
Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

2-01 Minutes

February 14, 2001

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, in the Board Room at Central Office in Truro commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Kaaren Barkhouse
Robin Bourque
Cheryl Cutler
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:

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Elmer MacDonald
Gary Miller
Brian Murphy

Robert Renouf
Nancy Mosher
Bruce MacIntosh

Absent:

Bernie Knockwood, with regrets
Robert Parker, with regrets

Board Vice-Chair Trudy Thompson called the meeting to order.

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Mrs. Thompson reported that Chair Robert Parker was experiencing health problems and had reluctantly taken a leave of absence from his board duties. She indicated that Section 55(6) of the Education Act states that “the vice-chair shall perform the functions of the chair in the event of the absence or incapacity of the chair”. She also reported that it would be necessary to appoint an acting vice-chair to serve until Mr. Parker’s return and she called for nominations from the floor.

Moved by David Myles, seconded by Cheryl Cutler
TO NOMINATE RON MARKS TO SERVE AS ACTING VICE-CHAIR UNTIL THE RETURN OF CHAIR ROBERT PARKER.

Mr. Marks agreed to let his name stand for nomination.

Moved by Marilyn Thompson
TO NOMINATE JOHN HENDERSON TO SERVE AS ACTING VICE-CHAIR UNTIL THE RETURN OF CHAIR ROBERT PARKER.

Mr. Henderson declined the nomination.

There being no further nominations, the question was called.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Agenda:

Moved by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Mary Macaulay
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Mark Lavers, seconded by Marilyn Thompson
TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 10, 2001 MEETING AS CIRCULATED.

One amendment was noted on page 10, first paragraph, third line changed to read “inadequate funding” from “reduced funding”.

MOTION CARRIED

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Presentation:

Acting Chair Trudy Thompson welcomed Dr. Ellen MacLean, Chair of the East River St. Mary's School Closure Study Committee, who was in attendance to report on the Committee's findings. Dr. MacLean thanked Hillard MacDonald, Assistant Coordinator of Property Services, who had served as a member of the Committee for attending with her.

The printed report was circulated to Board members and Dr. MacLean gave a brief overview of the contents and indicated that the Committee had reviewed factors including student educational progress, school board finances, transportation requirements and maintenance/facility requirements. Two areas on which the Committee focused were the educational and financial consequences for both East River St. Mary's and Thorburn Consolidated if East River St. Mary's were to remain open. The Committee's recommendations to the Board were that East River St. Mary's be closed permanently effective September 2001 and that the elementary children in the area formerly served by the school be provided bus transportation to Thorburn Consolidated with routes not exceeding one hour under normal circumstances.

Dr. MacLean responded to questions raised by Board members concerning community reaction to the recommendations, distances to be traveled and population numbers in the community. It was indicated that the next step as identified in the school closure study process is to hold a public meeting in the community to review the recommendations of the report. The meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Marilyn Thompson
**TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE EAST RIVER ST. MARY'S SCHOOL
CLOSURE STUDY COMMITTEE.**

MOTION CARRIED

Acting Chair Thompson thanked the Committee for its efforts in studying the issue and in particular thanked Dr. MacLean for attending the meeting.

Correspondence:

The Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary reported on a number of items of correspondence received since the last Board meeting and indicated the response to each. Two items were brought forward for discussion:

A letter had been received from Doug Sparks, written on behalf of the African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus requesting Board consideration to two requests – 1) that the Board recognize the time contributed by the Board's African Nova Scotian representative to the Caucus initiative as board work and 2) that the Board write a letter of support to the NSSBA encouraging them to designate a seat on their Board of Directors for representation from the Caucus.

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Acting Chair Trudy Thompson indicated that she and Board Chair Robert Parker had discussed this item of correspondence and recommended that the Board refer the first request to the Finance and Human Resources Committee for consideration to approve, within budget restrictions, an amount of \$1000 per fiscal year for both the African Nova Scotian and First Nations members of the Board to be used in covering the additional expenses incurred in traveling across the region and to provincial meetings. Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Parker also recommended that the matter of a seat on the NSSBA Board of Directors be referred to the Association for discussion and decision.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Murray

THAT THE REQUEST AND RECOMMENDATION RELATED TO EXPENDITURES BE REFERRED TO THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE FOR DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Raymond Tynes, seconded by Ron Marks

THAT THE REQUEST AND RECOMMENDATION RELATED TO THE SEAT ON THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS BE TABLED AND REFERRED TO THE NEXT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING FOR DISCUSSION.

MOTION CARRIED

The second item of correspondence was received from Sharon Findlay-MacPhee, Communications Manager, NSSBA, seeking nominations for the NSSBA School Board Member Recognition Award and also the Education Week Recognition Award.

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Jim Grue

TO REFER DISCUSSION ON THESE TWO AWARDS PROGRAMS TO THE NEXT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING.

MOTION CARRIED

Committee Reports:

Committee of the Whole

Acting Vice-Chair Ron Marks reported on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on February 7, 2001. It was reported that discussion had taken place on several items including the Colchester Physical Fitness Council and a recent meeting with the Minister of Education attended by Robert Parker.

Update on Pictou East Grade Configuration

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald had provided brief background information on the issue and indicated that the majority of the meetings planned by the school advisory councils to discuss the matter had been postponed due to inclement weather and therefore a report will not be available until March. Only one meeting, at Thorburn Consolidated, had taken place with a very small turnout of parents and interested citizens. Mr. MacDonald had reported that information coming from the communities appears to oppose the inclusion of the grade nine students in the project and he suggested that the Board might wish to discontinue the process and proceed with planning the school for the grades ten to twelve only. Several board members suggested that the process should continue to allow parents and interested citizens to have input as originally intended.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Murray

THAT THE PROCESS OF GATHERING INPUT FROM THE APPROPRIATE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS ON THE ISSUE OF GRADE CONFIGURATION FOR THE NEW PICTOU EAST SCHOOL CONTINUE AS ORIGINALLY APPROVED.

Following brief discussion,

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Cheryl Cutler

THAT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BE ADOPTED.

MOTION CARRIED

Resignation of Superintendent

The Acting Chair reported that during an in-camera session following the Committee of the Whole, the Board had received a letter of resignation from Superintendent Elmer MacDonald. Mrs. Thompson read the letter to the open meeting. In it, Mr. MacDonald indicated his decision was made after consideration and reflection and he recommended that the Board, through the Finance and Human Resources Committee, initiate a Superintendent Search Committee to ensure a smooth transition for a new superintendent.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Cheryl Cutler

TO ACCEPT, WITH SINCERE REGRET, THE RESIGNATION OF SUPERINTENDENT ELMER MACDONALD TO BE EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31, 2001.

During discussion, a question was raised regarding the anticipated start date of a new CEO and the necessity to have two individuals serving in that capacity for a period of four to five months.

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Mary Macaulay
**THAT THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE ESTABLISH
A PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF A NEW SUPERINTENDENT AND
PRESENT IT TO THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL.**

MOTION CARRIED

It was indicated that the matter would be a priority for the Committee and would be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. Led by the Chair, the Board and those in attendance applauded the Superintendent.

Finance and Human Resources Committee

Committee Chair Ron Marks reported on a special budget session held on January 18, 2001 with all Board members invited to attend. The regular Committee meeting scheduled for January 31 had been cancelled due to inclement weather. Circulated to the Board for information purposes was the list of teachers who were awarded sabbatical leaves for the 2001-2002 school year.

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

MOTION CARRIED

Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee

Marilyn Thompson, Chair of the Operations and P/R/T Committee, reported on a meeting of the Committee held on January 29, 2001.

Fitness Centre

Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology, Karen Casey, had given an overview of the concept of a fitness center to support program delivery for students at the Cobequid Educational Centre. This was followed by a presentation from the Colchester Physical Fitness Council who put forth a proposal that included a partnership between the Council and the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board. The Committee received the report, and agreed to forward the proposal to Committee-of-the-Whole. At its meeting on February 7, 2001, the Committee-of-the-Whole had referred the topic back to the Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee for recommendation. Following consultation with all committee members, it was recommended that the Board not enter into a partnership with the Colchester Physical Fitness Council at this time.

Status Report – New Construction - Elmsdale

Information had been distributed showing the status and proposed dates for completion of various aspects of the construction of the new Elmsdale Elementary School. It was noted that the project is still on schedule for the September 2001 opening, pending favorable weather conditions.

Pictou Elementary Schools – Rocks on Playground

As part of the landscaping for the new Pictou Elementary School, rocks had been placed adjacent to the driveway to divide the driving area from the lawn areas and to protect the playground. These rocks are approximately 2' x 3' and some have jagged, sharp points. The School Advisory Council and Town Council consider the rocks to be a danger to the safety of the students. In response to the School Advisory Council and Town Council concerns, Scotia Learning, owners of the property had been approached to remove these rocks. Scotia Learning had indicated they are not prepared to do this although they did agree to take action on the jagged points. This was not considered to be a satisfactory solution and it was agreed that the Pictou Elementary School Advisory Council should bring a recommendation to the Operations and P/R/T Committee at the February meeting. The Committee will then forward the recommendation on to Committee of the Whole. It was also agreed that Dale Sabean would contact the Department of Education regarding this concern.

Request for Courtesy Busing – Five Islands

A request for courtesy busing had been presented to the Board in January and in accordance with the direction of the Board, a motion had been approved by the Committee that the Board's busing guidelines be followed.

It was **MOVED** by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Jim Grue
**TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING,
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE.**

During discussion on the report, questions were raised regarding the rocks on the playground at Pictou Elementary and what action the Board might take to address the community's concerns. The Superintendent indicated that the Department of Education had been contacted and that the Board's solicitor was also apprised of the issue.

MOTION CARRIED

Programs and Student Services

Chair of the Programs and Student Services Committee, John Henderson, reported on a meeting held on January 23, 2001.

BEST (Behaviour/Education/Support/Treatment)

Mr. Henderson reported that the BEST initiative is a joint project involving the Board and several other community and government agencies. The project was designed to intervene with early elementary children who exhibit various behavioural disorders. The Committee had received a detailed presentation on the evaluation report of the BEST project given by Dr. Dan Waschbusch, a member of the BEST team and a researcher in Dalhousie University's Psychology Department. He has been leading the research regarding the three pilot models operating in our Region.

All Board members had received a document detailing the research. The Committee was pleased with the positive results that were presented. It appeared as though the successful components of each pilot need to be incorporated into a single, new model. The project partners have been asked to present a proposal that addresses the future direction of the project, and to present that proposal in time for budget consideration.

French Special Projects

It was reported that each year school boards are invited to submit proposed French Special Projects to the Department of Education. Projects submitted may or may not be approved for funding. French Special Projects are designed to support the Core program and to implement Extended Core and Immersion programs. Funding will cover 70% of the teacher's salary for each approved project for the first year only. Thereafter, those staff must be fully funded by the board. Since students must be taught in either English or French, participation in these projects is financially advantageous for the Board.

Mr. Henderson stated that an attempt is being made to continually improve the quality of the Core program, to continue to implement Extended Core and to provide, over a period of years, the equitable introduction of early and late Immersion programs across the Region. This can be a great challenge - not only from a funding point of view but also from a school operations perspective.

Mr. Henderson indicated that the Programs and Student Services Committee has asked staff to review and propose revisions as necessary to the Regional procedures for student selection, program access, and other delivery issues regarding French second language programs. The Committee has asked that recommendations be made this spring and that review has already begun.

Circulated to all Board members was a proposed French Special Projects list for Chignecto-Central for 2001-02 as prepared by staff and approved by the Programs and Student Services Committee.

It was MOVED by John Henderson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
**TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE LIST OF FRENCH SPECIAL
PROJECTS FOR 2001-02 TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR
THEIR CONSIDERATION AND TIMELY RESPONSE.**

During discussion, a number of questions were raised on various aspects of the list of special projects, on French programming in general and the use of French specialists in some areas of the region. Gary Miller, Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Student Services, responded to the questions. Following this,

**MOTION CARRIED
1 Nay Vote**

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

A number of comments were made and questions raised on items arising in the report many of them focusing on the BEST program evaluation and presentation.

MOTION CARRIED

Conference Report – CSBA Atlantic

Board Member Raymond Tynes indicated that he had intended to present at this meeting a report on his attendance at the CSBA Atlantic conference held in St. John's, Newfoundland. However, Mr. Tynes had encountered problems with his computer and agreed to give his report at the March meeting.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald reviewed the highlights of his printed report that had been circulated to Board members and is subsequently circulated to all schools and school advisory councils. In recognition of African Heritage Month, Mr. MacDonald asked that everyone take time to pause and celebrate the history and tremendous contributions that African Nova Scotians have made, and are making, to the cultural richness of this province. He also commented on the advances in genome research that clearly show that we are indeed one people, more alike than different, and what that says about our learned behaviors of prejudice and discrimination.

In highlighting information from the various Board departments, Mr. MacDonald commented on a number of items including implementation of the Personnel Performance Program, meetings of new school construction committees for the South Colchester and Pictou East projects, the

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regional in-service day held on January 3 and the recently received interim report by the Provincial Special Education Review Committee.

It was noted that Mark Hingley, teacher at Hants North Rural High School was awarded a teacher grant of \$1500 from Knowledge House Inc. This award is designed to recognize achievement in the integration of technology to support curriculum delivery and to acknowledge the commitment of teachers to share their expertise with others. Mr. MacDonald also extended congratulations to eleven students from across the region that have been chosen to participate in the Forum for Young Canadians program in Ottawa.

A question was asked of the Superintendent regarding the provincial capital construction list. Mr. MacDonald indicated that he understood that the report was not ready but it is anticipated that it will be released soon contingent on budget considerations at the provincial level.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association:

CCRSB representative to the NSSBA Board of Directors, Ron Marks, reported that the minutes of the last executive meeting had been circulated in the meeting packages. He highlighted a number of issues raised at the meeting including a child poverty fundraiser scheduled for March 30 and the annual general meeting and conference to be hosted by the Strait Regional School Board in late May. Mr. Marks noted that a special Board of Directors meeting was scheduled for February 28 and March 1 to focus on three agenda items – priorities, structure and financial matters.

Board members were advised that each of the standing committees would be reviewing suggestions for resolutions to be submitted to the NSSBA for consideration at its annual general meeting with the resolutions being discussed by the full board during Committee of the Whole on March 7.

New Business

African Heritage Month

As an introduction to his comments on African Heritage Month, Board member Raymond Tynes thanked Board members and senior staff who attended a special ceremony at Truro Junior High School on February 13 to officially launch a new classroom resource binder developed by the Cobequid Race Relations Advisory Committee.

Mr. Tynes quoted a poem entitled “I Am Somebody” written by Jude Clyke, former Regional Educator with the Black Educators Association, and also quoted a number of publications and articles that referenced education opportunities, or lack thereof, for black students. Mr. Tynes

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indicated that the time has come for everyone, all public institutions, to work towards eliminating racism and stated that the Board needs to show leadership in these efforts.

Mr. Tynes took the opportunity to thank his colleagues on the Board for their support since he was elected to the Board and indicated his hopefulness that efforts can continue to ensure that every student in the region has the opportunity for an education.

It was MOVED by Raymond Tynes, seconded by Ron Marks
**THAT WHEREAS FEBRUARY IS AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH, THE
CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNIZE THIS
PROUD HERITAGE AND ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS OUR REGION IN CELEBRATING
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS TO THE CULTURAL
RICHNESS OF THE PROVINCE.**

MOTION CARRIED

Public Question Period:

There were no questions from those in attendance.

Adjournment:

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Trudy Thompson, Acting Board Chair

Date

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary

Date