

# Brant CAS 'trespassing', SN band council wants them gone

By Chase Jarrett  
Writer

Six Nations Band council considers the Brant CAS trespassers and has threatened legal action to get the Ohsweken-based Native Services Branch (NSB) of the Children's Aid Society removed from Six Nations territory.

"Since October, 1 2013, the Children's Aid Society of Brant has been trespassing on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory," a letter sent on Mar. 19, 2014 and signed by Elected Chief Ava Hill reads.

The letter was addressed to Brant CAS chairperson Lesley Brubacher, and CC'd to Brant CAS management Andrew Koster and Sally Rivers, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, and provincial minister of Aboriginal Affairs David Zimmer, and lastly, provincial

minister of Child and Youth Services, Teresa Piruzza.

"The Society has received sufficient notice to make arrangements to relocate its Native Services Branch office... Society staff, including senior management, such as Andrew Koster, Sally River, Kim Martin, were well aware of Council's Resolutions rescinding permission for the Society to be located on the territory," read the letter.

The letter adds that while council wants Brant CAS off the territory, council would not "prohibit the Society from meeting its obligations and responsibilities to families on Six Nations." The letter said once off reserve, Brant CAS will still be able to attend Six Nations territories to "fulfill its role."

The letter threatened legal action on Apr. 1, 2014

if the NSB had not relocated. But whether or not that action has been taken remains unclear.

Six Nations Elected Chief Ava Hill did not return Turtle Island News calls. Hill was in Toronto attending a Pan Am games meeting Tuesday.

As of April 1 Brant CAS was still on the territory and director Andrew Koster said he's trying to organize with band council for "mediation."

"What I can tell you is that our board will be meeting later this week to look at the (new) situation," he said, adding that the meeting would be closed.

He said under law the NSB of Brant CAS does not have to leave its location in the GREAT building in Ohsweken. "It's difficult because we do have a lease

and the lease is in effect."

He said the lease runs out in June. He declined to answer if Brant CAS would renew the lease. He said the issue was respecting the wishes of Six Nations, and that those wishes were unclear.

"On one hand you have the elected council wanting us to leave, then you have the confederacy who is telling us their letter from Aaron Detlor is still in effect," he said. "My understanding at the latest confederacy meetings they asked the clanmothers on how we might collaborate." He said working with clanmothers has "ebbed and flowed."

Koster sent the SNEC letter to Confederacy Chiefs. "We want to respect the confederacy but ultimately it's my job to protect the kids of the community."

Koster said as far as he knows a letter issued by legal advisor Aaron Detlor on behalf of the confederacy chiefs supporting the Brant CAS staying on Six Nations is still in effect. Clanmothers called for the letter to be rescinded in March but chiefs remained silent on the issue.

Koster said that Brant CAS receives between \$3.5 to \$4 million per year to operate the NSB. He said once Six Nations own child welfare service is in place Brant CAS will lose that funding. He said right now, if Brant CAS were to relocate, "the level of care would be diminished because of additional travel times." He said CAS workers would not necessarily lose their tax-free income from Brantford offices.

He said the removal of Brant CAS is unwarranted.

"The new agency isn't ready. Why are you kicking us off now?"

This is not the first time band council has bared their teeth in attempt to get Brant CAS off territory. Last fall one Brant CAS employee threatened to chain herself to a desk if the NSB was removed from territory after a (Mar. 2013) resolution was passed by band council to have Brant CAS off territory in Oct.

Since then a political tug-of-war between band council and the CAS has ensued, with Brant CAS defying band council claiming they have the support of the confederacy. Chiefs have remained silent since the New Year but have taken information from Koster and Rivers, clanmothers, and organizers of Six Nations child welfare service that is still in development.