

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION, HELD IN THE J. L. MILNE BOARDROOM, ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1031 - 6TH STREET, BRANDON, MANITOBA, AT 7:00 P.M., MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2012.

PRESENT:

Mr. M. Sefton, Chairperson, Mr. M. Snelling, Vice-Chairperson, Mr. P. Bartlette, Mrs. P. Bowslaugh, Mr. D. Karnes, Mr. G. Kruck, Mr. J. Murray, Dr. L. Ross, Mr. M. Snelling, Mr. K. Sumner.

Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. K. Zabowski and Recording Secretary: Ms. S. Bailey.

Senior Administration: Dr. D. M. Michaels, Superintendent, Mr. G. Malazdrewicz, Associate Superintendent, Mr. D. Labossiere, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Ms. B. Switzer, Director of Human Resources.

CALL:

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and referred to the Call.

The meeting had been called for the purpose of considering the following:

- a) Public Budget Feedback Presentations

Before proceeding with public feedback presentations, the Chairperson spoke of the Board's budget work to date. He noted the various stakeholder meetings which had been held and reminded the public of the dates and deadlines which the Board must adhere to during the budget process. Mr. Sefton reminded all present of the time limit for presentations and confirmed that the Board would not be responding to any presentations at this meeting. He concluded his opening remarks by noting the Board will still accept letters on the budget until noon on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, for inclusion in the March 12, 2012 Board Agenda Package.

The following individuals made presentations regarding the Proposed 2011/2012 Budget:

- A) Ms. Tracey Denbow-Peasgood, Parent, spoke to the Board of Trustees about their decision not to include the bussing proposal for home economics and shops classes for Grades 7 and 8 Students. Ms. Denbow-Peasgood included a petition with 67 signatures, requesting Division bussing for students who are required to travel to a different school for home economics. She expressed concern regarding the safety of children riding City buses to other schools for home economics and industrial arts. She also included five articles from the Brandon Sun which highlighted "brazen individuals damaging policy vehicles, abducting a child from his own yard, offering children candy or to look at puppies in the back of their van" to emphasize how times have changed. She noted Division bussing is provided for high school students under the "open campus" concept, yet was not provided for younger students. She noted bussing was provided for some

courses, such as the band program, but not provided for compulsory courses like home economics and industrial arts. She asked the Board to look at other options using the current resources available and provided possible suggestions. Ms. Denbow-Peasgood concluded her presentation by reminding the Board of Trustees they are responsible for the safety of their students during the school day and asked the Board to take into consideration that responsibility when ensuring students receive a quality education.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Denbow-Peasgood for her presentation. Trustees asked questions for clarification.

- B) Mr. Darren Hardy, President, Brandon Teachers' Association, began his presentation with some observations before providing feedback on the budget. He noted the Funding of Schools Program does not adequately provide for student education. He encouraged all stakeholders to work together towards change in this area. He noted the stakeholder meeting the Finance Committee had with the BTA to discuss budget needs wherein the BTA stated their expectation was that the Board would put student needs first and make an investment in those students. He confirmed the budget discussions had been made easier with a Collective Agreement in place. Although the approach of the BTA has not changed in addressing budget matters, the "freedom from the complexity of perception" was welcomed. Mr. Hardy concluded his observations by noting the budget process for the BTA is a year long process. The Association is in constant communication with the Division on Budget matters. Mr. Hardy noted the BTA felt overall the 2012-2013 budget was a good budget. He did note that from an educational perspective, there are many merits to all day every day kindergarten. He noted strong arguments had been made on February 21st not to move forward with the expansion of this program without the proper funding from the government. However, he felt that if it was the right thing to do to add additional Kindergarten resources, and lobby the government for funding at the same time, "then that is what this Board will do". Mr. Hardy noted the one area the Association did want to speak to in the proposed budget was the expansion of the Vice-Principal Positions in the K-8 schools. All positions listed in the budget appendix were required. He stated it was an investment in the foundation of every school, and the impact of a Vice-Principal is felt by every student, parent and employee. He asked the Board to reconsider putting that \$60,000 back into the budget.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Hardy for his presentation.

- C) Nate Andrews, Vice-President of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce began his presentation by acknowledging the School Division's Administration for providing them with information regarding the proposed budget and allowing them the opportunity to observe a breakdown on where new expenditures are arising from. He confirmed the Chamber continues to be a supporter of quality education in the community. He spoke about the need for good value for the tax dollar. He did express concern that in the long term it is not sustainable to continue to see above inflation increases. He asked the Board to continue to make tough choices on critical needs. Mr. Andrews requested the Board go back and analyze its past budgets as it is likely not every initiative and addition to a budget may not turn out to be as was originally intended. Mr. Andrews stated that Chamber would

continue to lobby the provincial government on increasing its portion of funding to help alleviate pressure on the municipal tax base. They want to continue to fight for a larger provincial contribution and feel they can combine with the Division efforts to do so. He noted the Chamber does not feel property tax is a progressive form of taxation and will continue to lobby for new and innovative ways the province can create revenue. He concluded his presentation by thanking the Board of Trustees for allowing the Chamber to speak publically.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Andrews for his presentation.

Trustee Snelling, Vice-Chairperson, read the following three letters into the Board Minutes:

- A) Ms. Lee-Anne Featherstone, French Immersion Teacher, École O'Kelly School, undated, noting in Manitoba, students are only required to attend half-day kindergarten. She noted French Immersion students are supposed to have 100% of their instruction in French. However, this is not the case at O'Kelly as physical education and music classes are taught in English. Therefore, to ensure the French immersion students are getting the intensity of French mandated by the province, she asks that this position be full time. She notes that French Immersion was excluded from the full day every day kindergarten pilot. She believes that had French Immersion Kindergarten been included in the pilot, teachers would have seen drastic changes in the abilities of the students. She hopes the Division will "reconsider piloting a full-time French Immersion kindergarten class at École O'Kelly School for the 2012-2013 school year. She includes the government website where Trustees can find the Manitoba French Immersion document put out by the Bureau de l'éducation française division.
- B) Madam Anna Gaudet, French Immersion Teacher, École O'Kelly School and mother of two, March 4, 2012, writing to explain why full time French Immersion kindergarten is important. She notes a full time program is beneficial for students, teachers and parents. She confirms that students come to a French Immersion program without any French. Through various strategies she works to get her message, in French, understood. By having the students for a full day students would have a good understanding of the language and be able to communicate in French. They would also have a better knowledge of basic reading and writing so that when the students move to Grade 1 the teacher does not have to go back to basic language and reintroduce the basic vocabulary. Full Day Every Day Kindergarten is beneficial because students learn more from different subjects. The half time program only permits teachers to teach the basic knowledge without going in-depth. By having a full time program, teachers have more time to spend teaching language and other skills such as fine and gross motor skills. She notes her own two children had gone through the full time Kindergarten in another division and believes it was very successful for them. When they entered grade 1, they were more prepared and successful.

C) Nancy Wallace, Foster Parent, March 5, 2012, writing in support of full day Kindergarten, in particular in George Fitton. She notes she has foster children going into Grade 1 and Kindergarten and provides her reasons for supporting full day Kindergarten:

- It is very hard for two working parents to pick-up children from school at 11:30 in the morning. Kindergarten students are released 10 minutes prior to the other children; therefore it is not even feasible for the older siblings to look after them.
- There is a shortage of daycare spots. Many full-time spots are being taken up by people with children in half-time kindergarten. If there were full-time kindergarten classes these children could be using the before and after school programs instead.
- Her two foster children have come to them with significant development delays, including FAS. For children such as this, full time kindergarten is a must not only for the students but for the teachers as well. Children who attend full-time kindergarten are much better prepared for grade 1.

Mr. Murray – Dr. Ross

That the meeting do now adjourn (7:50 p.m.).

Chairperson

Secretary-Treasurer