

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

03-01 Minutes

March 21, 2001

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, March 21, 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
Robert Parker
Mackie Ross
Marilyn Thompson
Trudy Thompson
Raymond Tynes

In Attendance:

Karen Casey
Ann Hamilton-Wood
Elmer MacDonald
Gary Miller

Robert Renouf
Dale Sabean
Elizabeth Van den Eynden

Absent:

Bernie Knockwood, with regrets

Acting Chair Trudy Thompson called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda:

Moved by David Myles, seconded by Ron Marks

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS:

ix) d) 2) Student Travel

xvi) In-Camera

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

Moved by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Robin Bourque

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 14, 2001 MEETING AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

NSSBA Resolutions

It was reported that a package of three proposed resolutions to be submitted to the Nova Scotia School Boards Association had been circulated prior to the meeting. One resolution, focusing on funding for Student Support Workers, had come forward from the Programs and Student Services Committee and the Finance and Human Resources Committee had submitted the other two that related to the shortage of substitute teachers and the anticipated shortage of administrative personnel. Board members were reminded that once the resolutions are submitted to the NSSBA they are reviewed by a Resolutions Committee and forwarded to the Associations annual general meeting for approval.

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by David Myles

THAT THE PACKAGE OF RESOLUTIONS BE SUBMITTED TO THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION.

MOTION CARRIED

NSSBA School Board Member Recognition Award

In correspondence read at the February 14, 2001 meeting, the NSSBA had requested that the Board nominate one member to be considered to receive the annual School Board Member Recognition Award. No names were put forward.

Education Week Recognition

The NSSBA had also requested that the Board consider nominating a board member or senior staff member to be considered to receive provincial recognition during Education Week 2001.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE BOARD NOMINATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ELMER MACDONALD TO RECEIVE PROVINCIAL RECOGNITION AS PART OF EDUCATION WEEK ACTIVITIES.

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

The Acting Board Secretary reported on items of correspondence.

Minister of Education, School Code of Conduct

Correspondence had been received from the Minister of Education, Jane Purves, accompanying a copy of the proposed School Code of Conduct. Ms. Purves had requested that comments be forwarded to the Department of Education by March 30, 2001.

During discussion, it was suggested that all school principals and school advisory councils be reminded to submit any comments by the deadline.

Elmsdale School Advisory Council

Carol Hindy, Chair of the Elmsdale District School Advisory Council, had written expressing concerns with proposed changes to the construction project plans for the new Elmsdale School. It was reported that the wiring and infrastructure that would support ceiling mounted LCD projectors had been deleted from the project along with a number of other design changes. Ms. Hindy has asked that the Board inform the Department of Education that this decision was unacceptable to the school community in Elmsdale.

Board member Cheryl Cutler, who represents the Elmsdale area, reported that she had attended a meeting of School Advisory Council. Ms. Cutler read an e-mail message Ms. Hindy had received from Dennis Cochrane, Deputy Minister of Education, indicating that the changes to the design for new school construction had been approved by the province ten months ago.

Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology, Karen Casey, indicated that the planning team for the school had been working with the most recent design manual available to school boards and that information on the revisions as indicated by Mr. Cochrane had not been communicated to boards. In response to a question, Ms. Casey listed a number of changes that, in

March 21, 2001

light of this recent information, the design team has only recently become aware of, many of them technology-related.

A number of Board members expressed serious concern with this development and the impact it will have not only on the Elmsdale facility but also the remaining new school construction projects scheduled over the next few years. In discussing what action the Board might take, the Superintendent reminded the board that an invitation had been extended to the Deputy Minister of Education to meet with the board and one item on the agenda is the Elmsdale project.

Invitation to the Deputy Minister of Education

An invitation had been sent to the Deputy Minister of Education, Dennis Cochrane, asking that he meet with the Board to discuss education system reform, building renovations and capital construction projects and the changes to the Elmsdale project. To date, no response had been received.

Announcement – Regional Education Officer

Regional Education Officer, Nancy Mosher, advised the Board that she has been reassigned to the Halifax and Annapolis Valley school boards and will no longer be responsible for the CCRSB. David White, past principal of the Nova Scotia Teachers College who is currently working on special projects for the Department of Education, has been assigned to this region effective April 1, 2001. In recognizing Ms. Mosher's support of the Board, the Acting Chair indicated that Nancy has served as Regional Education Office since the time of amalgamation and will certainly be missed not only by the board and senior staff but also at the schools across the region.

Committee Reports:

Committee of the Whole

Acting Vice-Chair, Ron Marks, reported on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on March 7, 2001.

Presentation – Grade Configuration, Pictou East

Allan MacDougall, Family of Schools Supervisor, and Eileen English, Principal of the new Pictou East school, had made a presentation to the board on the results of the series of meetings held in the Pictou East area regarding the possible inclusion of grade nine students in the new school facility. Accompanying Mr. MacDougall and Ms. English were the chairs of the school advisory councils for East Pictou Rural High, New Glasgow High, Thorburn Consolidated and the Trenton Schools.

Mr. MacDougall had provided a brief history of the consultation process and shared with Board members a printed report indicating the opinions expressed by each school community. The information had been gathered both through public meetings and in some cases, the circulation of a survey. In summary, it was reported that the majority of responses from East Pictou High and Thorburn Consolidated were opposed to the proposal, Trenton was in favor and New Glasgow parents and interested citizens were split. Following Mr. MacDougall's presentation, the floor was opened to numerous questions from Board members that were posed to Mr. MacDougall, Ms. English and the council chairs. It was indicated that the Board will be discussing this matter in detail, and a decision will be made, in the very near future.

Selection Process – New Superintendent of Schools

Finance and Human Resources Committee Vice-Chair Mary Macaulay had reported to the Committee of the Whole on a Committee meeting held on February 21, 2001 at which the majority of the time had been devoted to discussing the selection process for a new superintendent. Mr. Marks reported that the Finance/HR Committee had agreed to recommend that the start date for the new superintendent would be August 1, 2001. However following lengthy discussion at the Committee of the Whole, it had been agreed to bring forward the following recommendation to the Board:

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF A NEW SUPERINTENDENT PROCEED WITH THE EMPLOYMENT START DATE BEING ESTABLISHED AS JANUARY 1, 2002.

Board members debated the motion following which,

MOTION CARRIED

In Favor – 13

Against - 3

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by David Myles

THAT THE SELECTION COMMITTEE WILL CONSIST OF SIX MEMBERS, INCLUDING THE CHAIR OR ACTING CHAIR, THE VICE-CHAIR OR ACTING VICE-CHAIR, THREE OTHER BOARD MEMBERS WHO REPRESENT THE DIVERSITY ON THE BOARD, AND THE ASSIGNED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

There was some discussion on the possibility of designating an alternate member in the event that someone could not fulfill their obligation to the Committee. However it was noted by the Board's Solicitor that in order to maintain a fair selection process, those involved in making recommendations and decisions would be required to have first-hand information on all discussions and conclusions reached.

It was MOVED by David Myles, seconded by John Henderson
**TO AMEND THE MOTION TO INCLUDE A NON-VOTING ALTERNATE
COMMITTEE MEMBER WHO WOULD ATTEND ALL MEETINGS AND BE
PREPARED TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF A VOTING MEMBER IF SOMEONE
WHERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR MANDATE.**

The Superintendent commented that including a non-voting alternate could complicate the process. Mr. MacDonald suggested that if the Committee did have to be reduced to five members due to unforeseen circumstances, then the process would still maintain its integrity since the decision had already been reached that all Board members would be welcome to be observers of the final interview process.

Based on that information, Mr. Myles and Mr. Henderson agreed to withdraw their motion.

ORIGINAL MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Cheryl Cutler
**THAT ANY BOARD MEMBER WISHING TO SERVE ON THE SELECTION
COMMITTEE SHOULD SUBMIT THEIR NAME TO THE SECRETARY TO
THE BOARD ON OR BEFORE MARCH 19, 2001 AND THAT THE LIST OF
THOSE INTERESTED WILL BE SHARED WITH THE ENTIRE BOARD AND
MEMBERS WILL BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO INDICATE THREE
CHOICES AND THE FINAL SELECTION WILL BE MADE BASED ON THE
MAJORITY WISH OF THE BOARD.**

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Mary Macaulay, seconded by Cheryl Cutler
**THAT A LETTER BE SENT TO THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION
REQUESTING THAT NANCY MOSHER, REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICER,
REMAIN ON THE SELECTION COMMITTEE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF HER EXPERTISE AND
KNOWLEDGE OF THE CCRSB REGION.**

When asked if she was agreeable to continue to serve on the Committee, Ms. Mosher indicated that she would make that commitment if it was the wish of the Board.

MOTION CARRIED

The Acting Board Secretary reported that three Board members, Marilyn Thompson, Mackie Ross and Raymond Tynes, had indicated their willingness to serve on the Selection Committee while a fourth, Mary Macaulay, had stated she was willing to serve if required.

Mr. Tynes stated that he is experiencing some health problems and depending upon the results of tests to be completed in the next few days, he will know whether or not he will be able to make the commitment to serve.

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Marilyn Murray
**THAT MARILYN THOMPSON, MACKIE ROSS AND RAYMOND TYNES
SERVE ON THE SUPERINTENDENT SELECTION COMMITTEE WITH
MARY MACAULAY TO TAKE MR. TYNES' PLACE IF HE IS UNABLE TO
SERVE.**

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue
**THAT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BE RECEIVED
FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.**

During discussion on the report, some questions were raised regarding the Pictou East grade configuration issue particularly focusing on the impact any changes will have on the feeder schools. Questions were also raised regarding the timing of a decision by the Board.

It was MOVED by Mary Macaulay, seconded by Robin Bourque
**THAT THE NEW PICTOU EAST HIGH SCHOOL BE CONSTRUCTED TO
HOUSE GRADES TEN, ELEVEN AND TWELVE AS ORIGINALLY
APPROVED.**

In not wanting to rush the decision and to ensure that Board members have the opportunity to discuss the matter at length,

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Robert Parker
**TO TABLE THE MOTION TO THE APRIL 4, 2001 COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE MEETING.**

MOTION CARRIED

In Favor – 11

Against – 5

Robin Bourque, John Henderson, Mary Macaulay,
Lawrence MacKinnon and Raymond Tynes

MOTION TO RECEIVE REPORT CARRIED

Robert Parker excused himself from the meeting at 8:45 p.m. and thanked everyone for the cards and messages of best wishes he had received since becoming ill earlier this year.

Finance and Human Resources Committee

Committee Chair, Ron Marks, indicated that the majority of the meeting had focused upon the process for selecting a new superintendent and that matter had been dealt with earlier. He indicated that a budget meeting had been scheduled for March 28, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. and all Board members were invited to attend.

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

MOTION CARRIED

Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee

Marilyn Thompson, Chair of the Operations and P/R/T Committee, reported on a meeting held on February 27, 2001. Ms. Thompson reported that the Committee had discussed a number of issues including the concerns surrounding the large rocks located on the grounds at Pictou Elementary School that has been referred to the Department of Education. The Committee gave its permission to waive rental fees for use of school facilities related to the hosting of a memorial fundraising volleyball tournament for the family of student in the school system.

The Committee had discussed at length the suggestion that the Board submit a letter to the provincial Department of Justice requesting that the possession of cigarettes by a minor be made illegal. This issue had arisen at the last Committee of the Whole meeting and had been referred to the Operations Committee.

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
**THAT THE BOARD FORWARD CORRESPONDENCE TO THE MINISTER OF
JUSTICE REQUESTING THAT LEGISLATION BE PASSED WHEREBY THE
POSSESSION OF TOBACCO BY A MINOR WOULD BE ILLEGAL IN THE
PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.**

There was lengthy discussion on this matter and how current board smoking policies are implemented at the region's schools with the use of designated smoking areas. A suggestion was made that parents be required to fill out a permission form before their student is permitted to smoke in a designated smoking area. It was suggested that the Board seek legal advice before instituting the use of permission slips.

MOTION DEFEATED

The issue of the use of permission slips was referred to the Operations and P/R/T for discussion and recommendation.

Jim Grue left the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

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

MOTION CARRIED

Programs and Student Services Committee

Chair of the Programs and Student Services Committee, John Henderson, reported on a Committee meeting held on February 20, 2001. Several items had been discussed including the evaluation report on the student support worker program, middle school grade configuration and French programs.

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

MOTION CARRIED

Student Travel to Europe

Concerns were raised that students and staff from one of our schools who will be traveling to Greece may not be aware of danger posed to livestock in this country if hoof and mouth disease is inadvertently carried back. It was suggested the school be advised of the Board's concerns and be asked to take extra precautions, particularly any students who may be returning to farming communities.

It was MOVED by John Henderson, seconded by Raymond Tynes
**THAT IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT OUTBREAK OF HOOF AND MOUTH
DISEASE IN THE BRITISH ISLES THAT STAFF BE ASKED TO DETERMINE
IF THOSE STUDENTS AND STAFF ATTENDING A TECHNOLOGY
CONFERENCE IN GREECE HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE IN THE BRITISH
ISLES AS PART OF THEIR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND IF SO, THAT
THEY BE ADVISED TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS TO ENSURE THEY
DO NOT CARRY THE DISEASE BACK TO THIS COUNTRY.**

MOTION CARRIED

Conference Report

Board member Raymond Tynes reported on his recent attendance at the Canadian School Board Association Atlantic conference held in St. John's, Newfoundland. In his report, Mr. Tynes praised the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association for their organization of an excellent conference. He focused on three areas that had been of particular interest to him –

March 21, 2001

community development, communications technology and Child poverty. Mr. Tynes outlined highlights of workshops attended and mentioned a keynote address given by Brian Tobin, federal Minister of Industry and former Newfoundland premier.

As a follow-up, a question was raised as to the status of a motion adopted by the Board in December that would see the establishment of a committee to develop a policy to address child poverty. Acting Chair Trudy Thompson indicated that the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Superintendent.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent, Elmer MacDonald, indicated that he would not review his printed report in detail due to the lateness of the hour. He did note from his opening remarks that March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and reminded everyone that each and every one of us must accept responsibility to ensure that discrimination does not occur and not depend on other to make it happen.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association

Board representative on the NSSBA Board of Directors, Ron Marks, reported on a special meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 28 and March 1. An internal analysis of the priorities of the association had been conducted based on discussions from last year's annual general meeting. On the topic of structure, the Board of Directors had adopted a motion to remain with the status quo as it relates to number of directors, executive and committee structure.

Specific items discussed as part of budget deliberations included the establishment of the Nova Scotia School Trust, a motion to approve the budget for 2002-02 and a presentation on the Hope and Harmony charity event scheduled for March 20, 2001.

During discussion on the report, a question was asked of Mr. Marks regarding the motion to maintain the status quo for the number of directors and executive. Mr. Tynes asked if the Association had considered a recent request from the African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus to have a seat on the Board of Directors. In response, Mr. Marks indicated that the Association had 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.

New Business

There was no new business to bring forward to the meeting.

Public Question Period

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

In-Camera

It was MOVED by Cheryl Cutler, seconded by Marilyn Murray
THAT THE MEETING MOVE IN-CAMERA.

Time, 9:35 p.m.

It was MOVED by Raymond Tynes, seconded by Lawrence MacKinnon
THAT THE MEETING MOVE OUT OF IN-CAMERA.

Time, 10:05 p.m.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by John Henderson
**THAT AUTHORITY BE GIVEN TO THE SELECTION COMMITTEE TO HIRE
AN OUTSIDE FACILITATOR TO ASSIST WITH DEVELOPMENT OF A
PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF A NEW SUPERINTENDENT.**

MOTION CARRIED

Adjournment

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

Trudy Thompson, Acting Board Chair

Date

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Communications Officer/Acting Board Secretary

Date