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Compensation process for survivors of abuse at Mount Cashel orphanage in St. John's gets underway

Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's predicts it will have \$43,291,117 collected by Dec. 31 to settle abuse claims

Tara Bradbury · Reporter | Posted: 13 hours ago | Updated: 13 hours ago | 3 Min Read



Lawyers representing the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's and survivors of abuse at Mount Cashel prepare to leave Newfoundland and Labrador Supreme Court after proceedings Tuesday, May 2, 2023. (SaltWire News)

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ST. JOHN'S, N.L. — Now that a team has been appointed to oversee the claims process, survivors of abuse at the Mount Cashel orphanage who have waited more than 20 years for financial compensation are expected to receive it by the end of the year.

Lawyers for the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. of St. John's (RCECSJ), abuse survivors and monitor Ernst & Young appeared in Newfoundland and Labrador Supreme Court in St. John's Tuesday, May 30, where they told Justice Garrett Handrigan they had agreed on the appointment of Global Resolutions Inc., a Toronto-based dispute resolution firm with experience in sexual abuse claims, as claims officer in the matter.

The firm has appointed four of its most experienced panel members to the case, RCECSJ lawyer Geoffrey Spencer said, and has agreed, at the suggestion of the claimants' lawyers, to appoint a fifth panel member: Newfoundlander Lawrence Hatfield, a mediation consultant and lawyer. The team will be led by Global Resolutions founder and president Paul Torrie, who has adjudicated hundreds of sexual assault cases across Canada.

"Global Resolutions is well-positioned to hit the ground running in the adjudication of abuse claims under this process," Spencer told the court.

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Lawyers Geoff Budden and Bob Buckingham, representing abuse survivors, said they were satisfied with the firm's proposal; Budden said they "take particular comfort in the leadership" of Torrie.



Some details of the process are yet to be established — including a mechanism for disputing individual claims assessments — but the firm has indicated it will be able to complete the process by Dec. 31.

The panel will assess each claim and determine the amount of compensation to be paid, and it has discretion when it comes to considering claims from deceased victims, previous compensation awards, and determining the amount of interest that can be applied to the claims.

The deadline for victims to file a claim is Sept. 30. The identities of the claimants will not be publicly disclosed.

The compensation has been a long time coming, with the case working its way through the courts since 1999, when 39 former residents of Mount Cashel orphanage filed statements of claim alleging they were abused during the 1940s, '50s and '60s by certain Christian Brothers who ran the facility.

The courts have determined the archdiocese vicariously liable for the abuse and the RCECSJ has been granted creditor protection while it sells churches and other properties to collect the funds to settle the claims. It requested and received another extension on that protection Tuesday, this time to Dec. 31, to allow more time to finalize a settlement with the province for the sale of school properties, complete the sale of 43 properties with accepted agreements, continue its efforts to sell its remaining real estate and get the claims process underway. The archdiocese is also in the midst of a legal battle against its insurance provider for refusing to indemnify it related to the claims.

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Documents indicate the RCECSJ expects to have \$43,291,117 available by the end of the year to settle the claims with abuse survivors.

"There is still a fair amount of property to be sold, plus there are other assets which have the potential to help grow that sum," Budden told SaltWire.

He has previously said up to \$50 million could be required.

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