

# Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

## Regular Meeting

### 08-01 Minutes

### August 22, 2001

---

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, August 22, 2001, in the Board Room at Central Office, Lorne Street, Truro, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Present:**

Kaaren Barkhouse  
Robin Bourque  
John Henderson  
Bernie Knockwood  
Mary Macaulay  
Lawrence MacKinnon  
Ron Marks  
Marilyn Murray

David Myles  
Robert Parker  
Mackie Ross  
Cheryl Samson  
Marilyn Thompson  
Trudy Thompson  
Raymond Tynes

#### **In Attendance:**

Larry Elchuck  
Ann Hamilton-Wood  
Elmer MacDonald  
Gary Miller

Robert Renouf  
Dale Sabean  
David White  
Bruce MacIntosh

#### **Absent:**

Jim Grue, with regrets  
Mark Lavers, with regrets

Board Chair Robert Parker called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone back from the summer break.

August 22, 2001

---

**Approval of Agenda:**

It was MOVED by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Trudy Thompson  
**TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of Minutes:**

It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by David Myles  
**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JUNE 13, 2001 BE APPROVED AS  
CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Ron Marks  
**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 1, 2001 BE APPROVED  
AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Board Chair reported that Gary Miller had recently been appointed as the board's new superintendent and he indicated how pleased the Board was with Mr. Miller's selection. Mr. Parker stated that Mr. Miller would assume his new duties at a time still to be negotiated. Mr. Miller thanked the Board for the opportunity and stated that he was very pleased and honored to have been selected. He stated that he is looking forward to working with board members to ensure that the CCRSB remains "number one" in the province.

**Correspondence:**

The Communications Officer/Board Secretary reported on items of correspondence received.

**Minister of Education, Meeting with Board Chairs**

Minister of Education, Jane Purves, had written to all board chairs inviting them to attend a meeting on August 21, 2001 in Halifax. The Board Chair indicated that he would report on the meeting later in the evening.

August 22, 2001

---

### Minister of Education, Communication Issues

Correspondence had been received from the Minister of Education in response to a letter sent by the Board Chair expressing concerns with the Pictou East site selection process and the lack of communication coming from the Minister's office on the issue. The Board Secretary indicated that copies of the correspondence had been shared with all board members.

### Nova Scotia School Boards Association

Lavinia Parrish-Zwicker, President of the NSSBA, had written to request that the CCRSB appoint a member to serve on the Association's Resolutions and Election Committee for the 2001-2002 year. The information had been copied for all board members to review and it was agreed that discussion/decision on the matter would take place at the September meeting.

### Student Thank You Notes

Students Terri Fenton and Amy Campbell of Hants North Rural High School had written to express their thanks for the Board's support of their attendance at a summer academy held at St. Francis Xavier University.

## **Committee Reports:**

### **Committee of the Whole**

The Vice-Chair reported that no Committee of the Whole meeting had been held since the June regular board meeting and subsequently there was no report to bring forward.

### **Finance and Human Resources**

Committee Chair Ron Marks reported on a meeting held on June 27, 2001. The committee had received information on the financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2001 and had requested that the Board Chair and Vice Chair schedule a time for the external auditors to present the financial statements to the Board.

The committee had received three items for information purposes: an update on staffing and an overview of the staffing processes; SAP (integrated data management program), which is being implemented in school boards across the province beginning in September, 2001 and an update on financing for a central operations depot.

August 22, 2001

---

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Bernie Knockwood  
**TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES  
COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Operations and Planning, Research and Technology**

Marilyn Thompson, Chair of the Operations and P/R/T Committee, reported on two meetings – one held on June 20, 2001 and the second held earlier on the evening of August 22, 2001.

At the June 20, 2001 meeting, the Committee had received the following items for information: a copy of a memo that had been distributed to principals advising that filtering software had been installed on Linux boxes in 30 junior/senior high schools with plans to expand to all schools; an update on new school construction; and, a copy of the Site Evaluation Report Cumberland Elementary School.

It was reported that at the meeting held earlier in the evening, information had come forward to the Committee regarding building assessment reports for Alice Street, Douglas Street and the former Residential Centre on Aberdeen Street in Truro. In light of the results of those building assessments,

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray  
**THAT THE TRURO P-9 STUDY COMMITTEE (WITH THE CURRENT SCHOOL  
ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIRS ALSO INVITED) BE RECONVENED TO  
REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE BUILDING ASSESSMENT REPORTS AND  
THAT THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND LOCAL MLA, JAMIE  
MUIR, BE INVITED TO MEET WITH THE STUDY COMMITTEE.**

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabeau, gave a brief review of the results of the building assessments. The reports, conducted on behalf of the Department of Education, did not recommend using any of the three sites for either renovation or new construction for an elementary school. The suggestion that the Deputy Minister and Mr. Muir be invited to meet with the study committee was based upon the fact that the Department is in favor of constructing only two new elementary schools in Truro rather than three as requested by the Board based on the previous recommendation of the Study Committee.

**MOTION CARRIED**

August 22, 2001

---

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Mary Macaulay  
**THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BE REQUESTED TO  
CONSTRUCT A REPLACEMENT FOR TRURO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
WITHIN TWO YEARS.**

Mr. Sabean provided the Board with a brief history and rationale for the motion indicating that earlier in the day the Board had been forced to close the gymnasium at Truro Junior High School based on receipt of an engineer's report that indicated the structural steel in that area of the building does not meet current standards for safety and extensive repairs would be needed before allowing further use of this area. It was reported that a conservative estimate of the cost to repair the ceiling/roof would be between \$200,000 and \$300,000. It was noted that if the Department of Education were to make those repairs, it might delay construction of the much-needed new building. Based on that information, the Committee was recommending that the Board ask the Department to "speed up" the replacement of Truro Junior High.

During discussion, a question was raised as to whether approval of the motion would displace any other projects on the Board's capital construction list. Superintendent Elmer MacDonald indicated that Truro Junior High has already been submitted as the Board's number one construction priority and forwarding the request to the Minister of Education would serve to reinforce the necessity to replace the facility due to critical needs.

**MOTION CARRIED**

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

Board member Cheryl Samson inquired as to the anticipated occupancy date for the new school in Elmsdale. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations reported that the facility is nearing completion and should be ready for students and staff in early October. A plan is in place to allow for a smooth transition into the new building.

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Board Chair welcomed and introduced Dr. Larry Elchuck who had recently been appointed as Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology on a one-year basis.

August 22, 2001

---

### **Programs and Student Services**

Chair of the Programs and Student Services Committee, John Henderson, reported on a Committee meeting held on June 19, 2001.

The Committee had received a report from staff addressing recommendations found in the Murley Report regarding Parrsboro and Advocate Schools. At a meeting on April 12, 2000, the Board had directed that the recommendations be reviewed during the 2000-2001 school year. Staff indicated to the Committee that Mr. Murley's proposals are not educationally viable at this time and should not be implemented. The Committee had agreed to accept the report but directed that staff also continue to explore, and then recommend options to the Committee, that will address the educational concerns highlighted by Mr. Murley.

The Committee had received a "first" draft of a revised handbook for Student Support Workers. It was reported that the draft has now been widely distributed for review and response. The Committee planned to examine the responses at its August meeting.

On behalf of the Board, the Committee had submitted a response to the Department of Education regarding the draft Racial Equity Policy.

The Committee had received a detailed presentation on a new provincial technology initiative for students in Grades 4-6. The project is locally titled "TINS – Technology Integration – Next Steps". Documents were distributed and a video shown highlighting "project-based learning" which is central to the new initiative.

The Committee had been informed that two books had been launched pertaining to African-Nova Scotian history. The granddaughter of Mrs. Wilena Jones, the first Black Guidance Counselor in the former Colchester-East Hants District, recently launched her book. Donna Byard-Sealey, a former teacher and resident of Truro, completed an in-depth study of the Black Community of Colchester and the church in the community. Her book was launched on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

It was MOVED by John Henderson, seconded by Trudy Thompson

**TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE.**

Raymond Tynes asked if the two books mentioned in the report were available to schools. The Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Student Services, Gary Miller, indicated that he would speak with the Coordinator of Race Relations regarding distribution of the books.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Canadian School Boards Association Congress 2001 Report**

The four Board members who attended the CSBA Congress 2001 in Calgary shared information on the conference and the various sessions they attended. Marilyn Murray, Lawrence MacKinnon, Raymond Tynes and Chair Robert Parker each gave a report and indicated that the conference had been excellent.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald stated that he had not prepared a written report but instead had asked each Assistant Superintendent to give a brief update on activities within their departments over the summer months. It was noted that the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Brian Murphy, had previously e-mailed his report to board members.

Mr. MacDonald took the opportunity to welcome everyone back to another school year. Mr. MacDonald also welcomed Mr. Elchuck to the senior management team and extended congratulations to Mr. Miller on his selection as Superintendent of Schools.

### **Programs and Student Services**

Mr. Miller reported that the Programs and Student Services department had primarily been involved with staffing, teacher professional development activities, summer school and planning for the upcoming school year. He indicated that three appointments had been made to the Program Department – Margie Beck, Coordinator of Student Services, Kim Sullivan, Coordinator of Literacy and Assessment, and Harry Wilkes, Coordinator of Science, Mathematics and Technology Integration. Mr. Miller reported that the closing date for new position for the Race Relations/Cross Cultural Understanding division, intended to assist First Nations students and communities, was August 30.

During discussion, a question was raised regarding the change in staff assignments to reflect the focus on literacy and assessment and also a question was asked regarding how the two positions in the Race Relations division would interact.

### **Finance Department**

Director of Finance, Robert Renouf, reported that the main priority of Finance Department staff had been the conclusion of the financial statements for the 2000-2001 fiscal year and assisting the auditors with preparation of their report. It was stated the summer is a busy time for payroll staff due to staff layoffs and assignment and pay changes for the new school year.

August 22, 2001

---

Mr. Renouf reported that one staff member has been seconded to serve on a provincial committee that is working toward implementation of the integrated data management program.

#### Planning, Research and Technology

Dr. Elchuck reported on items on behalf of the Planning, Research and Technology Department. A comprehensive maintenance program for computer hardware had been conducted both at schools and offices across the region. It was reported that the International Students Program is anticipating another successful year with approximately 60 students expected to attend classes in this region.

Approximately 80 educators from across the region participated in the final Camp E-I-E-I-O as part of the Information Economy Initiative. The intensive 39-hour program represented the last professional development component of the 3-year initiative that has seen approximately 1000 computers and various software options placed in schools.

#### Operations

Mr. Sabeau circulated and briefly reviewed a written report for the areas of property services, transportation and health and safety. Included in the report was a list of the capital repair projects completed over the summer months that were funded primarily by the Department of Education with the Board contributing \$636,000 of the \$2,708,000 total cost.

It was noted that several staff members had participated in first aid training over the summer months. In recognition of the significant time that staff volunteer to participate in various professional development activities, it was agreed that the next staff newsletter would contain a special “thank you” on behalf of the Board.

#### **Nova Scotia School Boards Association:**

Board representative to the NSSBA Board of Directors, Ron Marks, reported on recent activities at the Association level. It was reported that the five priority resolutions developed at the AGM in May were submitted to the Minister of Education. These focused on funding for the BLAC report, long range planning for technology needs, a request to reconsider the number of mandatory credits for graduation, development of collaborative efforts with universities to encourage graduating teachers to remain the province and the need for timely funding announcements.

Mr. Marks reported that information had been circulated to all board members regarding a professional development seminar scheduled for October 18 and 19 relating to communications



August 22, 2001

---

issues. Mr. Marks also reported that the final report on the Nova Scotia School Trust would be discussed at a special Board of Directors meeting on August 30 and would then be circulated to individual boards for consideration.

### **New Business:**

Board Chair Robert Parker reported on a meeting held on August 21 with the Minister of Education and the Chairs of the other school boards. A number of items had been discussed with the Minister including the release of the special education report, the impending teacher shortage, the status of the APEF programs and examinations, provincial testing, Active Young Readers programs, the study related to Bill 47, education renewal initiatives and funding for the implementation of the BLAC report.

Of particular concern to Mr. Parker had been various issues surrounding new school construction. He had spoken with Deputy Minister Dennis Cochrane **as to what progress was being made** on the South Colchester project, the Cumberland County elementary schools and Truro Junior High. The site selection for the Pictou East project was the main focus and Mr. Cochrane agreed to supply answers to three questions related to the Parkdale site – the size of the proposed site, the results of the environmental assessments and if a cost analysis has shown the site to be most cost effective. The Deputy Minister had responded to two of the questions and information on the third was anticipated in the very near future.

There was lengthy discussion on the Parkdale site with several issues being raised including the matter of student safety with a shale pit located in the rear of the property and the possibility that part of the school property would be located over the underground shafts of the former Westray mine.

### **Public Question and Answer Period:**

There were no questions brought forward to the Board for response.

### **Committee of the Whole In-Camera:**

It was MOVED by Cheryl Samson, seconded by Trudy Thompson  
**THAT THE MEETING MOVE TO IN-CAMERA SESSION.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

August 22, 2001

---

It was MOVED by John Henderson, seconded by Raymond Tynes  
**THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Board Chair reported to the public session that the Board had determined a start date for the new superintendent.

It was MOVED by David Myles, seconded by Raymond Tynes  
**THAT THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT COMMENCE HIS DUTIES EFFECTIVE  
NOVEMBER 1, 2001.**

**MOTION CARRIED**  
**One Nay Vote – Lawrence MacKinnon**

**Adjournment:**

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Parker, Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Hamilton-Wood  
Communications Officer /Board Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date