

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

06-01 Minutes

June 13, 2001

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, June 13, 2001, in the gymnasium at West Colchester Consolidated School, Bass River, 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
Robert Parker
Mackie Ross
Marilyn Thompson
Trudy Thompson
Raymond Tynes (7:46 p.m.)

In Attendance:

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

Robert Renouf
Dale Sabean
David White
Bruce MacIntosh

Absent:

Bernie Knockwood, with regrets
David Myles, with regrets

Acting Chair Trudy Thompson called the meeting to order and thanked Principal Dianne Thompson and her staff for hosting the meeting. Ms. Thompson thanked for the Board for visiting West Colchester Consolidated and brought to the Board's attention various pieces of art work displayed

June 13, 2001

in the gymnasium resulting from a number of activities held over the past few weeks. She also encouraged the Board members to view the computer presentation on display focusing on the schools' work with the Economy Falls project.

The Acting Chair then turned the floor over to Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, for a special presentation to Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology, Karen Casey who is retiring at the end of the school year. Mr. Sabean highlighted the career of Ms. Casey including her varied teaching and administrative assignments. Mr. Sabean noted that it was appropriate that the meeting was being held at West Colchester as Karen had graduated from that school and in recognition, Mr. Sabean presented her with a refinished Bass River student desk similar to those used at West Colchester at that time.

In expressing her appreciation, Ms. Casey thanked the Board for the opportunity given to her in 1996 to become an assistant superintendent with the newly-amalgamated board and to be part of the "molding and shaping" of the new region. She indicated that over the past five years the Board had made some difficult but good decisions and she encouraged the Board members to continue to work together for the benefit of students.

Approval of Agenda:

It was MOVED by Robert Parker, seconded by Marilyn Murray
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Ron Marks
THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAY 9, 2001 BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

The report on correspondence received since the last meeting was read by the Acting Board Secretary.

June 13, 2001

Racial Equity Policy

In response to a letter forwarded from the Board, Mike Sweeney, Senior Executive Director, Public Schools, Department of Education, agreed to accept a late submission from this board with regards to the Racial Equity Policy. The policy had been previously referred to the Programs and Student Services Committee for response.

Minister of Education

In correspondence dated May 18, 2001, the Minister of Education, Jane Purves, indicated that the government estimates for the fiscal year 2001-2002 had been approved by the House of Assembly and also indicated that the Deputy Minister had provided the finalized profile sheet to the Board. She thanked the Board for its participation in the budget development and funding allocation process and in particular thanked staff for their invaluable contributions to the process.

Committee Reports:

Committee of the Whole

Acting Vice-Chair Ron Marks reported on Committee of the Whole meetings held on May 14 and 30 and June 6, 2001.

May 14 and 30 Budget Meetings

The Board had met in special Committee of the Whole meetings on Monday, May 14, 2001 and Wednesday, May 30, 2001 to discuss and deliberate budget issues for the 2001-2002 fiscal year. It was reported that as a result of those discussions, the Finance and Human Resources Committee report would include a recommendation to approve the budget for 2001-2002.

During discussions relating to staffing allocations, concerns were expressed with the impact that providing a teacher for East River St. Mary's will have on Thorburn Consolidated and/or the Celtic Family abeyance. As a result, it was

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Robert Parker

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE EAST RIVER ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR THE 2001-2002 SCHOOL YEAR WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS TO THE THORBURN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL WILL BE RESTRICTED TO FORTY-FIVE MINUTES, EACH WAY, UNDER NORMAL DRIVING CONDITIONS.

A question was raised regarding the intent of the Education Act relating to temporary and/or permanent school closures and whether it was appropriate for the Board to institute a temporary closure for a second time. It was indicated by the Superintendent that taking this action is not intended to circumvent the Act but rather to react to a particular situation at that school. The Assistant Superintendent of Operations was asked if the busing time could be restricted to forty-five minutes and Mr. Sabeau indicated that a review is still in progress.

MOTION CARRIED

June 6 Committee of the Whole

Presentation

Coordinator of Budget and Audits, Dayle Morris-Quinn, had provided information to the Board regarding recent audits of school financial statements and school-based financial transactions. Ms. Morris-Quinn had indicated that approximately \$5.7m in total income and expenses was administered at schools around the region during the 1999-2000 school year. This amount represents funds generated at schools through a variety of sources.

Ms. Morris-Quinn had also provided an update on the goals and objectives set by the business managers, in cooperation with the Finance Department, after amalgamation in 1996. The various goals had been set in order to assist schools in developing accurate financial systems that would ensure necessary internal controls and provide required financial information. Ms. Morris-Quinn stated that the goals set in 1996 have been achieved and that new objectives have been developed for the next five years.

Committee Reports

Operations and Planning, Research and Technology

A question was raised as to whether the Board has been advised of a decision on site selection for the new Pictou East school. It was reported that no additional information had been received and concerns were expressed that the continuing delays will have an impact on the completion date for the school. It was agreed that correspondence would be sent to the Department of Education seeking information on the site selection process with a request that the Board be advised prior to the regular monthly meeting on June 13.

Program and Student Services

Chair of the Program and Student Services Committee, John Henderson, reported on a meeting held on May 15. Mr. Henderson indicated that there had not been a quorum of committee members present and while the meeting had proceeded, no actions were taken. In reviewing the minutes, Mr. Henderson had highlighted one item that, in the absence of a quorum, required Board action.

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES BE REQUESTED TO SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO MIKE SWEENEY, SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SEEKING PERMISSION FOR COBEQUID EDUCATION CENTRE IN TRURO TO HAVE A GRADE 10 ORIENTATION DAY IN SEPTEMBER AND FOR CEC TO BE PERMITTED TO HAVE 12 EXAMINATION DAYS RATHER THAN THE APPROVED 9.

MOTION CARRIED

Both of these issues had been raised at a previous Programs and Student Services Committee meeting in a presentation made by representatives from CEC and have resulted from changes to school calendar requirements implemented by the Department of Education.

Quorum for Standing Committee Meetings

In light of the difficulty encountered at the Programs and Student Services Committee in reaching a quorum, it was

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Murray

THAT IF A STANDING COMMITTEE DOES NOT HAVE A QUORUM OF REGULAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT THEN THE COMMITTEE CHAIR MAY APPOINT ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE TO SIT ON THE COMMITTEE FOR THAT MEETING FOR VOTING PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue

TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

June 13, 2001

With regards to site selection for the Pictou East school, a question was raised as to whether a response had been received from the Department of Education. The Superintendent indicated that he had written to the Deputy Minister on June 7 and had not received a response. Regional Education Officer, David White, also indicated that he had not received any additional information since the June 6 meeting.

Several Board members expressed frustration with not only the delay with the site selection but also with the lack of appropriate communication coming from the Department of Education on these and other issues. Based on these concerns,

IT WAS AGREED TO FORWARD CORRESPONDENCE TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION INDICATING THE NEED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL.

MOTION TO RECEIVE REPORT CARRIED

Finance and Human Resources Committee

Ron Marks, Chair of the Finance and HR Committee, reported on a meeting held on May 30, 2001.

Personnel Performance Program

As directed by the Board, the Committee had made arrangements for a presentation on the Personnel Performance Program at the Committee of the Whole meeting in September 2001.

Staffing Report

Wayne MacGillivray, Coordinator of Human Resources, provided the Committee with an update on the staffing process. It was anticipated that the NSTU staffing process would be completed by June 30, 2001. The placement of teacher assistants for the upcoming school year was completed by May 7, 2001.

IDMP – Provincial Initiative

Dr. Brian Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, had provided the Committee with information on the IDMP (Integrated Data Management Project) and discussion had ensued on the impact the initiative will have on the Board.

Human Resources Report

Dr. Murphy had distributed a report regarding the Human Resources substitute teacher web-site.

Operations Central Depot

The Finance/HR Committee had discussed a draft proposal regarding a new Operations Central Depot as requested by the Operations Committee. It was reported that staff is in the process of developing a more detailed proposal including plans, location, potential cost-savings and possible funding sources.

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Marilyn Murray

TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation of Budget for 2001-2002

Finance and Human Resources Committee Chair, Ron Marks, made a presentation to the Board on the proposed budget for the 2001-2002 fiscal year. With his opening remarks, Mr. Marks indicated that this was a “good news” budget and that the Board had been able to meet their target date of approving the budget at this meeting.

Mr. Marks’ presentation included a review of the Board’s mission statement and belief statements, basic budget assumptions and parameters, regional plan priorities and board priorities, summary of cost pressures and finally the budget highlights including revenue and expenditure totals. At the conclusion of his presentation, it was

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Cheryl Cutler

TO APPROVE THE BUDGET FOR THE 2001-2002 FISCAL YEAR.

In response to discussion surrounding the allocation of funds for libraries, it was

Moved by Mary Macaulay, seconded by Ron Marks

AN AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION THAT FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR LIBRARIES BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE ONLY AND NOT INCLUDED IN SCHOOL GLOBAL FUNDING ALLOCATIONS.

Lengthy discussion followed on the amendment with a focus on how global expenditures are handled at the school site. When the question was called,

AMENDMENT DEFEATED

Other budget items discussed in detail included teacher assistant allocations and administration salary lines. Questions were also raised regarding the availability of funding for the retention of the Planning, Research and Technology Department that had been eliminated in the draft budget document prepared by staff based on the impending retirement of Karen Casey, Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology. Following discussion, it was

Moved by John Henderson, seconded by Robert Parker

AN AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION THAT THE BUDGET BE APPROVED WITH ONE LESS ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT POSITION (4 instead of 5).

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald indicated that based on discussions held at the Committee of the Whole meeting on June 6, 2001, part of the Board's rationale for maintaining the current number of departments/assistant superintendents was to allow the new superintendent to review the administrative structure. Therefore it was recommended by the Superintendent that if the Board decided to retain five departments, that the assistant superintendent position be filled on a one year basis. Question was called,

AMENDMENT DEFEATED

In Favour – Robin Bourque, John Henderson, Mary Macaulay, Ron Marks, Robert Parker, and Mackie Ross

Against – Kaaren Barkhouse, Cheryl Cutler, Jim Grue, Mark Lavers, Lawrence MacKinnon, Marilyn Murray, Marilyn Thompson, Trudy Thompson and Raymond Tynes

Question called on original motion,

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by John Henderson

THAT THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY BE FOR ONE YEAR ONLY TO ALLOW FOR A FULL REVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE BY THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

MOTION CARRIED

Operations and Planning, Research and Technology

Committee Chair, Marilyn Thompson, reported on a meeting held on May 16, 2001

Expansion/Portable – North River Elementary

Correspondence had been received from the North River School Advisory Council in which they again requested the Board to examine the need for additional space at their school.

Easement Across Cobetec Soccer Field

The Committee had received information regarding a request from a landowner, who recently purchased a piece of vacant land behind the 60 Lorne Street soccer field, to come across the soccer field and connect to the sewer system behind the Cobequid Educational Centre. The owner will be responsible for installing and maintaining the sewer line with no cost to the Board.

East River St. Mary's

The Committee had been advised that partial renovations would take place at East River St. Mary's to prepare for school opening in September to accommodate the anticipated 4-5 students. The Committee had been advised that if there is further reduction in the number of students a recommendation to consider another temporary closure might be made.

Cobequid Consolidated Old Barns Survey

Results of a survey conducted of the families who currently have children attending Cobequid Consolidated and Central Colchester Junior High were shared with the Committee. The results of the survey indicate majority support for a status quo situation for Cobequid Consolidated which means the Grade 6 students staying at Central Colchester as well as the majority selecting CEC as their secondary school of choice. A handout was also shared with the Committee identifying current enrolments for Central Colchester and its feeder schools with an identification of a number of issues for consideration. The Committee, in recognizing the pressure of several inter-related issues, is recommending a full study be initiated next fall to analyze space, enrolment, and program issues in the Central Colchester/South Colchester area.

Smoking Research Update

Additional information had been sought from all school boards in the Province and was shared with the Committee as a follow-up to the smoking research that was carried out over a year ago. There was found to be no change in any policies from March 2000 to May 2001. Our Board and the

June 13, 2001

Annapolis Valley Board are the only two that have designated smoking areas. The research included a listing of prevention/health programs and this information will be shared with the Programs Department. A copy of Bill S-20, an Act to enable and assist the Canadian tobacco industry in attaining its objective of preventing the use of tobacco products by young persons in Canada, was also shared with the Committee. The Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that they support Bill S-20 and to write a letter to this effect.

New Elmsdale School

Information was shared with the Committee that suggested the new school would be available for students in September 2001 but that there may still be workers on site. A contingency plan is in place and, in the interest of safety, it was recommended that staff and students remain in their old building until the new facility is completely finished with no workers remaining on site. Past experience has shown that initial operating difficulties are created when moving into a new school before it is completely finished.

Moved by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Cheryl Cutler

TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE.

Several questions were raised of the Committee Chair and the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and the Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology. These focused on the estimated date of completion for the Elmsdale school, support for Bill S-20 and the provision of a portable classroom for North River Elementary.

MOTION CARRIED

One Nay Vote – Mary Macaulay

It was MOVED BY Marilyn Murray, seconded by Raymond Tynes

THAT THE PERMANENT SCHOOL CLOSURE PROCESS BE INITIATED FOR THE EAST RIVER ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

There was some discussion relating to the legal implications of taking this action. Concerns were expressed with continuing to implement temporary closures and the need to look at wise expenditure of board funds. Following discussion,

MOTION CARRIED

Superintendent's Report:

In making his opening comments, Superintendent Elmer MacDonald complimented the Board on approving the 2001-2002 budget and indicated that staff will now proceed with implementation of any changes to the various programs and services affected by the budget. The balance of Mr. MacDonald's opening comments focused on two items that will be of particular concern to the Board over the upcoming year – equitable education funding and staffing and the province's education reform agenda.

School Calendar

The Superintendent reported to the Board that normally a recommendation would come forward to the Board in the early spring to approve a calendar for the next school year. However, the Department of Education had not circulated the necessary information used to develop the calendar until late April and this, combined with the Board's contractual obligation to consult the NSTU, resulted in the calendar being presented for approval at this meeting.

Moved by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Marilyn Thompson

TO APPROVE THE CALENDAR FOR THE 2001-2002 SCHOOL YEAR AS PRESENTED IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. MacDonald reported that a draft document entitled "Critical Path for New School Construction" was attached to his report and that a final copy would be circulated to Board members once all dates have been verified.

The Superintendent encouraged Board members to peruse the remainder of the items in the printed report that highlighted a number of special events and student accomplishments from across the region.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association

Board representative to the NSSBA Board of Directors, Ron Marks, reported that copies of the most recent director's meeting minutes had been circulated to all Board members. Mr. Marks thanked Kaaren Barkhouse for attending the director's meetings held at the NSSBA annual general meeting in his absence.

Mr. Marks reported that the government's education reform agenda has been discussed on several occasions at the NSSBA and suggested that the Board consider devoting some time in September to develop a position on these proposed changes.

Public Question and Answer Period

There were no questions from the public to bring questions forward.

Dr. Brian Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, introduced to the Bruce Kelloway of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union who was in attendance to speak to the suspension of teacher that would be discussed during Committee of the Whole in-camera.

Business Arising From Minutes:

Moved by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Robert Parker
TO ADOPT POLICY OG-15 - PLAY SPACE, AS PRESENTED.

MOTION CARRIED

Committee of the Whole In-Camera

9:35 p.m.

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Cheryl Cutler
THAT THE MEETING MOVE TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE IN-CAMERA.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Cheryl Cutler
THAT THE MEETING CONTINUE PAST 10:00 P.M.

MOTION CARRIED

10:50 p.m.

Moved by Raymond Tynes, seconded by Cheryl Cutler
THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA SESSION.

MOTION CARRIED

In his report from Committee of the Whole, the Acting Vice-Chair, Ron Marks, reported that the Board had upheld the suspension of a female teacher and had approved the discharge of a male teacher.

Adjournment:

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Trudy Thompson, Acting Board Chair

Date

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary

Date