



Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

02-00 Minutes

February 9, 2000

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, February 9, 2000 in the Audio-Visual Room at the Cobequid Educational Centre, Truro, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Kaaren Barkhouse

George Bruce

John English

Jim Grue

John Henderson

Tina Hurley

Ron Marks

Marilyn Murray

David Myles

Robert Parker

Mary Stevenson

Marilyn Thompson

Trudy Thompson

In Attendance:

Karen Casey

Elmer MacDonald

Gary Miller

Brian Murphy

Robert Renouf

Elizabeth van den Eynden

Ann Hamilton-Wood

Dale Sabeau

Nancy Mosher

Absent:

Cheryl Cutler, with regrets

Lloyd Gibbs

Bernie Knockwood, with regrets

Chair Mary Stevenson called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone in attendance and asked those at the Board table to introduce themselves to the audience.

Agenda:

Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING ADDITION:
ix. e) Conference Report - Tina Hurley
MOTION CARRIED

Minutes:

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse
TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 8, 1999 MEETING
AS CIRCULATED:
MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Trudy Thompson
TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12, 2000 MEETING:

Vice-Chair Robert Parker noted that his name appeared on page five (5) as making a motion and he had not been in attendance at the meeting. The minutes should be amended to read that David Myles made the motion.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation:

Lawrence Ryan, Coordinator of Public Relations and School Advisory Councils, reported that a new project, the Superintendent's Award, had recently begun and one of the first two recipients of the award was to be recognized as part of the meeting. Mr. Ryan outlined the criteria for the award - to recognize a student for an outstanding achievement or accomplishment to their school or community that reflects the positive aspects of volunteerism and community service.

Mr. Ryan welcomed and introduced Heather MacKenzie, Grade 12 student at Cobequid Educational Centre. Ms. MacKenzie had been nominated for the award as the result of her organization of the recent post-secondary educational fair held at her school and in recognition of her involvement in a number of other school activities that require volunteer time. Mr. Ryan also noted that Jeffrey Green of Stellarton High School was the other recipient and would be receiving his award in the near future. Superintendent Elmer MacDonald presented Ms. MacKenzie with her award and conveyed congratulations for this significant achievement.

Correspondence:

Communications Officer Ann Hamilton-Wood reviewed the items of correspondence received.

Murray Scott, MLA

A covering letter was received from Murray Scott, MLA, Cumberland South, accompanying a report prepared by Mark Boon related to the River Hebert High School. In the correspondence, Mr. Scott had indicated that he and Mr. Boon would like the opportunity to meet with the Board to discuss the report. The report had been previously circulated to all Board members.

Moved by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by John Henderson
THAT MR. MARK BOON BE INVITED TO MAKE A PRESENTATION ON HIS REPORT TO THE BOARD AT ITS SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 21, 2000 AND TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS FROM BOARD MEMBERS ARISING FROM THE REPORT.

During discussion on the motion, Vice-Chair Robert Parker expressed his concern with what he considered to be an attempt by Cumberland South MLA Murray Scott to undermine the Board's responsibilities by having Mr. Boon prepare the report in question. Mr. Parker indicated that he felt Mr. Scott had shown disrespect towards John Murley in having another report prepared while Mr. Murley's work was underway. He stated that he was concerned that it appeared Mr. Scott did not believe the Board members from Cumberland County were representing the people they had been elected to serve.

Tina Hurley indicated that she was certain that Mr. Mark Boon would have written the report whether or not Murray Scott had requested it and noted that Mr. Boon had not received any remuneration for the report. John Henderson also took exception to Mr. Parker's remarks. Marilyn Thompson indicated that she felt it would be prudent for the Board to have Mr. Boon make a presentation in order to prevent any misinterpretation and to clarify points raised.
MOTION CARRIED

**Editorial note - the vote on the motion was taken twice as two members did not vote on the first call for a show of hands.

Murray Scott, MLA

Correspondence was received from Murray Scott requesting that the Board consider holding its March meeting in Cumberland County in one of the

communities affected by the options in the Murley report.

IT WAS AGREED TO REFER THE REQUEST TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

Murray Scott, MLA

Murray Scott, MLA had asked the Board to consider two options as it entered into deliberations on the Murley report. He requested that the report prepared by Mr. Mark Boon be reviewed with view that the recommendations contained in it may also be used across the region for other schools. Mr. Scott also asked that the Board delay any decisions on the future of high schools in Cumberland County until the task force review of school board boundaries was complete and recommendations are made.

Reports from Standing Committees:

Committee of the Whole

Vice-Chair Robert Parker gave a report on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on February 2, 2000 as follows:

Parents Carol Corbett and Lori Yorke had given a presentation on behalf of parents in the Five Islands area in support of the report submitted by the Five Islands School Closure Study Committee. The presentation focused on the distances that children would have to travel to school in either Bass River or Parrsboro and the parents' desire to keep them in their home communities for as long as possible;

The Board's Communications Department had provided an update on implementation of the Communications plan. Rachel Ramey, Public Relations Intern, Lawrence Ryan, Coordinator of Public Relations and School Advisory Councils, and Ann Hamilton-Wood, Communications Officer, outlined the wide-variety of projects currently underway intended to increase the awareness and understanding of the school system among students, staff, parents and communities; A presentation on the Cumberland County/North Colchester High School Study had been given by consultant John Murley. Mr. Murley reviewed the highlights of the report and, in particular, the options included for Board consideration. Mr. Murley's presentation was followed by a question and answer period with Board members.

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by David Myles
TO RECEIVE THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY/NORTH COLCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL STUDY REPORT AS PREPARED BY JOHN MURLEY.

MOTION CARRIED
Nay Votes Recorded

John Henderson, Tina Hurley, Marilyn Thompson

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by John English
TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

MOTION CARRIED

Finance/Human Resources Committee

Committee Chair Ron Marks reported on a meeting held on January 26, 2000. Information coming forward from the meeting included:

Discussion regarding potential resolutions to be forwarded to the Nova Scotia School Boards Association for consideration at its annual general meeting in June 2000. It was noted that the Board will discuss resolution proposals from the three standing committees at its Committee of the Whole meeting on March 1, 2000;

The Committee had been updated on the binding arbitration hearings that were underway between the Board and the NSTU;

A financial "statement of operations" for the period ending November 1999 had been circulated and reviewed;

Committee members had reviewed draft staffing chronology documents for teacher assistants. The Committee had agreed that staffing of teacher assistants should commence prior to budget approval to ensure the June 15 deadline for assignment of teacher assistants for autistic students is met.

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Robert Parker
TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

MOTION CARRIED

Operations/Planning, Research & Technology

George Bruce, Committee Chair, reported on a meeting held on January 19, 2000. The following items had been discussed.

The reports of the East River St. Mary's and Five Islands School Closure Study Committees had been received by the Committee.

The Education Act requires that a public meeting be held in each community to receive input following presentation of the reports to the Board. Following those public meetings, the reports will come back to the Board for further discussion and decision. Mr. Bruce indicated that a decision was anticipated at the next Board meeting;

A request for a school study to be carried out in the Bible Hill area had been received from the Bible Hill East Court Road School Advisory Council;

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Jim Grue
THAT A SCHOOL STUDY OF THE BIBLE HILL AREA BE CARRIED OUT.

MOTION CARRIED

Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabeau, indicated that it was hoped the study could be carried out over the next few weeks with a report coming to the Board at its June meeting.

Site selection reports for the Pictou East, Pictou West and South Colchester projects had been reviewed and discussed; Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse
TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE PICTOU EAST SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT.

John Henderson stated that he had requested a list of the membership of the Pictou West Site Selection Committee in September 1999 and had only received that list at this meeting. He expressed his concern that his area had not been represented on the Committee.

John English stated his opposition to the recommendations of the site selection for Pictou East and asked that the Board consider changing the ranking of the sites. Mr. English indicated that he had served as a member of the Site Selection Committee and he reviewed the process the Committee had followed to select the sites. He noted that the two sites listed as the second and third choices were actually the same site using different entrances. Mr. English outlined in detail his reasons for opposing the ranking of the sites and asked that the Board members consider voting in favor of the 90 acre site located off Exit 26.

Lengthy discussion followed, during which it was

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Robert Parker
TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ALLOW THE SEPARATION OF THE SECOND AND THIRD SITE RECOMMENDATIONS.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by John English, seconded by Trudy Thompson
TO AMEND THE MOTION TO REMOVE THE PARKDALE SITE FROM THE LIST OF SITES TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

During discussion on the second amendment, it was noted that the Committee's final vote on the sites was very close and some members were not happy with the decision. It was suggested that the report of the Committee be forwarded to the Department of Education to make an assessment and then allow the Board to make its final decision.

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Robert Parker
TO TABLE THE MOTION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE PICTOU EAST

SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE CAN BE RECONVENED AND REACH
CONSENSUS ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THREE SITES.

MOTION CARRIED

Nay Votes Recorded

George Bruce, John Henderson, Marilyn Murray and Mary
Stevenson

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Robert Parker
TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE
REPORT FOR THE PICTOU WEST SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT.

Ron Marks clarified the location of each of the sites
recommended by the Site Selection Committee in priority
order. During discussion it was noted that the Pictou
East facility was scheduled to open in September 2002
while the Pictou West building was slated to open in
September 2003. A question was raised as to whether
tabling the motion on the Pictou East site would delay
construction and put the Pictou West project ahead. It
was suggested that as long as the Pictou East
Committee can bring its recommendations to the Board
without a long delay it should not affect the
construction schedule.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by George Bruce,
TO SERVE NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECONSIDER THE MOTION
APPROVING THE SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT FOR
THE PICTOU WEST SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse
TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE SITE SELECTION
COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE SOUTH COLCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL
CONSTRUCTION PROJECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOR CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT.

MOTION CARRIED

A request had been received from Junction Road
Elementary School seeking approval to name their
new library "The Guy Brown Library" in recognition
of the contributions to the community of Springhill
by former MLA Guy Brown.

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Jim Grue
TO APPROVE A REQUEST FROM JUNCTION ROAD ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TO NAME THEIR NEW LIBRARY "THE GUY BROWN LIBRARY".
MOTION CARRIED

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Ron Marks
TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS/PLANNING,
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE.

Questions were raised regarding the East River Saint Mary's and Five Islands School Closure Study reports and when the Board would have the opportunity to discuss the reports prior to making a decision. It was noted that the Board must make a decision prior to April 15 in order to meet the requirements of the Education Act. Discussion followed on the two reports with Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabeau, circulating and reviewing documents that indicated anticipated bus schedules, transportation times and private transportation costs if the Board were to approve either or both of the school closures.

MOTION CARRIED

Program and Student Services Committee

Trudy Thompson, Program and Student Services Committee Chair, gave a report on a Committee meeting held on January 19, 2000. Among the items discussed at the Committee meeting were:

Financial support from the federal government for the BEST program in the form of a \$15,000 Community Mobilization Program Grant;

Mr. John MacLeod of Dartmouth had made a significant donation to school libraries in the region. He had a special interest in the Shubenacadie and Northport schools and Assistant Superintendent Gary Miller will ensure appropriate distribution of the funds in accordance with Mr. MacLeod's wishes;

Marilyn Thompson, Board representative on the NSSBA Ad-Hoc Committee on Inclusion, had presented the Ad-Hoc Committee's report in December and it had been discussed at the January meeting. The Program Committee had accepted the document and its recommendations and had agreed to request that Ron Marks, representative on the NSSBA Board of Directors, convey to the NSSBA this decision.

Some discussion followed on the inclusion report particularly related to the financial impact of inclusion policies on boards. Ms. Thompson noted that the report identifies the needs related to inclusion and ensuring there is adequate funding to implement the recommendations would hopefully be the next step in the process.

It was noted that the Cobequid Family of Schools, under Supervisor Kerry Geddes' leadership, has taken a special interest in the Autoskills program and is working with the Millbrook Band Council to implement this remedial intervention program for upper elementary/middle school students who are

experiencing reading problems

It was reported that as a follow-up to the Small High Schools Study Report, Assistant Superintendent Gary Miller had directed the principals of Springhill Junior/Senior High and Oxford Regional High to jointly analyze and attempt to apply the options described in the report to their schools. The Committee will be updated on this project as work progresses.

Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Thompson

TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE.

MOTION CARRIED

Canadian School Boards Association Atlantic Conference Report

Tina Hurley gave a report on attendance at the recent Canadian School Boards Association conference held in Halifax from January 27 - 29, 2000. The theme had focused around violence in schools and Ms. Hurley, along with others who had attended, reported that it was an excellent conference. Ms. Hurley left copies of the conference materials with the Board Secretary's office for the perusal of other Board members.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald outlined the highlights of his printed report that was circulated to Board Members and the media in attendance. An emphasis of the report was on family violence and the recognition of Family Violence Week. Included with the report were copies of several handouts that focused on women/partner abuse, child/youth abuse and dating violence.

Mr. MacDonald also reported that the Board had previously agreed to a rather ambitious schedule of meetings and tentative approval dates for the various reports and decisions facing it over the coming months. Combined with the impact of outstanding provincial items including the school board boundaries task force report and the budget, it will be difficult for the Board to meet those goals. Many of the issues the Board must address "go the heart" of schools and communities and Mr. MacDonald cautioned that the Board must be thorough in its discussions and decision-making. One item in this regard that the Board must address is a decision on a schedule of public meetings in the Cumberland County/North Colchester areas to receive input related to the Murley report.

Mr. MacDonald also raised a concern regarding the staffing of schools. In the past, the Board had been able to approve a total staffing allocation prior to receipt of funding figures and thereby allow staffing to begin. However, with the provincial budget situation uncertain, it was recommended that making budget decisions prior to receipt of accurate funding amounts would be unwise.

Mr. MacDonald noted items of interest from the Department and Family news sections of the report and mentioned the many activities that will take place during the month of February to recognize African Heritage Month.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association:

Ron Marks, Board representative on the NSSBA Board of Directors, indicated that there was no new information to bring forward and the next meeting of the Directors was scheduled for February 24 and 25.

Public Question Period:

Prior to the start of question period, the Chair outlined the process to be followed and indicated that the purpose of the question period was to clarify issues or items raised during the evening's meeting.

Doug Robinson, Mayor of the Town of Parrsboro, expressed concern with remarks made during the meeting related to the Mark Boon report that Mr. Robinson felt were inappropriate. He also asked that during discussion of the Murley report that the Board give careful consideration to what is equal and what is equitable. Mr. Robinson questioned the option contained in the Murley report regarding the transfer of River Hebert students to Amherst and said that there appeared to have been no consideration to the use of distance education in providing opportunities for those students.

Trudy Clinton, member of the River Hebert School Advisory Council, indicated that earlier in the meeting concerns had been raised by some Board members with the long distances that students in other areas of the region would have to travel if school closures took place. She stated that some students from the River Hebert area would be required to be on the bus for over one-and one-half hours to attend school in Amherst. Ms. Clinton asked if the public would have an opportunity for input prior to any Board decision on the options

contained in the Murley report. The Board Chair indicated that the Board would discuss the issue of public input at a future meeting.

Debbie Reid of New Glasgow raised a question regarding the ownership of the parcel of land referred to in the Pictou East Site Selection Committee report as the "Parkdale" site. Chair of the Operations/Planning, Research & Technology Committee, George Bruce, referred the question to Board Solicitor Elizabeth van den Eynden. Ms. van den Eynden indicated that a review of the site selection criteria should be completed before responding to the question. Ms. Reid was asked to leave her name, address and phone number with the recording secretary in order that a response could be provided. Ms. Reid agreed to do so but asked why the information was confidential and when she could expect an answer. Ms. van den Eynden reiterated her wish to consult the site selection criteria before responding and indicated that an answer would be provided within one week.

Murray Scott, MLA Cumberland South, stated that it appeared from comments made earlier in the meeting that some Board members had taken exception with his involvement and concern with the Cumberland County/North Colchester High School Study process. He asked that the Board give serious consideration to all options presented for its review as it entered into the decision-making process for the high schools being studied.

Rose MacKenzie, member of Pictou County Council, referred to Mr. MacDonald's administrative report and his comments regarding violence. She asked what school boards could do to reduce violence in schools and if building larger schools and transferring students from small, rural schools to those larger facilities will curb violence. In response, Mr. MacDonald stated that violence occurs in schools of all sizes and is not unique to any specific size of student population.

Jeff Berry, resident of River Hebert, stated his opinion that the transfer of students from River Hebert to Amherst Regional High School would "push those students towards violence".

Cheryl St. Peter, River Hebert Home and School Association, requested that the Board ask the students and parents from Amherst if they would accept students from River Hebert into their school community as she felt they would not be welcome.

Date of Next Meeting:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2000, at the Board Offices, 60 Lorne Street, Truro.

Adjournment:

On motion from Ron Marks, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Ann Hamilton-Wood,
Communications Officer
Recording Secretary

Mary Stevenson,
Board Chair
