



# Dispute Resolution Services

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Residential Tenancy Branch  
Office of Housing and Construction Standards

## **DECISION**

Dispute Codes      OPUM-DR, FFL

### Introduction

This matter proceeded by way of an *ex parte* Direct Request Proceeding, pursuant to section 55(4) of the *Residential Tenancy Act* (the “*Act*”), and dealt with an Application for Dispute Resolution by the landlords (the “landlord”) for an Order of Possession based on unpaid rent and a Monetary Order.

The landlord submitted two signed Proof of Service of the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding forms which declare that on April 10, 2019, the landlord served each of the above-named tenants with the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding via registered mail. The landlord provided two copies of the Canada Post Customer Receipts containing the Tracking Numbers to confirm these mailings. Section 90 of the *Act* determines that a document served in this manner is deemed to have been received five days after service.

Based on the written submissions of the landlord, and in accordance with sections 89 and 90 of the *Act*, I find that the tenants have been deemed served with the Direct Request Proceeding documents on April 15, 2019, the fifth day after their registered mailing.

### Issue(s) to be Decided

Is the landlord entitled to an Order of Possession for unpaid rent pursuant to sections 46 and 55 of the *Act*?

Is the landlord entitled to monetary compensation for unpaid rent pursuant to section 67 of the *Act*?

Is the landlord entitled to recover the filing fee for this application pursuant to section 72 of the *Act*?

### Background and Evidence

I have reviewed all written submissions and evidence before me; however, only the evidence relevant to the issues and findings in this matter is described in this decision.

The landlord submitted the following evidentiary material:

- A copy of a residential tenancy agreement which was signed by one of the landlords and the tenants on October 23, 2018, indicating a monthly rent of \$1,999.00 due on the first day of each month for a tenancy commencing on November 01, 2018;
- A Direct Request Worksheet showing the rent owing during the portion of this tenancy in question, on which the landlord establishes a monetary claim in the amount of \$1,999.00 for outstanding rent, comprised of the balance of unpaid rent due by April 01, 2019. The landlord also states that unpaid utility charges, in the amount of \$632.89, were due by January 30, 2019;
- A copy of a 10 Day Notice to End Tenancy for Unpaid Rent (the Notice) dated April 02, 2019, which the landlord states was served to the tenants on April 03, 2019, for \$1,999.00 in unpaid rent due on April 01, 2019, with a stated effective vacancy date of April 12, 2019. The landlord also cited on the Notice that unpaid utility charges, in the amount of \$632.89, were due by January 30, 2019;
- A copy of the Proof of Service of the Notice form showing that the landlord “NP” served the Notice to the tenants by way of personal service via hand-delivery to the tenant “JLK” on April 03, 2019. The Proof of Service form establishes that the service was witnessed by “CM” and a signature for CM is included on the form.

The Notice restates section 46(4) of the Act which provides that the tenants had five days to pay the rent in full or apply for Dispute Resolution or the tenancy would end on the effective date of the Notice. The tenants did not apply to dispute the Notice within five days from the date of service and the landlord alleged that the tenants did not pay the rental arrears.

### Analysis

I have reviewed all documentary evidence provided by the landlord and find that in accordance with section 88 of the *Act* the tenants were duly served with the Notice on April 03, 2019.

Direct Request proceedings are *ex parte* proceedings. In an *ex parte* proceeding, the opposing party is not invited to participate in the hearing or make any submissions. As

there is no ability for the tenants to participate, there is a much higher burden placed on landlords in these types of proceedings than in a participatory hearing. This higher burden protects the procedural rights of the excluded party and ensures that the natural justice requirements of the Residential Tenancy Branch are satisfied.

In this type of matter, the landlord must prove they served the tenant with the Notice of Direct Request Proceeding, the Notice, and all related documents with respect to the Direct Request process, in accordance with the *Act* and Policy Guidelines. In an *ex parte* Direct Request Proceeding, the onus is on the landlord to ensure that all submitted evidentiary material is in accordance with the prescribed criteria and does not lend itself to ambiguity or give rise to issues that may need further clarification beyond the purview of a Direct Request Proceeding. If the landlord cannot establish that all documents meet the standard necessary to proceed via the Direct Request Proceeding, the application may be found to have deficiencies that necessitate a participatory hearing, or, in the alternative, the application may be dismissed.

Policy Guideline 39 – “Direct Requests” provides that the *Act* allows a landlord to treat unpaid utility charges as unpaid rent **if the tenancy agreement requires the tenant to pay utility charges to the landlord** (emphasis added).

Section 46(6) of the *Act* provides the following with respect to non-payment of utilities under a tenancy agreement:

*46(6) If*

*(a) a tenancy agreement requires the tenant to pay utility charges to the landlord, and*

*(b) the utility charges are unpaid more than 30 days after the tenant is given a written demand for payment of them,*

*the landlord may treat the unpaid utility charges as unpaid rent and may give notice under this section.*

In the application before me, the landlord asserts that the tenants are to pay 50% of the utilities owed for the residential property in which the rental unit is located. Therefore, the landlord has attempted to treat unpaid utility charges as unpaid rent.

I find that the evidentiary material before me includes a copy of a tenancy agreement which does not demonstrate that the tenants are expected to pay utility charges directly to the landlord. The tenancy agreement does not include a term that expressly provides that the tenants are to pay 50% of the utilities owed for the residential property. Rather, the tenancy agreement does not state that the tenants are to pay any additional amount for utilities.

The landlord has not provided any documentary evidence to establish that the provisions of section 46(6) of the *Act* were adhered to by demonstrating that the

tenancy agreement included a term with respect to the tenants agreeing to provide additional payments for utility services.

I find that as the landlord has not followed the requirements under section 46(6) of the *Act*, it is not open for the landlord to treat the unpaid utility charges as unpaid rent and seek reimbursement by way of a monetary Order via the Direct Request process. I dismiss that portion of the landlord's application for a monetary Order that deals with unpaid utilities with leave to reapply. I limit my consideration of the landlord's request for a monetary Order to the unpaid rent claimed as owing to the landlord.

I find that the tenants were obligated to pay monthly rent in the amount of \$1,999.00, as established in the tenancy agreement. I accept the evidence before me that the tenants have failed to pay rental arrears in the amount of \$1,999.00, comprised of the balance of unpaid rent owed by April 01, 2019 for the month of April 2019.

I accept the landlord's undisputed evidence and find that the tenants did not pay the rent owed in full within the five days granted under section 46 (4) of the *Act* and did not apply to dispute the Notice within that five-day period.

Based on the foregoing, I find that the tenants are conclusively presumed under section 46(5) of the *Act* to have accepted that the tenancy ended on the corrected effective date of the Notice, April 13, 2019.

Therefore, I find that the landlord is entitled to an Order of Possession and a monetary Order of \$1,999.00 for unpaid rent owed by April 01, 2018, as claimed on the landlord's Application for Dispute Resolution by Direct Request.

As the landlord was successful in this application, I find that the landlord is entitled to recover the \$100.00 filing fee paid for this application.

### Conclusion

I grant an Order of Possession to the landlord effective **two days after service of this Order** on the tenant(s). Should the tenant(s) fail to comply with this Order, this Order may be filed and enforced as an Order of the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

Pursuant to sections 67 and 72 of the *Act*, I find that the landlord is entitled to a monetary Order in the amount of \$2,099.00 for unpaid rent, and for the recovery of the filing fee for this application. The landlord is provided with these Orders in the above terms and the tenant(s) must be served with **this Order** as soon as possible. Should the tenant(s) fail to comply with these Orders, these Orders may be filed in the Small Claims Division of the Provincial Court and enforced as Orders of that Court.

This decision is made on authority delegated to me by the Director of the Residential Tenancy Branch under Section 9.1(1) of the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

Dated: April 16, 2019

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Residential Tenancy Branch