
Advocate's fate to be decided before House closes

Liberals ask for judicial review into suspension

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THE TELEGRAM



Tom Marshall

Liberal Kelvin Parsons wants the government to conduct a judicial review into the suspension of child and youth advocate Darlene Neville.

In the House of Assembly Monday, Parsons asked Finance Minister Tom Marshall if that would happen. But the reply from Marshall was brief. "The answer to the question is no," said the minister.

Neville was suspended with pay in August after months of accusations, investigations, complaints and counter-complaints between Neville, the Speaker of the House Roger Fitzgerald, Citizens' Representative Barry Fleming, Neville's staff and other senior bureaucrats.

On Friday, the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador denied Neville's application to speak before the House.

That was the same answer the courts

gave former citizens' representative Fraser March after he was fired in 2005.

However, March's case has gone to a retired judge for review.

Outside the House, Marshall told reporters he couldn't say what Neville's fate would be yet.

But he said the matter would come before the House before it closes for Christmas.

Marshall said the options available to government are to fire Neville, continue her suspension with pay, continue the suspension, but without pay or to reinstate her.

The minister said cabinet still have to discuss how it will proceed.

"We've heard from Ms. Neville. We've had a 70-page document from her," Marshall said.

Reporters asked what the difference is between the cases of Neville and March.

"We've heard from Ms. Neville; we hadn't heard from Mr. March," Marshall stated bluntly.

Parsons told reporters the process should be the same in both cases.

"I'm just surprised why they wouldn't allow Ms. Neville to have the same process," he said.