



Divisional Futures and Liaison Committee Minutes

Thursday, November 19, 2009 – 10:00 a.m.

Conference Room, Administration Office

Present: B. Jolly, M. Snelling, Dr. D. Michaels, G. Barnes

Guest: Shirley Kendzierski, Director of AFM, Western Region

Regrets: B. Mayes, G. Buri (Alternate),

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Divisional Futures and Liaison Committee Meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Chairperson, Trustee Jolly.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Divisional Futures and Liaison Committee Agenda was approved.

3. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE GOAL ITEMS

NIL

4. OTHER COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

A) Meeting with Director of AFM Western Region

Chairperson, Mrs. Jolly, introduced herself and the representatives of the Divisional & Futures Liaison Committee. She welcomed Ms. Kendzierski and thanked her for attending the meeting. Mrs. Jolly reviewed the role of the Brandon School Division Board of Trustees' Divisional Futures and Liaison Committee. She referenced the question to be discussed at the meeting:

How can the Brandon School Division and AFM work together to maintain an appropriate level of service for the students of the Brandon School Division while keeping costs reasonable?

Mrs. Jolly then chaired an informal discussion with respect to the above-noted question. The key issues arising from the discussions are:

- AFM originally had 9 funded positions but has expanded to 22 positions;
- They were directed by the Government to use up their reserves and then they would receive base funding;
- They have almost used up their reserve and are now advised by the Government that they cannot receive funding due to fiscal restraint;
- They are a Crown Agency with salaries and pensions making up the largest portion of their budget;
- Government treats AFM like its other profit generating organizations such as Hydro and the Liquor Control Commission;
- Salaries make up the majority of their expenses with qualifications and expertise requirements being about the same pay level as a Level 4 – 6 teacher salary;
- AFM employees make less than CFS, Justice and Health employees which therefore can make it difficult to obtain and maintain qualified staff;
- If schools cannot help with the funding for AFM Counselors in the school then they must look at downsizing and reducing services provided;

- AFM has done what they can to keep costs down for the school division, lobbied government's at various levels, including both Department of Health and Department of Education;
- The Division currently funds 46% of the AFM costs and receives 8 days of service from AFM;
- AFM is running into a deficit and the only increases they receive from the Government are increases attached to a particular program;
- Information was provided regarding the current statistics at the three high schools and the services provided by AFM employees;
- AFM provides a level of anonymity and separation from the school;
- If Division was to reduce amount of time contracted by AFM then students would have to access public AFM services;
- If Division cuts services and then at a future date decides to increase services again, they would have to pay the full service price instead of the current 46%;
- AFM currently provides 8 days of standardized service, it would be nice to see increased services but this does provide the minimum standard;
- 46% is sustainable and future increases would be at the rate of inflation to compensate for wage increases;
- AFM does offer training, should a Division wish to train their own staff as counselors, however, other School Division have found that their staff is already overworked and this work tends to "drop to the bottom of the pile";
- Other options were discussed and are being explored, including the possibility of joint advocacy with the Drug and Alcohol Coalition; reviewing Level II and Level III funding criteria; applying for Foundation Grants such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for a one-time grant;
- It was noted that AFM does not get any funding from the Liquor Control Commission similar to funding provided by the Lotteries Commission or tobacco companies for similar addictions.

Following the meeting with Ms. Kendzierski, the Committee reviewed the discussions and agreed to ask the MSBA Resolution Committee to bring forth a resolution for the MSBA 2010 Convention that would ask the MSBA to advocate for sustainable funding from the Government in this area, particularly the Department of Health and the Department of Healthy Living.

Future meeting dates were also discussed. It was agreed all future meetings would take place at 12:00 noon. The meeting in December would be a regular meeting to review community meetings to date and future meetings. The Committee also requested the following meetings be arranged:

- City Poverty Committee – Trustee Snelling confirmed he will make arrangements for the Committee to attend the City Poverty Committee Meeting;
- January, 2010 – Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation;
- February, 2010 – Child and Family Services;
- May, 2010 – Brandon University.

5. OPERATIONS INFORMATION

NIL

6. **NEXT REGULAR MEETING: 12:00 noon, Thursday, December 17, 2009, Board Room.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Jolly, Chair

G. Buri (Alternate)

B. Mayes

M. Snelling