) and Alison Everitt (Operations Manager) contacted Judy Klassen. Judy placed us on speaker phone with MaryAnn Mihychuk (MP). The MP asked why we had occupants in the shelter. The Red Cross outlined the hotel selection criteria and protocol for placement. The MP inquired about where hotel room might be currently availability. The Red Cross said it has rooms being held and paid for all over the province including Brandon, Portage, Selkirk and Winkler.

Mihychuk then stated "Selkirk is a nice place with a Walmart" and that she will be taking the lead to go around the shelter and "load them up and ship them out". Hodder aggressively identified that she was not

to make a move without consultation with the community. In return, Mihychuk stated "Well it's clear they've picked their favourites, so these people will not be taken care of." The Red Cross team asked Mihychuk to cease until further notice and contacted Red Cross VP for Manitoba and Nunavut Shawn Feely.

19:20 – Hodder contacted Red Cross Vice-President Shawn Feely, who would call Klassen twice over a 30 minute-span. Feely asked Klassen to stand down. He noted to her that the First Nation had been offered hotel rooms outside of Winnipeg and had repeatedly turned these down, which Klassen did not know. After another call from Hodder that Mihychuk was still pushing to transport the evacuees to a hotel, Feely called Klassen back and told her to stand down and that the Red Cross could safely get evacuees to hotels in Selkirk during the day and not in the middle of the night. In both cases, it was Feely's understanding that Mihychuk was standing right next to Klassen during these conversations.

19:30 - Alison Everitt contacted community lead. The lead did not answer. Everitt then contacted a GHFN Councillor who stated yes, send them to Selkirk but only if you can move everyone to hotels in Manitoba tonight. The Red Cross requested an immediate meeting to discuss with Chief and Council. Following that call, the Red Cross received a call back from the Community Lead stating don't move people at night. He will convince his leadership to stand-down until the morning. We advised we will respond to the shelter for a meeting immediately.

19:34 - Cailin Hodder received a call from Mihychuk's assistant who inquired how we would get transportation for these people. Hodder advised he needed to connect with INAC and my VP.

20:40 - Hodder received a call from the MP who stated she had selected people they are standing outside waiting for a bus. The evacuees should not have been left out in the cold. Hodder advised she was enroute to the shelter and would discuss there as soon as the Red Cross received confirmation that the meeting would be held there.

21:43 – Hodder and Everitt arrived at the shelter, however, Mihychuk left prior to that arrival. The MP had left prior to my arrival. Carmenn Kardoes of INAC was requested to respond by Stephen Traynor. Upon arrival, it was discovered that 40-50 people were standing outside in the cold with garbage bags of items they rushed to pack up.

Results from meeting with community leadership:

- The Red Cross started the meeting with a review of the evening's events. The Red Cross noted it had offered these rooms over the previous few days to the community and they were declined by the community. This was confirmed to be a fact by the community leadership, in front of MLA Judy Klassen .
- Although the Chief was very hesitant, he made the decision that the move to Selkirk could be done and the community would take responsibility for the move.
- The idea of branching out to hotels outside of Winnipeg was discussed. The result was approved by Chief and council to make the following moves the following communities only :
 - Gimli
 - Brandon
 - Portage
 - Selkirk
 - Steinbach

DETAILS ON DISTRIBUTION OF HOTEL ROOMS

CRC Hotel Criteria

- Hotel rooms must be under \$130 per night.
 - As per federal government agreement
- Meals on-site.
 - Due to the scale of the event we are using 18 hotels with no meals on-site and will continue to utilize hotels with no meals. A meal plan is arranged for all evacuees.
- Laundry on-site.
 - Due to the scale of the event we are using 15 hotels with no laundry on site and will continue to utilize hotels with no laundry.
- Hotel room must be available for a minimum of 5-7 days.
 - To reduce the need to move evacuees repeatedly.

CRC/Community Representation Protocol (As agreed by Wasagamack First Nation, Garden Hill First Nation and St. Theresa Point First Nation)

- CRC identifies available hotels in Winnipeg.
- First Nation emergency management teams select families in shelters to move into hotels.
- CRC arranges transportation and coordinate outreach team to respond to hotel daily.

Hotels outside of Winnipeg

- CRC identifies all hotel availability outside of Winnipeg
- First Nation emergency management team approves or declines availability.
- Declined:
 - Thompson
 - Russell
 - Winkler
 - Morden
 - Swan River
 - Dauphin

Once Garden Hill First Nation (which is the only First Nation to currently have members in the shelter) announced it would be holding a march to the legislature earlier on Sept. 7 to protest the shelter conditions, pressure increased from provincial and federal counterparts. Alison Everitt (Operations Manager) connected with Oberon Munroe (Community Lead) at 10:45 a.m. on Sept. 7. He confirmed once again, with Red Cross and INAC officials present, that hotels outside of Winnipeg were not accepted by the First Nation.