

---

# Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

## Regular Meeting

### 09-01 Minutes

### September 12, 2001

---

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, September 12, 2001, at Stewiacke Elementary School commencing at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Present:**

Kaaren Barkhouse	Marilyn Murray
Robin Bourque	David Myles
Jim Grue	Robert Parker
John Henderson	Mackie Ross
Bernie Knockwood	Cheryl Samson
Mark Lavers	Marilyn Thompson
Mary Macaulay	Trudy Thompson
Lawrence MacKinnon (7:17 p.m.)	Raymond Tynes

#### **In Attendance:**

Larry Elchuck	Robert Renouf
Ann Hamilton-Wood	Dale Sabean
Elmer MacDonald	David White
Gary Miller	Bruce MacIntosh
Brian Murphy	

#### **Absent:**

Ron Marks, with regrets

Board Chair Robert Parker called the meeting to order and thanked Principal Stephanie Isenor for hosting the meeting noting the inconvenience that it causes to a school.

In recognition of the tragic events that took place in the United States on September 11, the Board Chair asked all those present to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims

September 12, 2001

---

and their families. In particular, everyone was asked to remember the children whose parents did not come home on Tuesday evening.

**Approval of Agenda:**

It was MOVED by Jim Grue, seconded by Marilyn Thompson  
**THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Approval of Minutes:**

It was MOVED by Mary Macaulay, seconded by Trudy Thompson  
**THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 22, 2001 BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.**

Board member Mary Macaulay raised a number of questions regarding the minutes and the issue of the requests for new elementary schools and a new junior high school for the Truro area. Ms. Macaulay requested that page 4 of the minutes be changed to indicate that the statement regarding three versus two elementary schools be revised to indicate that it was the opinion of the Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, that the Department of Education supported the concept of two rather than three facilities. Ms. Macaulay also expressed concern with the description of the reason for inviting the Deputy Minister of Education, Dennis Cochrane, and local MLA, Jamie Muir, to a meeting of the P-9 Study Group.

Editorial Note:

Following the September 12 meeting, a review of the notes taken at the meeting of August 22 indicated that what was contained in the minutes was a correct interpretation of what was said. Minutes should reflect what occurred during the course of that particular meeting and will remain unchanged with Ms. Macaulay's objections duly noted here.

A question was also raised by Mary Macaulay, related to page 9, second paragraph, regarding the Board Chair's comments surrounding his meeting with the Deputy Minister of Education to discuss construction projects. It was agreed that the minutes should be changed to say "and had asked what progress was being made" rather than "and reported that it appeared that progress was being made".

Marilyn Thompson noted an error on page 8, paragraph 4 where a comma was omitted in a dollar figure.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Presentation of Audited Financial Statements:**

Director of Finance, Robert Renouf, introduced Gordon Moore of KPMG Chartered Accountants who was in attendance to make a presentation to the Board outlining the results of the audit of the 2000-2001 financial statements. Also in attendance was Valerie Gauthier, Coordinator of Finance.

Mr. Moore reviewed in some detail the various sections of the statements including the consolidated balance sheet and statement of operations. He indicated that, as in previous years, the audit presents fairly the financial position of the board and its operations and he complimented the staff of the Finance Department for their assistance with the audit and also for their work throughout the year. The financial statements for the period ending March 31, 2001 indicated a small surplus of \$14,337.

Mr. Moore responded to a number of questions raised by Board members including items related to cafeteria operations, special education funding and school trust funds.

It was MOVED by Jim Grue, seconded by Trudy Thompson  
**TO ACCEPT THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FISCAL  
PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2001 AS PRESENTED.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mr. Renouf thanked Ms. Gauthier and other staff members of the Finance Department for their excellent work and the Board Chair thanked Mr. Moore for presenting the statements to the Board.

### **Correspondence:**

#### **Nova Scotia School Boards Association – Travel Expenses, African Nova Scotian Board Members**

The Board Secretary reported that an item of correspondence had been received on September 5 from the NSSBA indicating that an agreement had been reached with the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) regarding the reimbursement of expenses to African Nova Scotian Board members for their attendance at meetings organized by CACE. The memo indicated that boards would be responsible for meals and accommodations while CACE would cover mileage costs.

September 12, 2001

---

The Board Chair and Vice-Chair discussed the matter and subsequently Mr. Parker had written to the NSSBA stating the Board's support for the African Nova Scotian board members but expressing concerns with what was felt to be inappropriate actions of the NSSBA in reaching an agreement that directs school boards on how they should allocate funds. In his letter, the Chair said that he did not feel that it is within the mandate of the Executive of the Association to enter into such an agreement without prior knowledge and approval of boards.

The Board Secretary also reported that as Mr. Parker's letter was being sent to the NSSBA, another memo was received from the Association stating that school boards should consider the information to be a guideline only and continue to use whatever arrangements respective boards have in place.

In responding to questions raised, the Board Chair indicated that the purpose of the correspondence to the NSSBA was simply to express concerns about the manner in which the decision had been made on behalf of boards and to state that this Board had already approved additional annual funding for the African Nova Scotia member of the Board to participate in provincial and region-wide events and meetings.

## **Committee Reports:**

### **Committee of the Whole**

Vice-Chair Trudy Thompson reported on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on September 5, 2001.

#### **Personnel Performance Program**

Dr. Brian Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, had welcomed and introduced members of the Personnel Performance Program implementation team committee. Chris Murray, principal of the Springhill Elementary Schools, Scott Hughes, teacher at Stellarton Middle School, Richie Scott, Custodial Foreman, along with Dr. Murphy and Lawrence Currie and Wayne MacGillivray, Coordinators of Human Resources, had all shared information on the work of the committee in developing the new employee evaluation program as well as their experiences in the pilot stages of the initiative.

#### **Committee Reports**

It had been reported that neither the Finance and Human Resources Committee nor the Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee had met since the last board meeting on August 22.

September 12, 2001

---

In a matter related to the Operations and P/R/T Committee, Board member Robin Bourque had indicated that she still had concerns relating to both the site selection and the actual construction of the new high school for the Pictou East area. There was lengthy discussion on the matter.

#### Program and Student Services

Chair of the Program and Student Services Committee, John Henderson, had reported that a meeting had been held on August 28. Mr. Henderson indicated that there were no urgent items to bring forward to the meeting and a full report would be presented at the regular monthly meeting on September 12, 2001.

#### Planning and Priorities Session

It had been agreed that the Board would hold a planning and priorities session in late October. The purpose of the session would be to set priorities for the Board for the upcoming months.

It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray  
**TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.**

The Board Chair reported that he and the Vice-Chair had met earlier in the evening with the chairs of the three standing committees to discuss the proposed planning and priorities session. It had been agreed that the event would be held on October 26 and 27, 2001 at the Debert Hospitality Centre with sessions held on Friday evening and Saturday until approximately 1:00 p.m. The Chair reported that consultant Frank McCormick had agreed to serve as facilitator for the sessions and that staff member Lawrence Ryan had also agreed to assist if needed.

Board member Raymond Tynes indicated that he had concerns that the Board had not yet participated in cross cultural understanding/sensitivity training. The Chair reported that sensitivity training was one of the many issues that would require discussion as part of the sessions with the intention of setting a schedule for the upcoming months that will allow the Board to address a number of priority items.

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### Finance and Human Resources Committee

Committee Vice-Chair Mary Macaulay reported that the Committee had not met since the last Board meeting on August 22.

September 12, 2001

---

### **Operations and Planning, Research and Technology**

Marilyn Thompson, Chair of the Operations and P/R/T Committee reported on a meeting held on August 22. Ms. Thompson reported that two items had been discussed by the Board on the evening of August 22 with other outstanding matters were to be brought forward to this meeting.

#### **Building Assessment Reports – Alice Street, Douglas Street, Residential Centre**

The Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that the P-9 Study Group be reconvened as soon as possible and to invite the Deputy Minister, Dennis Cochrane, as well as the local MLA, Jamie Muir, to a meeting of the Study Group. Both past members of the Study Group, as well as any new SAC Chairs of the town School Advisory Councils, should also be included. This recommendation was approved by the Board on August 22, 2001.

#### **Truro Junior High Gym Roof**

The Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that a letter be sent to the Department of Education requesting a new Junior High School in the Town of Truro be constructed within two years. This recommendation was also approved by the Board on August 22, 2001.

#### **Update on Truro OPP Facility**

The Committee had been advised that the Occupational Preparation Program would be relocated to the former Residential Centre for the 2001-02 school year, due to ongoing renovations being carried out by the Town of Truro at their current location in the former police station.

#### **New School Construction Update**

The Committee was brought up-to-date on the status of each of the new school construction projects. They were also informed that Karen Casey, recently retired Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research, and Technology has been contracted to continue her role with the ongoing new school construction projects.

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Cheryl Samson  
**TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING,  
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT.**

During discussion, questions were raised regarding the meeting of P-9 Study Group with the Deputy Minister and also the contract with Karen Casey for the upcoming year.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Programs and Student Services**

Committee Chair John Henderson reported on a meeting held on August 28, 2001.

Student Support Worker Handbook

Mr. Henderson reported that in June the Committee had received a draft Student Support Worker Handbook. That draft had been widely distributed for input and response and the Committee had reviewed the responses received. Staff were asked to incorporate recommendations that will strengthen the document. It was reported that the next draft would be reviewed at the Committee's September meeting with the expectation that a working document will be in the schools before the end of September.

Department Priorities

Mr. Henderson reported that staff have begun a detailed review of key priorities in the Programs and Student Services Department for 2001-02. Discussion at the August meeting centered on the Literacy Initiative for Grades P-6; on the Student Support Worker Initiative; and on CAYAC – a joint initiative of the Departments of Health, Education, Community Services, Justice, and Sport and Recreation. These topics were presented in some detail and Board members were reminded to review the meeting minutes for a more detailed description.

Race Relations and Cross Cultural Understanding Division

The Committee had discussed the organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities of the two positions assigned to the Race Relations and Cross Cultural Understanding division of the Programs and Student Services Department. For 2001-02, it was agreed that both positions would report to the Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Student Services; that one position would have primary responsibility for the issues/concerns of African-Nova Scotian students and communities; that the other position would have similar responsibilities for First Nations students; and that both would work as a team to address "cross cultural understanding" initiatives essential to support other visible minority students and communities in our Region. The Committee had been reminded that the complete organizational structure would be reviewed over the next year.

It was MOVED by John Henderson, seconded by Mark Lavers  
**TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES  
COMMITTEE.**

Questions were raised by Board member Raymond Tynes regarding the Student Support Workers Handbook and also the hiring of another student support worker for the Cumberland area. Mr. Tynes also questioned the organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities of the two positions assigned to the Race Relations and Cross Cultural Understanding division of the Programs and Student Services Department and how the work of those individuals will relate to the Board's affirmative action policy and similar policies that fall under the jurisdiction of the Human Resources Department.

In addressing the decision to have a new position in the Race Relations/Cross Cultural Understanding division assigned specifically to First Nations students and communities, Board member Bernie Knockwood thanked the Board for taking that action while recognizing that there will no doubt be some "growing pains". He indicated that the addition of position in the division would be a valuable asset to all students in the region.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Superintendent's Report:**

In his opening comments, Superintendent Elmer MacDonald reported that school had opened on a positive note with all families of schools reporting an easy transition back to classes. Preliminary enrolment figures indicate a decline of approximately 460 students over last year. Mr. MacDonald cautioned that these figures are very preliminary and would change before September 30 when the Department of Education gathers its audited enrolment data.

As part of his report, the Superintendent circulated a document entitled "Poverty and Educational Success". The document represented the first phase in a comprehensive plan designed to address poverty among children in the region. It was reported that further updates on the project would come forward to the Board through the Programs and Student Services Committee.

The Superintendent reviewed a number of highlights from his printed report including department reports and families of schools updates. An item of particular interest was the impending opening of the new Elmsdale School. Mr. MacDonald reported that the project is nearly complete with furniture and instructional equipment arriving daily. Final preparation (cleaning) of the floors has started and the school will be ready for occupancy early in October.



September 12, 2001

---

Board members raised questions related to the “Poverty and Educational Success” document, the delivery of computer technician service to schools particularly as it relates to Knowledge House, the new poverty initiative, the LEAD program and the impact of the declining enrolments.

A question was also raised regarding a change in the availability of health benefits for several retired personnel. Dr. Brian Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reported that the matter is under investigation and resulted from a recent change in insurance carriers designed to save employees higher premium costs.

### **Extension of Time Limits**

It was MOVED by Robin Bourque, seconded by Mary Macaulay  
**THAT THE MEETING EXTEND BEYOND 10:00 P.M.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

John Henderson left the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

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

#### **Appointment to NSSBA Resolutions and Election Committee**

The NSSBA had previously requested that the Board appoint a member to serve on the Association’s Resolutions and Election Committee. Mary Macaulay volunteered to fill this position.

It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray  
**THAT MARY MACAULAY SERVE AS THE BOARD’S REPRESENTATIVE  
ON THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION RESOLUTIONS  
AND ELECTION COMMITTEE.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **Nova Scotia School Trust**

In the absence of Ron Marks, the Board’s representative to the NSSBA Board of Directors, the Board Chair reported that the Association would be meeting on September 20 and 21 to discuss the possible establishment of the Nova Scotia School Trust. Mr. Marks had asked that the Board discuss the matter in detail and provide him with opinions and suggestions to share with

the Board of Directors. Board members were reminded that a copy of the detailed report on the Trust had been circulated in the meeting package.

A number of Board members raised concerns regarding the school trust concept including: only one elected board member on the advisory board; the application and distribution process; the use of trust funds to support research projects rather than funding programs directly related to children; the cost of administration; and, what impact a provincial program will have on local school fund-raising initiatives. It was agreed that Mr. Marks would be advised of the discussions and Board members were asked to forward any additional comments directly to Mr. Marks by e-mail.

### **Notice of Motion:**

Board member Robin Bourque served **Notice of Motion** that at the next regular meeting of the Board she would move, or cause to be moved, a motion to rescind the board motion of October 23, 1998 approving the submission of a request to the Department of Education for the construction of two new high schools in Pictou County.

The Chair clarified that the serving of the Notice of Motion would not restrict the planning process and site selection activities currently under way for the two schools as previously approved.

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

Jim Grovenor, former president of the Stewiacke Elementary Home and School, asked where the request to construct a new elementary school to serve Stewiacke and East Stewiacke was on the Board's priority capital list. Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabeau, reported that when the last list was submitted, Truro Junior High was number one and the Stewiacke project was number two.

In a follow-up question, Mr. Grovenor asked when the community might expect an announcement for the project. David White, Regional Educational Officer, indicated that the Department of Education is hopeful that information on the next group of approved projects will be made available, based on cabinet decisions, within the next two months.

The Superintendent encouraged the community to become directly involved by maintaining pressure on local MLA's and other government officials involved in the decision-making. Catherine Smith-Horsman, Chair of the Stewiacke Elementary School Advisory Council, encouraged the Board to continue to move forward with the necessary requests and that the Home and School and SAC would pursue other avenues.

**In-Camera Session:**

It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray  
**THAT THE MEETING MOVE TO IN-CAMERA SESSION**

**MOTION CARRIED**

It was MOVED by Cheryl Samson, seconded by Raymond Tynes  
**THAT THE BOARD RECONVENE INTO PUBLIC SESSION.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Vice-Chair, Trudy Thompson, brought forward a report from the in-camera session related to the employment contract for the new Superintendent of Schools, Gary Miller.

It was MOVED by Lawrence MacKinnon, seconded by Marilyn Thompson.  
**THAT THE BOARD CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BOARD'S SOLICITOR, BE AUTHORIZED TO FINALIZE THE TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND EXECUTE THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT FOR THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, GARY MILLER, IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE IN-CAMERA REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2001.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Adjournment:**

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date