

Men's centre continues its quest for cash

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A long-anticipated meeting this week between Housing and Social Development Minister Rich Coleman and officials from the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre was not as fruitful as Theo Boere had hoped.

Boere, executive director of the centre, said funding requests for a number of provincewide initiatives for services for men were directed by Coleman to the office of Solicitor General Kash Heed and a commitment for much-needed funding for the men's centre was not made by the minister.

Boere had asked Coleman for the province to commit \$4.6 million to help pay for nine additional men's resource centres in other communities around B.C. (the Nanaimo centre is currently the only fully functioning men's centre in the province), a transition house for men and a 1-800 help line for men in crisis.

While thankful that the province came through with \$100,000 earlier this month to allow the financially beleaguered resource centre to keep its doors open, Boere said he was told by Coleman that the centre will have to wait until late next month when gaming funding decisions will be made by the province before it knows if it will receive an additional \$150,000 to help pay for the centre's services this year.

A response from Coleman's office was not immediately available.

"I've been lobbying various provincial governments for funding for men's issues since 2000 and I've always been handed off to someone else," Boere said after the meeting.

"It's not our intent to debate our funding issues through the media and we'd rather just work co-operatively with the government ministries, but that's the situation we consistently find ourselves in."

Boere said that he hopes a meeting with Heed will be expedited, considering the solicitor general just released a comprehensive plan to better deal with domestic violence around the province, an issue the men's centre is well-versed in.

"We some good things in those recommendations, but the question we have is what will be the role of men in all this?" he asked.

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