

**2017-83: Minifie vs Gravelbourg Tribune**

*For immediate release*

The NNC has mediated a complaint about accuracy in an editorial in the November 13 2017 Gravelbourg Tribune.

Complainant Ward Minifie is a municipal staff member who read the column and understood “everyone” in the paragraph in question to be municipal staff.

That assumption may have flowed from the previous paragraph, which referred to the mayor phoning the CAO. Under that misapprehension, it’s understandable the complainant was upset with what he perceived to be incorrect information.

According to both the complainant and the editor, attempts to discuss concerns about the column were not successful, for whatever reason.

After three requests from the NNC, the editor clarified that “everyone” meant councillors, not municipal staff. That meaning was implicit but not specifically stated in the column.

The NNC upholds the wide latitude of editorial and opinion writers to express points of view that may not be shared by all, and recognizes journalistic standards that require opinions to be based on fact. Reviewing the material available, and with the explanation from the writer, it appears though while there was lack of clarity in the reference to “everyone”, there is no error in fact and it does not appear to amount to a lie to readers.

The NNC upholds the news media’s prerogative to be critical of government. The article in question is strongly critical, but does not breach journalistic standards in that regard.

The NNC declined to comment on previous columns or attitudes expressed by the editor about municipal council. The NNC noted, however, that earlier clarification of the word “everyone”—either through more careful writing or in subsequent conversation with the complainant—could have avoided a complaint to the NNC.