

April 11, 2001

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

04-01 Minutes

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The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, April 11, 2001, in the Board Room at Central Office in Truro commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Kaaren Barkhouse
Robin Bourque
Jim Grue
John Henderson
Mark Lavers
Mary Macaulay
Lawrence MacKinnon

Ron Marks
Marilyn Murray
David Myles
Mackie Ross
Marilyn Thompson
Trudy Thompson
Raymond Tynes

In Attendance:

Karen Casey
Ann Hamilton-Wood
Elmer MacDonald
Gary Miller
Brian Murphy

Robert Renouf
Dale Sabean
David White
Harry Munroe

Absent:

Cheryl Cutler, with regrets
Bernie Knockwood, with regrets
Robert Parker, with regrets

Acting Chair Trudy Thompson called the meeting to order.

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Approval of Agenda:

Moved by David Myles, seconded by Ron Marks
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Jim Grue, seconded by Marilyn Murray
TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 21, 2001 MEETING AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation – Nova Scotia School Boards Association

The Acting Chair welcomed Lavinia Parrish-Zwicker, President, and Frank Barteaux, Executive Director, of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association. Ms. Parrish-Zwicker and Mr. Barteaux were in attendance to present an overview on the operation of the Association with regards to governance, services provided and staff support structure.

In her opening comments, Ms. Parrish-Zwicker complimented the Board for being fiscally responsible and for the creative ways it has found to do good things for students while staying within its financial limitations. She also complimented Ron Marks for his representation of the Board on the NSSBA Board of Directors.

Ms. Parris-Zwicker indicated that the Association, through a strategic planning process, has established goals focusing on advocacy, communications and service to boards. She also provided brief highlights of the Association's standing committees structure.

Mr. Barteaux outlined the Association's staff support structure and also circulated an information package including budget highlights, dues and fees and a summary of the dollars saved by boards through participation in various initiatives. Mr. Barteaux suggested that any member who may have questions about the Association should refer them to Mr. Marks.

The Acting Chair thanked Ms. Parrish-Zwicker and Mr. Barteaux for attending the meeting and for the informative presentation.

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Business Arising from the Minutes:

Policy Statement: Child Poverty

The Superintendent indicated that the development of a policy statement on child poverty had been referred to the Acting Coordinator of Special Services, Ed Colquhoun, who has taken the initial steps in establishing a committee. The Board was reminded that policy development, particularly in an area such as this, will be a long-term project.

Pictou East Grade Configuration

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by John Henderson

TO LIFT FROM THE TABLE A MOTION ORIGINALLY MADE ON MARCH 21, 2001 THAT THE NEW PICTOU EAST HIGH SCHOOL BE CONSTRUCTED TO HOUSE GRADES TEN, ELEVEN AND TWELVE AS ORIGINALLY APPROVED.

MOTION CARRIED

Several Board members expressed their opinions both in favor and opposed to including the grade nine students in the new facility. Questions were raised as to whether or not the Department of Education would consider expanding the project based on recent changes to the Design Requirements Manual and the overall size reduction for the facility. Concerns were also expressed regarding the impact on the students remaining in the old buildings if the grade nine students were moved.

After lengthy discussion, the question was called,

ORIGINAL MOTION CARRIED

Nay Votes – Kaaren Barkhouse, Jim Grue, Marilyn Murray, David Myles, Trudy Thompson

Correspondence:

The Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary reviewed correspondence received since the last Board meeting. Two items had been referred for review and action.

A letter from Karen Sanford, President, Enfield District Parent Action Group, regarding teacher access to the building was forwarded to the Operations Department for action and response. Correspondence was also received from Jim Campbell, Chair of the CEC School Advisory Council, expressing ongoing concerns regarding school calendar issues including examination schedules. This item had been referred to the Programs and Student Services Committee with a recommendation that the SAC make a presentation to the Committee regarding their concerns.

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Nova Scotia School Boards Association

Correspondence had been received from the NSSBA seeking Board action on three items.

1. that the Board put forward the name of any member who may wish to serve on the Executive of the Association for the 2001-2002 term;

No nominations were put forward from the Board.

2. that the Board nominate a member to serve on the Board of Directors of the Association for the 2001-2002 term;

It was MOVED by David Myles, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse

THAT RON MARKS SERVE AS THE CCRSB REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NSSBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE 2001-2002 TERM.

MOTION CARRIED

3. that the Board indicate the names of eight voting delegates to represent the Board at the Association's annual general meeting to be held on May 25, 2001 as part of the annual conference, this year being hosted by the Strait Regional School Board in Antigonish;

Six Board members - Kaaren Barkhouse, Robin Bourque, Jim Grue, Mark Lavers, Mary Macaulay, and Trudy Thompson - indicated that they were planning to attend and would serve as voting delegates. Others were asked to consider attending and were asked to advise the Board Secretary.

Committee Reports:

Committee of the Whole

Acting Vice-Chair, Ron Marks, reported on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on April 4, 2001.

Presentation – Student Smoking Issues

The Board had welcomed Sue MacIntosh, Helen Farrell and Lyn Hale of Public Health Services who presented information on student smoking issues with the focus of promoting smoke-free school areas. Using statistical information, the presentation recognized the Board's policy on smoke-free buildings while encouraging the Board to eliminate designated smoking areas at the region's schools. Following the presentation, the Board referred the matter to the Operations and P/R/T Committee for further discussion and recommendation.

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New School Construction

Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology, Karen Casey, had provided a detailed report to the Board on the impact that changes to the Design Requirements Manual for new school construction will have on the schools being planned for the CCRSB region. Ms. Casey indicated that if implemented, the reductions would see schools built substantially smaller and with fewer resources than those constructed in the province over the last five years. It had been stated that cabinet had approved the revisions to the Manual approximately ten months ago but that school boards were only recently advised of the changes.

In light of the number of construction projects either in the construction, planning or preliminary stages in the CCRSB area, Board members had expressed anger and frustration with the information shared by Ms. Casey. It had been agreed that the matter would be raised with the Deputy Minister of Education, Dennis Cochrane, at a meeting with the Board scheduled for April 10, 2001. It had been further agreed, and

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Lawrence MacKinnon

THAT THE BOARD REQUEST A MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO DISCUSS THE BOARD'S NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AND THAT A DELEGATION CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATION FROM EACH AREA OF THE REGION ATTEND THAT MEETING.

MOTION CARRIED.

It was agreed that the Acting Chair Trudy Thompson, Acting Vice-Chair Ron Marks, Kaaren Barkhouse and Marilyn Thompson would serve as the delegation to meet with the Minister.

It had been agreed that a media release outlining the Board's concerns with the changes to the design requirement manual be prepared and circulated and it was reported that this had been done on April 6, 2001.

African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus

The Board had discussed, in some detail, a letter recently received from the African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus seeking the Board's support in its efforts to obtain a seat on the Nova Scotia School Boards Association Board of Directors. Mr. Marks had reported that the NSSBA had previously agreed that the Association is an association of school boards and it was felt that groups other than school boards, such as the African Nova Scotia School Board Caucus, should be given associate member status and not a seat on the Board. It was noted that the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (First Nations Education Committee) already holds associate member status in the Association.

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As part of the discussion, it had been suggested that the NSSBA attempt to include representatives of the Caucus on each of its committees in order that the group may assist with the work of the Association and be part of the decision-making process. Mr. Marks had agreed to bring this suggestion forward to the next Board of Directors meeting on April 5 and 6.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue
TO RECEIVE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT.

During discussion, Board member Raymond Tynes, took exception to the discussions that had taken place at the Committee of the Whole and expressed his concerns with the African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus being offered associate member status and not a seat on the NSSBA Board of Directors. He quoted a dictionary definition of “associate” and indicated that the Caucus felt it should have an equal status on the Board of Directors.

In responding to Mr. Tynes’ remarks, Mr. Marks indicated that it was not the intention of the Association to say that any group should not have equal representation on the Board of Directors however the legislation that created the NSSBA clearly states that it is an “association of school boards” with each school board having one seat on the Board. It was noted that a resolution on the issue has been submitted by the Halifax Regional School Board and will be discussed at the NSSBA annual general meeting in May.

MOTION CARRIED

Finance and Human Resources

Committee Chair, Ron Marks, reported on a meeting held on March 28, 2001 with all Board members invited. The meeting had been a special session to review projections of revenue and expenditures to March 31, 2001 and it was reported that the CCRSB is on track to bring in a balanced budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

The Committee had also approved budget transfers in accordance with the established Budget Transfer Guidelines. It was noted that the Committee is currently working on the development of a draft budget for 2001-2002 and all Board members will be invited to attend each of the budget meetings.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue
**TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES
COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.**

A question was raised regarding the Budget Transfer Guidelines that was responded to by the Director of Finance, Robert Renouf.

MOTION CARRIED

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Operations and Planning, Research and Technology

Marilyn Thompson, Chair of the Operations and P/R/T Committee, reported on a meeting held on March 26, 2001.

Maritime Arms Collectors Association

It was reported that the Maritime Arms Collectors Association had made a presentation to the Committee regarding an antique and modern firearms show and sale that they wished to hold at Bible Hill Junior High School.

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Jim Grue
THAT THE BOARD APPROVE A REQUEST FROM THE MARITIME ARMS COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION TO HOLD THEIR 40TH ANNUAL ANTIQUE AND MODERN FIREARMS SHOW AND SALE AT BIBLE HILL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, PROVIDED THE SIGNS ARE NOT DISPLAYED BEFORE STUDENTS ARE DISMISSED ON THE RESPECTIVE FRIDAY AFTERNOON AND THAT ANY SIGNS NOT INCLUDE THE WORDS “GUN SHOW”.

A concern was expressed that approving this event might be seen as a type of endorsement by the Board for the sale and use of guns. During discussion, it was indicated that the group involved advocate the safe use of firearms and that the school community, including the school advisory council, is supportive of the project.

**MOTION CARRIED
Nay Vote – Mary Macaulay**

Former Enfield District Elementary School Building

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse
THAT THE OLD ENFIELD DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BE DECLARED SURPLUS TO BOARD NEEDS AND BE OFFERED FOR RETURN TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF EAST HANTS.

MOTION CARRIED

Truro P-9 Study Committee

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
THAT THE PROCESS TO ESTABLISH SCHOOL SITE SELECTION COMMITTEES FOR A NEW TRURO JUNIOR HIGH, TRURO WEST AND TRURO SOUTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS COMMENCE.

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Some concerns were expressed with taking this action while information is still pending from the Department of Education on approval for the projects.

It was MOVED by Raymond Tynes, seconded by Jim Grue
**TO TABLE DISCUSSION ON THIS MATTER TO THE IN-CAMERA SESSION
FOLLOWING THE REGULAR MEETING.**

MOTION CARRIED

East River St.Mary's Elementary School

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
**THAT THE EAST RIVER ST. MARY'S SCHOOL BE CLOSED
PERMANENTLY EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2001.**

During discussion on the motion, there were concerns expressed with the length of time that young students would be required to travel on a bus to attend school in Thorburn. There was some discussion on the requirement to meet the April 15 deadline for making a decision and it was reported that the regulations established by the Department of Education are clear with regards to the date.

Board members were reminded that the School Closure Committee had recommended closing the facility, based on input from the community, with the condition that transportation be limited to no more than one hour each way.

It was MOVED by John Henderson,
**THAT THE MOTION BE AMENDED TO STATE THAT THE EAST RIVER ST.
MARY'S SCHOOL BE CLOSED IN SEPTEMBER 2001 PROVIDED
ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION TAKING SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN
ONE HOUR BE PUT IN PLACE.**

Board Solicitor, Harry Munroe, indicated that the Board could not place restrictions on a motion to close a school and therefore the motion was out of order. With the question called,

ORIGINAL MOTION DEFEATED
**Nay Votes – Robin Bourque, Jim Grue, John Henderson, Mark Lavers,
Lawrence MacKinnon, Mary Macaulay, Mackie Ross,
Marilyn Thompson, Raymond Tynes**

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Day of Mourning

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Jim Grue
THAT THE BOARD DECLARE APRIL 27 (in observance of April 28) AS AN ANNUAL DAY OF MOURNING IN RECOGNITION OF WORKERS KILLED, INJURED OR DISABLED ON THE JOB.

Committee Chair, Marilyn Thompson, indicated that the Cumberland District Labor Council had submitted a request to the Operations and P/R/T Committee regarding the Day of Mourning and Ms. Thompson read a proclamation that was subsequently signed by the Acting Board Chair.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse
TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE.

MOTION CARRIED

Programs and Student Services Committee

John Henderson, Chair of the Programs and Student Services Committee reported on a meeting of the Committee held on March 27, 2001. The Committee meeting had been devoted to the discussion of issues regarding the delivery of optional and Core French programs. The discussion was held in the context of the *Vision and Key Principles* document the Board adopted in December 1998. Mr. Henderson reported on the following highlights:

1. The Committee supported, in principle, authorizing staff to activate the application process for Early Immersion at St Charles Elementary in Amherst and Late Immersion at Central Colchester Junior High in Onslow and to implement these **new** programs if student numbers permit.
2. The Committee discussed, at length, implementing a new Late Immersion program at E. B. Chandler Junior High in Amherst. The Committee determined that the number of expressions of interest did not warrant moving forward with implementation in 2001-02. However, the Committee directed staff to re-survey the catchment area in 2002.
3. The Committee, in spite of a lower than expected number of applications, supported the staff recommendation to continue with Primary Immersion at Douglas Street in Truro.
4. The use of “draws” for student placement in optional programs was discussed at length. Options were considered. The most desirable option is to be able to accept all applicants; but that option presents serious financial and educational implications for the Board. The Committee **agreed** to support the continuation of draws but has asked

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- staff to consult with School Advisory Councils, the Canadian Parents for French and other interested parties in identifying do-able alternatives to draws.
5. The Board does not provide **transportation** to optional programs. However, students are accommodated if there are available spaces on busses traveling to schools where these programs are offered. Since these are optional programs, the Committee **agreed** to support the continuation of present practice.
 6. The Committee also **agreed** to continue the present practice of not automatically including siblings in optional programs. The issue of “fairness” for all applicants was the chief concern.
 7. The Committee discussed the delivery of elementary Core French. There are two models: (1) specialist (circuit and school-based) and (2) classroom teacher. Both have strengths. Regardless of the model, the Committee expects a high quality of French program for students. The Committee directed staff to keep the Board informed if that quality appears to be in jeopardy and to make recommendations on addressing that concern in a timely way.
 8. The Committee also supported implementation of a Region-wide oral proficiency testing program for Grade 12 students enrolled in French. The test measures the level of fluency according to an international standard. Students will receive a certificate describing their level of proficiency. Staff will budget for full implementation of this initiative over the next 2-3 years.

Mr. Henderson advised that the Committee minutes detail several other French-related topics and he encouraged Board members to peruse them at their convenience.

Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald made a few opening comments and asked that Board members review the report at their leisure. A question was raised regarding a reference made in the report to higher than usual costs for repairs to buses resulting from the state of many roads in the region.

During discussion, it was noted that not only have repair costs been higher but in a few cases, students have suffered a number of injuries this spring when buses have encountered pot holes and broken pavement. The Board directed that correspondence be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Public Works expressing concerns with the state of disrepair of roads in the CCRSB region and in particular secondary roads.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association

Board representative to the NSSBA, Ron Marks, circulated copies of a written report that summarized the discussions held at the most recent Board of Directors meeting. Issues discussed had included the NSSBA internal review, standing committee selection process, funding for heritage fairs and a follow-up to school board elections.

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Public Question and Answer Period:

There were no questions raised by members of the media or public in attendance.

Mr. Marks asked for a five minute recess.

When the meeting resumed, Mr. Marks asked that the Board consider suspending its normal rules of order so that the motion regarding the closure of East River St. Mary's could be reconsidered. Any motion to allow that to happen would require unanimous agreement from the Board.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by John Henderson
**THAT THE BOARD SUSPEND ITS RULES OF ORDER (Section 5.32) TO
ALLOW FOR THE RECONSIDERATION OF THE MOTION REGARDING
THE CLOSURE OF EAST RIVER ST. MARY'S SCHOOL.**

**MOTION DEFEATED
Two Nay Votes – Not Unanimous**

Time, 9:50 p.m.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Thompson
THAT THE MEETING MOVE TO IN-CAMERA SESSION.

MOTION CARRIED

Time, 10:26 p.m.

It was MOVED by Lawrence MacKinnon, seconded by Marilyn Murray
THAT THE MEETING MOVE FROM IN-CAMERA TO PUBLIC SESSION.

MOTION CARRIED

Truro P-9 Study Group

It was agreed

**TO LIFT FROM THE TABLE THE MOTION THAT THE PROCESS TO
ESTABLISH THE SCHOOL SITE SELECTION COMMITTEES FOR A NEW
TRURO JUNIOR HIGH, TRURO WEST AND TRURO SOUTH ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS COMMENCE.**

ORIGINAL MOTION DEFEATED

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Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Trudy Thompson, Acting Board Chair

Date

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary

Date