



## **Chignecto-Central Regional School Board**

### **Special School Board Meeting**

#### **07-00 Minutes**

**May 24, 2000**

A special public meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, May 24, 2000 in the cafeteria at Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro commencing at 6:30 p.m.

#### **Present**

Kaaren Barkhouse  
George Bruce  
Cheryl Cutler  
John English  
Lloyd Gibbs  
Jim Grue  
Tina Hurley  
Bernie Knockwood  
Ron Marks  
Marilyn Murray  
David Myles  
Robert Parker  
Mary Stevenson  
Marilyn Thompson  
Trudy Thompson

#### **In Attendance**

Ann Hamilton-Wood  
Elmer MacDonald  
Gary Miller  
Robert Renouf  
Dale Sabeau

Helene Smith  
Elizabeth vanden Eynden

**Absent**

John Henderson, with regrets

Chair Mary Stevenson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. She indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to present preliminary information on the nature of the reductions required for the Board to develop a balanced budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year. Chair Stevenson emphasized that it was NOT a budget approval meeting.

**Report from Committee of the Whole**

Vice-Chair Robert Parker gave a report on Committee of the Whole meetings held over the past three weeks and reviewed the difficult process the Board followed to attempt to manage a \$3 million reduction in funding. [copy of report on file]

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Jim Grue

**THAT THE BUDGET REDUCTIONS AND ‘ADD-BACKS’ AS DISCUSSED BE APPROVED.**

In response to a question about the loss of a Teacher Assistant in one particular classroom, it was noted that although the teacher assistant hours remain at status quo, the actual placements of these teacher assistants could change according to the greatest need.

It was further noted that the need for teacher assistants for special education students is increasing each year, due in part to the Government closing the institutions for special needs students.

It was noted that one board member did not agree with the process relating to administration, feeling that a different model should have been studied and, therefore, would not be voting in favor of the motion.

Dale Sabeau, in response to a request, outlined the cuts in Operations.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

[Negative votes cast by Ron Marks, Marilyn Thompson and Tina Hurley]

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Jim Grue

**THAT THE NEED FOR A VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PROGRAM CONSULTANT BE REVISITED BY THE BOARD IN AUGUST - SUBJECT TO PRIOR APPOINTMENT BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IF FUNDS CAN BE FOUND WITHIN A BALANCED BUDGET.  
MOTION CARRIED.**

In response to a question about the progress made to date with regard to the vocational/technical program consultant, Mr. MacDonald stated that he feels confident that this objective can be achieved before the end of this school year.

## Public Question Period

In response to a question from Ellen Lamont about handouts it was explained that this meeting is not to approve the budget; that will be done at a later date once the profile sheets have been received from the Department of Education and the budget is finalized.

In response to a question from Dave Ryan about how the board can justify each board member getting paid \$60 per meeting as compared to a lesser amount paid to bus drivers to transport students to school it was noted that board members do not get \$60 per meeting; they are paid a flat stipend of approximately \$7,000 per year.

In response to Robin Young's question about the explanation of private conveyance savings it was pointed out that this might mean a special needs bus.

It was further pointed out that the board is not expecting a change at this time involving more money being available; therefore, the board is not anticipating any additional change to the teacher assistant hours.

In responding to Carol Jones' questions about the administration figures in various school boards, Mr. MacDonald emphasized that the information printed in the media was not correct and, in fact, the paper that had run the original story, had printed a retraction of sorts and that the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, in establishing its administration, abided by the definition given by the Department of Education to a "T".

He further noted that during the amalgamation process it was felt that a single central office would lose touch with all of our schools in an area twice the size of Prince Edward Island and the decision of the Board to go with the five families of schools had the approval of the Department of Education. Mr. MacDonald indicated that the board would probably realize a saving in the vicinity of \$.5 million if the Families of Schools offices were to close.

Mr. MacDonald responded to a rhetorical question by Art Lindsay's by emphasizing the tremendous effort this board has put into getting the government to change its direction and decision over the past few months – going from a \$7.6 million to a \$2.9 million shortfall ~ that is almost miraculous. He further stated that this board's priority is to the students in the classroom, but the board is also legally responsible to the Department of Education for bringing in a balanced budget.

*Robert Parker reiterated that if it hadn't been for the school boards and superintendents working as a group, many jobs would have been eliminated across the province. He also stated that the public helped a great deal to get as much money back as we did.*

In responding to a question by Crystal States and the position of Race Relations Coordinator being reduced to half time, Mr. MacDonald indicated that word had just been received that negotiations with the federal/provincial government for funding to keep the position as full-time are nearing completion.

In response to Brenda Webb's question about the stalemate on teacher assistants, it was noted

that it WOULD impact on the classroom.

**Adjournment**

On motion from Trudy Thompson, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Helene C. Smith,  
Secretary to the Board  
May 26, 2000

Mary Stevenson,  
Chair

**Return to Governance**