

**Chignecto-Central Regional School Board  
Education Services/Operational Services Joint Committee Meeting  
October 21, 2014**

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The Joint Committee Meeting of the Education Services/Operational Services Committees was held in the Board Room at Central Office on Tuesday, October 21, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

***Education Services Committee***

Wendy Matheson-Withrow, Vice-Chair  
Vivian Farrell, Chair  
Jim Grue  
Susan MacQuarrie

***Operational Services Committee***

Gordon Anderson, Chair  
Adam Davies, Vice-Chair

**Other Board Members in Attendance**

Ron Marks  
David Myles  
Margie Nicholson

Mackie Ross  
Trudy Thompson, Board Chair

**Staff in Attendance**

Lynn Blake, Recording Secretary  
Jacqueline Fahey, Operational Services  
Debbie MacDonald, Operational Services  
Patricia MacKinnon, Nova Family of Schools Supervisor

Ian MacLeod, Cobequid Family of Schools Supervisor  
Scott Milner, Director of Education Services  
Herb Steeves, Director of Operational Services  
Ron Turnbull, Celtic Family of Schools Supervisor

**Presenters**

Denise Miller and Julie Thomas, Maitland District Elementary School  
Sheree Fitch and Robin Campbell, River John Consolidated School  
Linda Patriquin and Rick Parker, Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School

**Regrets**

Keith MacKenzie, Board Vice Chair

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Farrell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

## **HUB SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS**

Chair Farrell addressed the guests and outlined the presentation guidelines. Each presentation was allotted 30 minutes including the opportunity for the exchange of questions and answers. If questions require research, a response is to be issued at a later date. Questions can also be directed at any time to Debbie MacDonald, Executive Secretary to the Director of Operations, via email (macdonaldde@ccrsb.ca).

### **Maitland District Elementary**

Denise Miller and Julie Thomas, on behalf of Maitland District Elementary's Save-the-School (SOS) Committee, presented milestones, highlights, road blocks and plans for moving forward. They reported that sub-committees have been created and that a business plan is being drafted. The Committee has been attending Municipality Community Rejuvenation meetings and sourcing potential sources of revenue. The Committee has also applied to the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies to begin the process of forming an official company, "Maitland School Community Hub Association."

The Committee has identified alternate uses of the space such as a seniors centre, hostel, interpretive learning centre and retail, such as a "New to You" outlet. Potential sources of revenue are funding from the Municipality, community fundraising, grants and rental fees. Community meetings have been met with positive feedback for retaining the elementary school. Committee meetings are being held bi-weekly to move the project forward with sub-committee meetings being held more frequently.

The Committee has had serious discussions with potential partners but the process is still ongoing. Before the Committee can move forward, they require the specific room dimensions/measurements so that they can determine what they will be charging per square foot.

The Committee's biggest focus is being the region's centre for seniors. There are no programs for seniors in the Hants North area at this time. There is a large amount of funding that can be attained through the Department for Seniors in the area of \$45,000-\$50,000, so the Committee is hoping to tap into this funding.

Another focus is with tourism. It's felt that a hostel would be a great idea for back-packers and students traveling in the area.

The Committee is also looking into the possibility of a New-to-You store, as well as a Language School. They're hoping it will not be in conflict with the School Board. They are also waiting on information regarding the joint use of the facilities and who will be responsible for what. The Committee needs this information before they can finish working on their business plan and presentation to the Board.

The Committee has been in regular contact with the Municipality for funding. They will be presenting to the Municipality within the next month. They have a lot of opportunity for an injection of funds if they provide a plan for retail; crafts, artisans or anything that is going to generate people and interest. Maitland is known for, the artisans and ship building so there is further opportunity in the retail sector if it's allowed.

The community is famous for ship building with W. D. Lawrence and one idea is that in conjunction with the museum, perhaps an interpretive centre with a model ship can be built alongside the building. Possible use of the school grounds brings up the question of the location and capacity of the septic field is and the actual size.

The Municipality is looking into developing walking trails in the area. The Committee feels that if there's a trail from the centre of the village to the school, it would be a wonderful destination for people to go to see what materials and tools were used to build ships.

The potential revenue sources are pilot funding from the Municipality, community fund raising, space rental, grants and social enterprise. They are hoping to branch out enough so that they are not depending on one source of income.

The Committee has been working hard to move ahead, keeping things positive and doing what they can to make it work. They require ongoing community support; more precise and clear direction from the school board such as joint use agreements, dimensions of building measurements, acceptable tenants, i.e. retail store, language school, etc. These questions have been forwarded to Operations. The last thing they are looking for is clarification on the usage of time, i.e. if they are being restricted to any usage. Is it safe for them to conduct business as they see fit on that portion of the building? Are they allowed to have tenants there at any time during the day? They require further clarification on these items. They realize child safety is the number one concern with the Board; it's their concern as well.

Director Steeves spoke to the question regarding square footage. Classroom size is approximately 700 sq ft/classroom. There are two dimensions: 726 and 666, the difference being external versus internal size. Common area costs should also be included as part of rental structure, i.e. hallways. Operational Services is in the process of determining the exact location of the septic field area. The Committee is looking at the area between the end of the school and the helipad to place the interpretive centre. The issue regarding retail, which applies to all groups present, is to propose what you think is best and let the board consider the options, i.e. New to You shop. As was suggested by the Committee, as long as the school is secured and the Board is reassured that's the premise the Committee should work upon and build on. Board members or staff may not know all the issues the Committee wants to put forth; propose what the Committee thinks is going to fit. With the floor plan, the biggest concern is always going to be, for all schools, washrooms and the chance of mingling with students. When writing the business proposal, show that these issues are recognized and clearly addressed during school hours. After hours, it will not be an issue. For example, the multi-purpose area can be used after hours as long as it isn't going to detrimentally affect the students the next day. It was suggested that, at the next meeting, possible tenants be proposed and Board members and staff would provide feedback. The possibility of a Language School as a tenant was suggested. In all cases, proponents were encouraged to ask questions to receive feedback, rather than waiting until the final submission.

The other question regarding security is with regards to the parking lot. Would the parking lot have to be closed off? It would depend on fire lane regulations. The same thing comes into play if a gazebo is built for the interpretative centre. Show on the plot plan where the Committee wants to put it. Hand sketches are acceptable. The next question would be the security of the gazebo after hours. Is it in an open place where the RCMP can drive by and see it? Or, is it behind the school where nobody can see it. It was reiterated that proponents need to bring questions forward so answers can be provided as quickly as possible. Some questions may take longer to answer due to required research.

Director Milner addressed the Committee representatives, reiterating the importance of not waiting to ask questions. There will be three meetings as outlined in the letter sent to the schools with a significant amount of time between the meetings. Do not wait on the meetings to ask the questions. Director Milner asked for clarification regarding the extra classroom that teachers were requesting; that it could be used for library space and/or a space for itinerants such as a school psychologist or speech language pathologist, circuit teachers, etc. In the proposal, these are particulars the Board will be looking for. In the interim, the Board will provide what is required under the Public School Program P-6 to help guide the work of the Committee. A better response can be provided, if the Committee provides exactly how the space is going to be used.

Director Milner indicated the word “grant” implies there’s a time limit to the funding, i.e. one or two years. One of the things the Board will be looking for is sustainability. There could be a bridging time where grants are needed before a retail outlet or language school could be viable. That’s another piece important to articulate. The Committee is looking to diversify and branch out just for that reason.

The Committee representatives asked if it would be taken into consideration with regards to having grant funding the first year and revenue from retail the next. Director Milner addressed the question with the response that a multi-year business plan would be viewed in far better light. Director Steeves indicated that the more value added the better giving the example, that if in the first six months the retail shop needs to do renovations in order to generate revenue, but then signs a lease for the next 2.5 years after that, that’s better than saying they are waiting on grants. The more data that can be provided, the stronger the proposal is. A tenant with a secure line of credit is better than relying on a grant. It’s all how well the proposal is written with the assurances given within.

The Committee had asked who the landlord would be. Board Member Grue asked Director Steeves to provide clarification. Director Steeves stated that as per the guidelines, CCRSB would remain the landlord, the hub would be the overall tenant and the tenant oversees the occupiers of the excess space such as a retail space.

The Committee then responded to questions from Board Members.

### **River John Consolidated School**

Robin Campbell and Sheree Fitch, representing River John Consolidated School, presented to the Board the “Save Our School” Mission Statement and Vision.

The Group developed an acronym to explain what it means to them and what they believe the vision to be:

- H** Health and Wellness: blood collection, foot care clinics, wellness clinics, exercise classes/fitness room. The Committee is working with community health districts and private health care providers to gain interest.
- U** Unity: Working with community groups such as River John Adult Learning and Continuing Education Programs such as a variety of evening classes and community interest groups such as knitting groups, painters, flea markets, etc. going back to the idea of a community school and building on what is already there, being more organized and perhaps generating revenue.
- B** Brighter Future: through the development of a successful community hub, the community will have the tools to sustain a healthy population.

The highlight would be an interactive discovery centre with donations and a trust from River John Consolidated and other revenues. *The North Shore "Scholar Ship" Discovery Centre and Makerspace Community* will be an educational hub rather than a commercial hub. It will be a place-based experiential learning hub housed within the existing library space, utilizing the shop, kitchen and outdoor spaces. It will be a community place where things are made and discovered by doing.

With the vibrant ship-building past, with the presence of agriculture, fisheries and forestry and embracing the future in technology and innovation, the Group has reached out and held initial discoveries with educational people in the province and beyond, gathering valuable insight and information from Discovery Centre, Halifax; Science East, NB; and SuperNova; NS. Creativity is as important as literacy, not just for students but for all as we work toward solutions. A ship's design creating a virtual ship and mast would be built with interactive learning stations within the ship's hull in the River John Library. There would be a range of subjects and skills that the discovery centre could enhance; using something as simple as basic machines like wheels and pulleys and going into 21<sup>st</sup> century technology such as 3D printer and green screens. All the ideas and assumptions fit in with the Board's strategic plan and educational climate. It would be tapping into the creativity of the students and teachers and meeting outcomes for River John students, as well as creating a centre for all students in CCRSB, and Nova Scotia as well, because the Group would like it to be an outreach to other areas. It would be a welcoming and exciting place for families and children on the North Shore after school hours and during vacations. With marketing and tourism backing and partnerships there is great potential for revenue growth sustainability as the North Shore "Scholar Ship" Discovery Centre and Makerspace Community becomes an educational, recreational, tourist destination.

The Group has started communication with other community organizations to see if they want to lease space; organizations that are community-based such as Read by the Sea. Another potential tenant is the quarterly newspaper, the River John Pioneer. The students would have an opportunity to learn about digital technology and media literacy. The Group is looking for things that benefit the students, but also benefits the community falls within the Department of Education's parameters. The Group has also been testing ideas such as night classes, festivals and flea markets to see what works best with regards to generating revenue.

The Financial Committee of the SOS Group has been brainstorming ways to acquire funds for renovations to the parts of the school they will be using for the interpretive centre, as well as other capital costs that would be required in the school. ACOA has been contacted and discussions have been positive. A business plan has to be developed for ACOA at which time ACOA will look at the proposal for consideration. The Group is looking at corporate sponsorships, getting ready to contact businesses to see if there is financial assistance available from them as well.

The Group has received the services of an architect who has volunteered time to look at the school and assist with the design of the interpretive centre and other changes that may be necessary within the school building so that the Group is not in conflict with the student population. The Group has been in contact with a green energy provider about the possibility of having lightweight solar panels added to the roof. The Group understands that the roof would have to be repaired first. This would provide enough electricity to operate the school if it proves to be feasible and also generate electricity that can be sold back to Nova Scotia Power. If this works, this will produce savings of \$18,000 to \$20,000 for the School Board in electricity cost plus generate additional funds that would go towards the required funding.

The Group is very pleased that the Municipality of Pictou County has approved \$30,000 on an annual basis for the SOS Group to go towards the amount of money the group needs to raise. This is in addition to the \$25,000 the Municipality has approved over a two-year period for a community coordinator. The current community coordinator will be employed on a 12-month basis versus 6-month basis over the next two years. This coordinator will assist the Group in preparing programs and grant applications.

The Group has been in contact with Health Foundations with the possibility they may contribute some funds to assist with the equipment needed for the wellness part of the plan. The Group is also in touch with other government agencies for possible funding.

The Group did not have any questions for the board members or staff at this time.

Director Milner asked where the library for the students will be. Ms. Fitch indicated it will remain in the same space but will be a new kind of library. Director Milner also inquired if the space would be accessed by adult visitors during the school day to which the representatives responded that it would only be after school hours and vacation periods. It would, however, be open to other students, such as field trips from other schools in the district during school hours. Director Milner stated that these are some of the fine details that should be included in the proposal, i.e. security and use of the labs.

Director Steeves asked that the Group ensures the architect contacts the Fire Marshal regarding fire codes. The architect should also contact the Operations Area Manager on a regular basis whenever he requires access to the school. The Area Manager can explain things such as the Fire Marshal and the current situation of the library, which the Fire Marshal has given the Board a deferral on. The library is a capital cost because it currently does not meet fire code.

Director Steeves indicated that the business plan should include the idea of the solar panels, as well as if there is capital to invest up front for a return over a period of time. The sooner the Group can communicate what areas they would like to have, the better off the Board would be able to give a response to. The practical ones are the ones relating to security and use of the various areas. Another consideration is the workshop and when items in the shop reach the normal end of life; what are the plans to replace equipment and tools. Are these things being added to the business plan? These are the same details that ACOA will likely want with regards to sustainability. Director Steeves reiterated that the business plan should also state how the Group intends to accomplish the programming as required by the Department of Education.

The representatives responded to questions from Board Members.

### **Wentworth Consolidated**

Linda Patriquin and Rick Parker addressed the Board on behalf of the School Sustainability Association. The community formed the Association to continue to maintain a school in the community. The efforts have been ongoing since the decision was brought down that the school was to close.

Mr. Parker indicated that the school is in a very different situation than Maitland and River John. The space that Wentworth has is very limited and therefore the Association is asking just how much space is available. From the discussions that the Association has had with the SAC to date and looking at the school, the Association

believes that they only have one room available that is not being used as part of the school's day-to-day use. The idea of a hub model is very limiting for Wentworth. How much space is available and is it limited to the one room. It is hard for the Association to go any further until they have this information.

The other concern that the Association has is around the revenue and expectations for revenue. The Association has a question of what is expected from the impact assessment report: is it the Operational Service's savings of \$97,000 or is it the total projected operational efficiencies of \$243,000 that the Association is expected to cover. Director Steeves responded to the question stating that the amount expected to be covered is the \$243,000 on an annual basis as outlined in the previous correspondence distributed to the groups.

Mr. Parker indicated that the amount is unachievable. The Association proposed that the cost savings be based on the actual building costs, the operating costs of the building, and based on a percentage of usage. For example if a hub model uses 50% of a building, they should cover 50% of the building cost. The Association feels that their tax dollars are what pays for the education of the students and should not be the responsibility of the community groups to raise money. The Association is asking the Board to consider a fairer approach, meaning a reduced financial obligation.

Chair Farrell stated that Joint Committee Co-Chairs and Directors will meet within a week of the Joint Meeting to discuss the more obvious questions that have arisen and that can be answered without going to the whole Joint Committee.

Discussion ensued with regards to the guidelines and criteria imposed by DEECD that must be adhered to. It was noted that no Board Members were part of the Province's meetings to determine the guidelines and criteria for the hub models. Chair Farrell reviewed the motion made at the previous meeting held on September 24, 2014, that was also included in a letter dated October 17, 2014 from Board Chair Thompson to the Hub Schools:

"Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Keith MacKenzie

**THAT THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE THREE HUB COMMITTEES WOULD BE INFORMED THAT THE OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL COST SAVINGS INDICATED IN THE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WOULD NEED TO BE COVERED WITH THEIR HUB MODEL ALONG WITH THEIR RECOGNITION OF ANY ADDITIONAL COST PRESSURES DURING THE TERM OF A BUILDING USE AGREEMENT.**

**MOTION CARRIED."**

Mr. Parker stated that the Association is aware of the guidelines but feels that some of the wording is not consistent with the impact assessment report, i.e. operational savings versus operational efficiencies. The Association is asking for the Joint Committee to consider some other options for the funding because the Association feels that what was approved is unachievable for the Association. The Association is willing to work in whatever way they can within reason, but feel this is not reasonable.

Board Members spoke to the guidelines that have been set by the Province. Chair Farrell noted that the only way the Joint Committee can assist at this time is to hear the Association's presentation and give advice as to whether there is compliance with the guidelines and to answer questions.

Mr. Parker indicated the Association has read the guidelines and there is only one reference to cost savings. It doesn't say that the school boards need to achieve and recover all the costs that would have been saved if the school is closed. It says, "...allow school boards to achieve costs saving."—it doesn't say how much. The Association wrote to the Minister of Education with their concerns after the July 28 meeting of hearing the worst case scenario was that the expectation was \$243,000. The minister wrote back, "as indicated in the guidelines, boards are not expected to incur additional operating or capital costs to support the proposed use of available space in the school building beyond the costs to deliver the public school program." Incremental costs, yes, beyond the cost to deliver the public school program. The Association is asking that the School Board consider keeping responsibility for delivering the public school program and that sharing the building costs on a pro-rated basis with the hub model uses that were presented at this meeting would be a fairer approach, therefore the Joint Committee is being asked to consider this.

The Association is concerned with the limited space and when it will be available. The Association has held discussions and consulted with SAC to determine what is believed to be the most useable space and has the least effect on the delivery of program to the students. Ms. Patriquin reviewed the floor plan of the school with how it is currently being used and how it can be adapted for the hub model. There is one classroom, Classroom 3, and washroom that can be closed off from the school and very few renovations would be required. In addition, the multi-purpose room can be used after school hours, weekends and vacations.

It is a small community with high needs and there are a lot of services that could be offered to the community but there are not a lot of organizations to provide the services for such things. One that did was the Community School Council and they are the only group in the community that has offered a wide variety of programs for preschoolers to seniors for everything from preschool, adult education and physical wellness. The Association feels that one of the road blocks is that the Community School is currently without an agreement and without access to the school. Every program they offered was offered at the school so nothing is being offered right now because they are in the process of negotiations with the Board. Because all of their programs were offered at the school and the Association doesn't know when the new agreement will be in place, the Association feels that it is being impeded by this. It is the Association's understanding that the hub model used should not be in competition or infringe upon duly the viability of local business or organizations that already exist in the community and delivers services to target public school students. If the Association is not going to be in conflict, they require the issue with the Community School resolved so they know where they stand, what uses the Community School has and what programs they offer so that the Association will know what they can offer.

One of the options that the Association is looking at is a preschool/daycare. The Association is also in communication with YMCA Amherst. The space could be used to promote literacy such as Children and Adults Reading Together (CART Program) and are looking at literacy grants. There could be afterschool fitness classes. Grants through the Community Health Board could achieve turning part of the space into a health clinic. There could also be intergenerational programs with seniors; a historical society preserving the community's history; tutoring services as well as the possibility of rental space for vehicle compliance officers.

Director Steves acknowledged the difficulties and challenges that the amount of \$243,000 will present. Director Steves confirmed that Classroom 3 is the space that the hub model can use on a go-forward basis. He indicated to the Association, as well as to the other groups present, that there's no limitation to adding on space to the outside of the school. There is nothing in the guidelines that precludes that. He further suggested that a room could be partitioned off to provide a meeting space that can be rented out.

Director Milner also acknowledged the challenges faced by the Association. He confirmed that it's clear that the Association can have Classroom 3 without impeding the Education Program. Director Milner addressed the question about the usage of space, as well as the road block mentioned by Ms. Patriquin regarding the Community School. As previously described to the council, and most recently by the Supervisor of the area, the school is subject to the policies of the board and there is a facility use policy. Anybody at any time can walk into the principal's office and complete a facility use application. That policy is publicly available on the school board website along with the fee structure. The conduit to use the school is through the principal's office. No one is stopping any group from using the facility, so long as policy stipulations are upheld. For example, tomorrow someone could walk into the school and rent the school in the evening for a particular purpose. Can it be used after hours? Yes. Can it be used on the weekend? Yes, subject to the policy that is currently in effect.

Director Milner wanted to clarify that he does not want the impression to be that no one could use the school now. He was concerned that was this was the impression being portrayed. Ms. Patriquin stated the Association does not use the school because they do not have the budget to pay for the use. Director Milner responded that there is a budget available and that when one walks into a school for the use of the facility, the information is provided to every applicant, including the fact that there is a community-access budget available. If rental fees are a hindrance, one can say so and the information is provided to the group along with the application process. That budget has been in place for three years now.

Board Member MacQuarrie addressed the Co-Chairs and Directors and asked if the Committee is able to consider a proposal if it doesn't cover the total operational cost. For example, if the group come back in December after spending two months on a proposal and drumming up business and it does not generate \$244,000/year, according to what was discussed at the last meeting, it is one of the main criteria; that the Board cannot even look at the proposal. The groups need clarification on this so that they do not waste their time. Board Member Marks reiterated that the understanding is that if the school does not meet the savings the board would have if the school closed, then the guidelines for the hub model would not be adhered to and the school would then close. That was the motion that was passed at the September 24 meeting. Board Member Davies stated more input is required and, at some point, come together as a Board and have the discussion of "are the guidelines written in stone"; if the parameters are not met then the course is clear. The best thing to be done is gather the information and be aware that it will be a full board discussion.

Chair Farrell read the motion a second time:

"Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Keith MacKenzie

**THAT THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE THREE HUB COMMITTEES WOULD BE INFORMED THAT THE OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL COST SAVINGS INDICATED IN THE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WOULD NEED TO BE COVERED WITH THEIR HUB MODEL ALONG WITH THEIR RECOGNITION OF ANY ADDITIONAL COST PRESSURES DURING THE TERM OF A BUILDING USE AGREEMENT.**

**MOTION CARRIED."**

Chair Farrell thanked everyone for the first of three presentations. The groups have received the information by listening to the answers given to all of the groups. While work is completed on the next presentation for December 17, the questions that have been asked will be answered to the very best of the ability for you in as

timely a fashion as possible. Any matters guideline-related and can be answered without the full Committee. The Committee Chairs and Directors will meet next week to address those questions.

The next Joint Meeting is on November 18, 2014 at 6:00 PM and all groups will be informed of the outcomes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Approved: November 18, 2014