

Residential Tenancies Tribunal

[REDACTED] Decision 20-0218-05

Michael Greene
Adjudicator

Introduction

1. The hearing was called at **11:49 am** on **14 May 2020** at Residential Tenancies Hearing Room, 84 Mt. Bernard Avenue, Lower Level, The Sir Richard Squires Building, Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador and via Bell Teleconferencing System.
2. The applicant, [REDACTED], hereafter referred to as landlord, participated in the hearing and was represented by [REDACTED], LLB. The applicant was *Affirmed*.
3. The respondent, [REDACTED], hereafter referred to as the tenant, did not participate in the hearing. (*Absent and Not Represented*).
4. In a proceeding under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, the applicant has the burden of proof. This means the applicant has the responsibility to prove that the outcome they are requesting should be granted. In these proceedings the standard of proof is referred to as the balance of probabilities which means the applicant has to establish that his/her account of events are more likely than not to have happened.

Preliminary Matters

5. The application was AMENDED at the hearing to add rent that has come due since the filing of the application. The new amount outstanding is \$2658.00 up to and including 31 May 2020.
6. The tenant, [REDACTED], was not present or represented at the hearing. The Tribunal's policies concerning notice requirements and hearing attendance has been adopted from the *Rules of the Supreme Court, 1986*.
 - a. Rule 29.05(2)(a) states *a respondent to an application must be served with claim and notice of the hearing 10 clear days prior to the hearing date and,*

and where the respondent fails to attend the hearing, Rule 29.11(1) states *that the hearing may proceed in the respondent's absence so long as he/she has been properly served.*

The affidavit submitted by the landlord shows that the tenant was served with the notice of this hearing on the **03 May 2020** by serving the original documents to the tenant personally at the rented premises.

The tenant has had **10 days** to provide a response.

A phone call was made to the number on file for the tenant [REDACTED] and there was no answer. The mailbox on the line was full and I was unable to leave a message for the respondent.

7. As the tenant was properly served with the application for dispute resolution, and as any further delay in these proceedings would unfairly disadvantage the landlord applicant, I proceeded in the tenant's absence.

Issues before the Tribunal

8. The landlord is seeking the following:
 - a) Payment of rent owing **\$2658.00**;
 - b) Payment of late fees
 - c) Vacant possession of the rented premises;
 - d) Hearing expenses.

Legislation and Policy

9. The jurisdiction of the Director of Residential Tenancies is outlined in the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2018 (the Act)*, Section 47.
10. Also relevant and considered in this case are Sections 19, 34 and 35 of *the Act*, and Policy 12-1: *Recovery of Fees: Filing, Costs, Hearing Expense, Interest, Late Payment and NSF*.

Issue 1: Rent Owing - \$2658.00

Relevant Submissions

Landlord Position

11. The landlord stated that he had entered into monthly rental agreement with the tenant. The agreed rent is set at \$1000.00 per month POU and due on the 1st

day of each month with a security deposit in the amount of \$500.00 collected on this tenancy on or about 01 November 2019. The landlord demonstrated the arrears with rental records (**Exhibit L # 1**) as total rent outstanding is \$2658.00 up to and including 31 May 2020. The landlord stated as of the hearing date 14 May 2020, the tenant remains in the unit and rent is outstanding.

Analysis

12. I have reviewed the testimony and evidence of the landlord in this matter. As far as I can see, there is 1 issue here that needs to be addressed: (i) is the rent that is being claimed by the landlord actually owed by the tenant.
13. With respect to the arrears being claimed, I agree with the landlord that rent is owed. Rent is required to be paid by the tenant for use and occupation of the rented premises as set out in the written rental agreement established when the tenancy began. Records are clear that rent for the period ending 30 April 2020 has not been paid leaving a balance of **\$1658.00**. Further, rent for May 1 – 14, 2020 can only be calculated up to and including the day of the hearing (14 May 2020). That calculation is ($\$1000.00 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$12,000.00 \div 366 \text{ days} = \$32.79 \text{ per day} \times 14 \text{ days} = \459.06). Rent for May 1 – 14, 2020 is **\$459.06**.
14. Additionally, the tenant is responsible for rent on a daily basis in the amount of **\$32.79** beginning on 15 May 2020 and continuing until the day the landlord obtain vacant possession of the rented premises.

Decision

15. The landlord's total claim for rent succeeds as follows:
 - a) Rent owing up to 30 April 2020 **\$1658.00**
 - b) Rent owing for May 1 – 14, 2020 **459.06**
 - c) **Total due to Landlord.....\$2117.06**
 - d) A daily rate beginning 15 May 2020 **\$32.79**

Issue 2: Payment of Late Fees - \$75.00

Landlord Position

16. The landlord is seeking payment of late fees as a result of the tenant's failure to pay rent on time.

17. The landlord testified that the tenant has been in arrears on an ongoing basis since October 2019. The landlord indicated that any calculated amount of late fees would exceed the maximum allowable under the *Residential Tenancies Regulations, 2018*.

Analysis

18. Established by undisputed fact above, the tenant was in arrears since March 1, 2020. The *Residential Tenancies Regulations, 2018* allows for a late fee of \$5.00 for the 1st day and \$2.00 for every day thereafter to a maximum of \$75.00 per late period.
19. The issue of rental arrears has been determined above confirming that the tenant owes rent to the landlord.

Decision

20. The landlord's claim for late fees succeeds in the amount of the maximum allowable of \$75.00.

Issue 3: Vacant Possession of the Rented Premises

Landlord Position

21. The landlord is seeking to recover possession of the rented premises located at █
█
22. The landlord testified that when the tenant fell in arrears, he issued a termination notice under Section 19 of the Act (**Exhibit L # 4**) to terminate the tenancy on 20 March 2020. He testified that the notice was served personally and as of the hearing date (14 May 2020), the tenant remains in the unit. The landlord testified that there is 1 adult and 1 child aged approximately 14 years living in the unit.

Analysis

23. Established by undisputed statement of fact above, the rental agreement is a monthly tenancy. The validity of the termination notice is determined by its compliance with the notice requirements identified in Sections 19. (1)(b), (4) and 34 as well as the service requirements identified in Section 35.
24. The issue of rental arrears has been determined above confirming that the tenant owes rent to the landlord.

25. Section 19. (1)(b) requires that rent be overdue for 5 days or more before the landlord may give the tenant a termination notice to vacate the property not less than 10 days after the notice is served on the tenant. On examination of the termination notice issued and submitted into evidence (**Exhibit L # 4**), I find the notice was served on 09 March 2020 with a termination date of 20 March 2020. As established above and undisputed by the tenant, rent had been in arrears since March 2020. As rent had been in arrears for 30 plus days, I find this is well beyond the 5 day requirement set out in the Act. I further find that as the date of termination identified on the notice is 10 clear days between the date the notice was issued and the date the tenant is required to move out, the termination notice is in full compliance with the requirements of Section 19. (1)(b).

26. Sections 19. (4) and 34 below identify the technical requirements of the termination notice. On examination of the termination notice, I find it all these criteria have been met.

Section 19. (4)

In addition to the requirements under Section 34, a notice under this section shall

- (a) *be signed by the landlord;*
- (b) *state the date on which the rental agreement terminates and the tenant is required to vacate the residential premises; and*
- (c) *be served in accordance with section 35.*

Section 34

A notice under this Act shall

- (a) *be in writing in the form prescribed by the minister;*
- (b) *contain the name and address of the recipient;*
- (c) *identify the residential premises for which the notice is given; and*
- (d) *state the section of this Act under which the notice is given.*

27. As identified above, the landlord testified that the termination notice was served personally which is a permitted method of service identified under Section 35.

28. According to the reasons identified above, I find that the termination notice issued by the landlord to be proper and valid. Therefore, the landlord is entitled to an order for vacant possession of the property along with an order for any and all costs associated with the Sheriff to enforce such a Possession Order should the Sheriff be engaged to execute the Possession Order.

Decision

29. The landlord's claim for vacant possession succeeds. The landlord is further awarded costs associated with the enforcement of the Possession Order by the High Sheriff of NL.

Issue 3: Utilities - \$205.96

Relevant Submissions

Landlord Position

30. The landlord stated that they had received an invoice from NL Power (**Exhibit L # 3**) in the amount of \$205.96. The landlord stated that the tenant failed to have the power changed into her name at the beginning of the tenancy and ran up the bill in the landlord's name. The landlord testified that this cost should be the responsibility of the tenant and is claiming this charge for the utilities.

Analysis

31. I have reviewed the testimony and evidence of the landlord in this matter. As far as I can see, there is one issue here that needs to be addressed: (i) is the utilities that is being claimed by the landlord actually owed by the tenant.
32. With respect to the utilities being claimed, I agree with the landlord that this charge is the responsibility of the tenant. Utilities are required to be paid by the tenant for the period of use and occupation of the rented premises as set out in the rental agreement established when the tenancy began. Records are clear that the tenant was required to pay her own utilities as stated in part 11 of the rental agreement (Exhibit L # 2). Failing to change the electrical account is contrary to the rental contract and I find that based on the records provided, the tenant owes utilities in the amount of **\$205.96** including forfeited discounts and interest charged by NL Power.

Decision

33. The landlord's claim for utilities succeeds in the amount of \$205.96.

Issue 5: Hearing Expenses

Landlord Position

34. The landlord paid a fee in the amount of \$20.00 as an application filing fee and presented a receipt from Service NL ([REDACTED]) (**Exhibit L # 5**). The landlord is seeking this cost.

Analysis

35. I have reviewed the testimony and evidence of the landlord in this matter. The expenses incurred by the landlord are considered a reasonable expense and are provided for with in Policy 12-1 *Recovery of Fees: Filing, Costs, Hearing Expense, Interest, Late Payment and NSF*. As such, I find the tenant is responsible to cover these reasonable expenses.

Decision

36. The tenant shall pay the reasonable expenses of the landlord in the amount of \$20.00

Summary of Decision

37. The landlord is entitled to the following:

a)	Rent Owing	\$2117.06
b)	Late Fees	75.00
c)	Utilities	205.96
c)	Hearing Expenses	<u>\$20.00</u>
d)	Total Owing to the Landlord	\$2418.02
e)	Vacant Possession of the Rented Premises	
f)	A daily rate of rent set at \$32.79 beginning 15 May 2020 and continuing until the day the landlord obtains vacant possession of the Rented Premises.	
g)	Any incurred costs from the High Sheriff of NL associated with enforcement of the attached Possession Order	

21 May 2020

Date

Michael Greene
Residential Tenancies Tribunal