



Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

10-00 Minutes

October 11, 2000

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, October 11, 2000 at the Stellarton Middle/High School commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Kaaren Barkhouse
George Bruce
John English
Jim Grue (7:20 p.m.)
John Henderson
Tina Hurley
Ron Marks
Marilyn Murray
David Myles
Robert Parker
Mary Stevenson
Marilyn Thompson
Trudy Thompson

In Attendance:

Karen Casey
Ann Hamilton-Wood
Elmer MacDonald
Gary Miller
Brian Murphy
Robert Renouf
Dale Sabean
Nancy Mosher
Harry Munro

Absent:

Cheryl Cutler, with regrets
Bernie Knockwood, with regrets

Chair Mary Stevenson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the current board.

Agenda:

**Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
THAT THE AGENDA BE ADOPTED AS CIRCULATED.
MOTION CARRIED**

Minutes:

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by David Myles

**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2000 MEETING BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.
MOTION CARRIED**

Presentation:

Nova Scotia School Boards Association Video

The Board viewed a video prepared for the Nova Scotia School Boards Association that outlined the role and responsibilities of a board member. The video also highlighted information on the upcoming school board elections scheduled for October 21.

Correspondence:

The Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary updated the board on items of correspondence received since the last meeting.

Minister of Education, Provincial Funding Arrangement

Notification was received from the Minister of Education that payment had been made to the Board to implement the May 5th funding agreement reached between the province and school boards. In addition to the payment received, the province also relieved the board of amounts owing to the Department, to the Maintenance Stabilization Fund and to the Nova Scotia Municipal Finance Corporation.

Minister of Finance, Public Service Superannuation Plan

Correspondence was received from Neil LeBlanc, Minister of Finance, advising that an Order in Council had been approved to grant the Board's request that the non-teaching employees of the Board become members of the Public Service Superannuation Plan.

Minister of Education, Elmsdale Elementary

Confirmation was received from the Minister of Education advising that the construction of a replacement for the Elmsdale Elementary School will proceed immediately. The site selected for the new facility is known as the Wilbur site and the tender has been awarded to Rideau Construction Limited. Work with the SST team will begin within the next few days to finalize the floor plans.

A question was raised regarding the site selection process. In the past, following the assessment of the selected sites by the province, the final decision was made by the Board on the location of the school. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations indicated that in this case, the Wilbur site was the only one available for purchase and it had been the second choice of the site selection committee.

As a follow-up to a motion made at the last meeting, it was asked whether correspondence had been forwarded to the Minister of Education regarding the composition of the Special Education Policy Review Implementation Committee. The Board Chair indicated that the letter had been sent but to date, no reply had been received.

Reports from Standing Committees:

Committee of the Whole

Board Vice-Chair Robert Parker reported on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on October 4, 2000.

A previously-tabled motion to initiate the development of a policy to set guidelines for the minimum number of students at which point it is feasible to continue operation of school building was lifted from the table to allow for discussion. In response to a request made at the last Committee of the Whole meeting, the Board solicitor had determined that the Board cannot develop such a policy under the terms and conditions of the Education Act.

Capital Construction Plan

Mr. Parker reported that Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabeau, had prepared a draft document containing a prioritized list of projects and supporting documentation that had been discussed in detail.

It was MOVED by Robert Parker, seconded by Ron Marks,

**THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PLAN
DOCUMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AS PRESENTED.**

Mr. Sabean provided background information on how the report had been prepared and highlighted how the ranking of the various projects had been done in accordance with criteria established by the Department of Education. Mr. Sabean reviewed the list indicating that while the Department of Education had requested only six (6) projects be submitted in each category, the list contained all projects considered to be necessary. Mr. Sabean also reported that a meeting had been held the previous evening (October 10) in the Brookfield area to discuss a recommendation resulting from a Department of Education audit that the Brookfield Memorial Elementary School be decommissioned and the junior high building be renovated to accommodate those students in conjunction with the construction of the already-approved new high school for that area. It was indicated that while there was no clear consensus from the Brookfield community on grade configurations, there was a request made at the community meeting that the elementary school project be moved to number one on the renovation/upgrade listing.

**It was MOVED by Kaaren Barkhouse, seconded by Robert Parker
TO AMEND THE MOTION SO THAT A REPLACEMENT FACILITY FOR THE BROOKFIELD
MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BECOME THE TOP PRIORITY ON THE BOARD'S
CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION LIST.**

During discussion, the issue of the appropriateness of the amendment was raised as there had been no public consultation process conducted. Mr. Sabean did indicate that another meeting to discuss grade configurations is planned for early November. The Superintendent recommended that the Board approve the submission of the report as presented in order to allow time to reconsider the Brookfield area issues.

AMENDMENT DEFEATED

Questions were raised regarding the balance of the projects on the list to which Mr. Sabean responded including the impact of the recommendations on the existing facilities in Pictou County following the construction of the two new high schools for that area.

MOTION CARRIED

IN FAVOUR - 9, AGAINST - 4

(KAAREN BARKHOUSE, JOHN HENDERSON, ROBERT PARKER, MARILYN THOMPSON)

Staffing Report

Mr. Parker reported that Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Dr. Brian Murphy, had highlighted information contained in the staffing report for the 2000-2001 school year as circulated to Board members. Dr. Murphy responded to additional questions arising as a result of the discussion at Committee of the Whole.

Technology Partnership

The Superintendent, Elmer MacDonald, and the Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Student Services, Gary Miller, had updated the Board on preliminary discussions that have been taking place to provide some innovative technology-based programs for students in senior high schools across our region.

**It was MOVED by Robert Parker, seconded by John English,
THAT THE BOARD APPROVE, IN PRINCIPLE, THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOPING A
PARTNERSHIP INTENDED TO PROVIDE INNOVATIVE, TECHNOLOGY-BASED PROGRAMS FOR
SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS ACROSS THE CCRSB.**

MOTION CARRIED

**It was MOVED by Robert Parker, seconded by Tina Hurley,
TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.**

MOTION CARRIED

At this point in the meeting, the Chair thanked Principal Eileen English for hosting the Board meeting and also extended congratulations on her recent appointment as the principal for the soon-to-be-constructed high school serving the Pictou East area.

Finance and Human Resources Committee

Committee Chair Ron Marks reported on a meeting of the Finance and Human Resources Committee held on

September 27, 2000.

The Committee had received information on the School Insurance Program proposal to reorganize as an insurance reciprocal.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE SCHOOL INSURANCE PROGRAM BEING FORMED AS A RECIPROCAL INSURANCE PROGRAM.

MOTION CARRIED

Teacher Assistant Funding

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by David Myles

THAT, BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEEDS, THE BOARD APPROVE FUNDING FOR AN ADDITIONAL EIGHTY HOURS PER DAY OF TEACHER ASSISTANT TIME THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM BY USING A BUDGET ALLOCATION PREVIOUSLY SET ASIDE TO DEAL WITH ISSUES ARISING IN SEPTEMBER 2000.

The Assistant Superintendent of Program and Student Services, Gary Miller, indicated that this increase would adequately address current needs. Concerns were once again expressed with the ever-increasing cost of teacher assistant time and if the Board should be attempting to find a more cost-effective way to help special needs students. Mr. Miller stated that the Board and, in particular, his department are anxiously awaiting the report of the provincial Special Education Policy Implementation Committee in hopes that some innovative ways on dealing with the complex issue of special education and services will be coming forward.

MOTION CARRIED

Bank Monitoring

It was reported that, as part of a new funding agreement between school boards and the Province of Nova Scotia, the province would be permitted to monitor school board bank accounts. In order to authorize the bank to release this information, a board resolution is required.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by David Myles

THAT THE BOARD AUTHORIZE THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA TO RELEASE INFORMATION ON ALL CCRSB ACCOUNT BALANCES, LINES OF CREDIT, AND NET ACCOUNT POSITIONS TO THE APPROPRIATE STAFF OF THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

When asked how this authorization would be different from past practices, the Director of Finance, Robert Renouf, indicated that never before has the province dealt directly with banking institutions regarding a school board's financial position. Board members expressed their concern with this change primarily since the CCRSB, unlike other boards in the province, has consistently balanced its budget.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by George Bruce, seconded by Marilyn Murray,

TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

MOTION CARRIED

Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee

George Bruce, Chair of the Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee, reported on a Committee meeting held on September 20, 2000.

Elmsdale School Site

The Committee had approved a motion that the present Elmsdale Elementary School site will become the future site of the Occupational Preparatory Site for the Nova Family area by September 2001.

Use of School Facilities

The Committee had also adopted a motion that the recently revised regulations relating to the Use of School Facilities be approved that would allow the current rate structure to remain in place.

**It was MOVED by George Bruce, seconded by John English
TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING, RESEARCH AND
TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE.**

A question was raised as to what changes were made to the Use of Schools Regulations. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations reported there were three major revisions primarily to reflect the recent amendments to the liability insurance requirements for non-school-based activities. It was indicated that the changes are effective immediately and that schools have been advised on how to implement them.

MOTION CARRIED

Programs and Student Services Committee

Chair of the Programs and Student Services Committee, Trudy Thompson, reported that a committee meeting had been held on September 20, 2000.

Central Colchester Junior High: Implementation of Middle School

The Committee had reviewed the implementation of a middle school at Central Colchester Junior High School and, based on information provided by staff, had determined that the school is proceeding at an acceptable rate toward implementation of the middle school concept and that full implementation including all feeder schools cannot be met by September 2001. This review had taken place in response to a request made by the Cobequid Consolidated Elementary School Parent-Teacher Group.

Student Support Worker Project Evaluation

The Committee had received an evaluation report of the Student Support Worker Project prepared by Robert Upshaw. Mr. Upshaw, former Director of the African-Canadian Studies Division of the Department of Education, had been hired through an HRDC grant to conduct the evaluation. The Committee will be reviewing the report at a future meeting.

**It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by John Henderson
TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE.
MOTION CARRIED**

Superintendent's Report:

In his opening comments, Superintendent Elmer MacDonald, acknowledged the leadership and dedicated service of the Board members during the past three years and in the case of some members, many more than three years. He noted that the amalgamation of three school boards created a tremendous challenge for elected board members with the need to respond to the individual concerns of constituents, while working within a legislated mandate to serve as a governing body responsible for the educational services provided to all children across the regional board. Mr. MacDonald thanked those board members not returning and encouraged those members coming back - either by acclamation or through new elections - to use the knowledge gained from the board's achievements to date to provide a good base for the challenges ahead.

The Superintendent made special acknowledgement of Chair Mary Stevenson for her leadership. He stated that chairing a group of sixteen strong-willed individuals in a manner that strikes a balance between respecting personal opinions and gaining majority consensus on important issues is an incredible challenge and he thanked her for her commitment to that task since amalgamation. Mr. MacDonald also highlighted a list of achievements of the outgoing board that included a wide range of program and operational initiatives accomplished over the past three years.

Mr. MacDonald gave a very brief overview of his printed report noting that the annual report of board operations for the 1999-2000 school year will be submitted to the Department of Education in accordance with the Education Act and copies will be made available to board members, schools and education partners in the near future.

It was also noted that October 16 - 20 is School Bus Safety Week across Canada and as part of the recognition activities, a media release would be issued on behalf of provincial school boards and their transportation staff bringing attention to the fact that many drivers in Nova Scotia are not stopping for the flashing red lights on school buses. It is hoped that by bringing this matter to the attention of the public, drivers will become more

vigilant of the danger caused when vehicles do not stop for school buses whose students are boarding or disembarking.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association:

Board representative to the NSSBA Board of Directors, Ron Marks, highlighted several items contained in the "Month in Review" report circulated by the NSSBA. Among the matters addressed by Mr. Marks were two upcoming conferences: 1) Board Member Orientation Seminar at the Citadel Halifax from October 29 to 31 and: 2) Child Poverty Conference at Mount Saint Vincent University from November 16 to 18. Mr. Marks also indicated that copies of the Minister of Education's response to the NSSBA resolution package was being distributed and Board members would be receiving a copy.

New Business:

Freedom of Information / Protection of Privacy Act

The Superintendent reported that beginning on November 23, 2000, the Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy Act will come into effect for school boards across the province of Nova Scotia. The Act gives the public a right to access of public records, gives individuals a right of access to personal information on themselves and establishes a clearly-defined process for the provision of the information and under what terms exemptions can be made. In order to adhere to the rules and regulations in the Act, it was stated that the Board must designate an individual to assume overall responsibility for process.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Thompson

**THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS OF THE CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD BE THE "DESIGNATED HEAD" OF THE BOARD FOR PURPOSES OF THE APPLICATION OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT.
MOTION CARRIED**

Public Question Period

Tammy McNutt, representing the Brookfield Memorial Home and School Association, asked if an audit had been conducted by the Department of Education for the Stellarton Middle/High School and if not, why it is ranked number one on the board's renovation/upgrade list. In response, the Superintendent indicated that project was approved by the province several years ago and that Department of Education staff have visited the facility. The project was placed on hold until a decision was made on the construction of two new high schools in Pictou County.

David Carter, father of three students at Brookfield Memorial Elementary, asked if the board had received and reviewed the list of capital construction and renovation projects prior to this evening's meeting. The Board Chair indicated that the list had been presented to the Operations Committee on September 20 and had been reviewed and discussed in detail by the entire board at a Committee of the Whole meeting on October 4, 2000.

In Camera

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Robert Parker

**THAT THE BOARD GO "IN CAMERA."
MOTION CARRIED**

It was MOVED by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Mary Stevenson

**THAT THE MEETING GO OUT OF "IN CAMERA".
MOTION CARRIED**

Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Board Chair

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary

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