

Approved
Minutes
Regular
Meeting

Board of School Trustees
School District No. 57 (Prince George)
1894 Ninth Avenue, Prince George, B.C.

2003.01.28
6:00 p.m.

The meeting took place at Vanier Hall.

Present:

Bill Christie, Chairperson
Lyn Hall, Vice-Chairperson
Carlene Keddie, Trustee
Michelle Marrelli, Trustee
Fred McLeod, Trustee
John Rustad, Trustee
Patricia Wick Thibault, Trustee

Dick Chambers, Superintendent of Schools
Bryan Mix, Secretary-Treasurer
Wendy De Marsh, Executive Assistant (Recorder)

In attendance:

Kerry Firth, Assistant Superintendent
Norm Monroe, Assistant Superintendent
Bonnie Chappell, Director of School Services
David DeVore, Director
Allan Reed, Manager of Finance
Lori MacIver, School Operations Officer
Jane Anderlini, Transportation Administrator

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as circulated.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

3.1 Regular Meeting

The minutes of the regular meeting held November 26, 2002 were adopted as circulated.

The minutes of the inaugural meeting held December 3, 2002 were adopted as circulated.

3.2 Record of In Camera Meeting Minutes

The Chairperson noted that a report on the items discussed and decisions made at the in camera meeting of November 26, 2002 were included in the agenda booklet.

4. **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

4.1 Choice Management Committee

4.1.1 Single-Track Montessori Choice School Application

MOVED:

That the choice school proposal submitted by the Prince George Montessori Education Society for a single-track Montessori elementary school be approved.

CARRIED.

4.1.2 Meadow Technology Choice School Application

After discussion and amendment, the following motion was agreed upon:

MOVED:

That the proposal by the Meadow Elementary School Parent Advisory Council to have Meadow Elementary School designated as a technology choice school be referred back to the parent advisory council for further development.

CARRIED.

The Choice Management Committee was asked to provide direction to the Meadow PAC regarding how the application could be improved upon.

4.1.3 Mackenzie French Immersion Choice Application

MOVED:

That consideration of the proposal for a K-7 French Immersion choice program in Mackenzie be postponed until the Board meeting of March 25, 2003.

CARRIED.

The reason for the postponement was to allow time for a survey of staff and parents at Mackenzie and Morfee Elementary Schools to be conducted.

4.1.4 Fine Arts Elementary Choice Program

MOVED:

That the Board delay implementation of a fine arts school in Prince George until the 2004/05 school year.

CARRIED.

5. **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

5.1 Budget Overview

Mr. Chambers gave a presentation on the district's budget situation. He reported that the projected budget shortfall for the coming year was close to \$10 million. He explained the process that would be followed for school closures, which included a 60-day consultation period, with final decisions regarding closures to be made by the Board on April 15, 2003.

MOVED:

That the Board write to the Minister of Education requesting that government immediately meet its obligations to provide school boards with full funding for government-mandated increases, including, but not limited to, the legislated teachers' settlement, the recently arbitrated CUPE settlement, Medical Service Plan increases, etc. and that a letter also be written to the Minister of Children and Family Development regarding the funding for programs supported by that ministry and that copies of these letters be sent to the four local MLAs and the Premier.

CARRIED.

5.2 2003 District Configuration Committee Report

Mr. Firth gave a presentation on the District Configuration Committee's 2003 School Amalgamation Report, which had been released on January 8, 2003. The report identified 15 options for elementary school closures that could be implemented in September 2003.

5.3 Input re: Proposed School Closures

Patty Astorino, representing the Central Fort George Traditional Elementary School Parent Advisory Council (PAC), spoke about the uniqueness of the program being offered at the school and expressed concerns about children having to cross 5th Avenue and Central Street to attend another school.

Judy Gaiesky, representing the Foothills Elementary School PAC, spoke about the importance of the school to the neighbourhood, its safe location and parents' concerns about the routes children would have to walk to other schools.

Anne Godon, representing the Heritage Elementary School PAC, spoke about the school's suitability to receive students from other schools that the Board might close.

Nadine Kapphahn, representing the Highland Traditional Elementary School PAC, spoke about the quality of the programming offered at the school, the quality of the school building and the importance of the school to the neighbourhood.

Doug Jeffery, representing the King George V Elementary PAC, spoke about the importance of the school as a historic site and its suitability as a location for the district's fine arts school.

Ted Van Rhijn, representing the Lakewood Elementary School PAC, spoke about the advantages of the school's location, the quality of its programs and parents' concerns about the routes children would have to walk to other schools.

Trudy Toninato, representing the Pinewood Elementary School PAC, expressed parents' concerns about the routes children would have to walk to other schools.

Don Pollard, representing the Quinson Elementary School PAC, spoke about the recent renovations made to the school, the quality of the programs offered and the importance of the school to the neighbourhood, and reported that information about the school in the District Configuration Committee's report was not up to date.

Doug Koyama, representing the Ron Brent Elementary School PAC, spoke about the importance of the school to its community, the recent upgrade of the building and the quality of the programs offered to students.

Lily Bachand, representing the Shady Valley Elementary School PAC, spoke of the importance of the school to its rural community, the length of the bus ride that would be required for some students to get to other schools and the strong aboriginal program offered at the school.

Cathy Gordy, representing the South Fort George Elementary School PAC, spoke about the importance of the school to its community and parents' concerns about the routes children would have to travel to other schools.

Leona Kline, representing the Van Bien Elementary School PAC, spoke of the importance of the school to the neighbourhood and expressed parents' concerns about their children having to cross one of the two highways to attend another school.

Krista Dawson, representing the Wildwood Elementary School PAC, spoke about the school's importance to its community and expressed parents' concerns about their children having to cross the highway to attend another school.

5.4 Motions re: Proposed School Closures

Mr. Christie explained that the motions being put forward would give notice of the consideration of school closure, not notice of closure, and that there would be a 60-day consultation period before the final decisions were made by the Board.

Mr. Christie noted that Mr. McLeod would make all of the evening's motions related to proposed school closures. Mr. McLeod explained that he wished to waive the right to speak first to each motion and that, in making the motions, he would not be bound by any obligation to vote in favour of them.

Ms. Keddie announced that she would be voting against every school closure, because she believed the issue to be a funding problem that should be solved by the Ministry of Education.

Van Bien Elementary School

Ms. Marrelli declared herself to be in conflict of interest, as her children attended the school, and excused herself from the room during the debate and vote related to Van Bien Elementary School.

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Van Bien Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

DEFEATED.

Trustees cited the location of the school, with neighbouring schools being either unable to accommodate the students or requiring unsafe travel routes to reach them, as the reason for voting against the motion.

Ron Brent Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Ron Brent Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

DEFEATED.

Trustees cited the recent major renovations to this building, the large area served by the school and the importance of the school to its community as reasons for voting against the motion.

South Fort George Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing South Fort George Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees expressed concerns about the small student population of this school and the safety of children traveling to neighbouring schools and declared a need for further investigation and discussion of this proposal.

Pinewood Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Pinewood Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

DEFEATED.

Trustees cited the location of the school, with neighbouring schools being either unable to accommodate the students or requiring unsafe travel routes to reach them, as the reason for voting against the motion.

Heritage Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Heritage Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted the complexity of the closure options in the area of the Bowl west of Highway 97 and that removal of any of the schools from the proposed closure list would limit the ability to investigate every possible option for that area.

Highglen Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Highglen Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted that this school was located in the Bowl west of Highway 97 and needed to be included in the discussion and investigation of options for that area.

Lakewood Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Lakewood Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted that this school was located in the Bowl west of Highway 97 and needed to be included in the discussion and investigation of options for that area.

King George V Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing King George V Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees expressed concerns about the small student population of this school and the safety of children traveling to neighbouring schools and declared a need for further investigation and discussion of this proposal.

Highland Traditional Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Highland Traditional Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted that this school was located in the Bowl west of Highway 97 and needed to be included in the discussion and investigation of options for that area.

Foothills Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Foothills Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted that this school was located in the Bowl west of Highway 97 and needed to be included in the discussion and investigation of options for that area.

Central Fort George Traditional Elementary School

Ms. Wick Thibault declared herself to be in conflict of interest, as her child attended the school, and excused herself from the room during the debate and vote related to Central Fort George Traditional Elementary School.

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Central Fort George Traditional Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.
CARRIED.

Trustees expressed concerns about the relatively small student population of this school and the safety of children traveling to neighbouring schools and declared a need for further investigation and discussion of this proposal.

Meadow Elementary School

Ms. Keddie declared herself to be in conflict of interest, as her children attended the school, and excused herself from the room during the debate and vote related to Meadow Elementary School.

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Meadow Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.
CARRIED.

Trustees noted that this school was located in the Bowl west of Highway 97 and needed to be included in the discussion and investigation of options for that area.

Shady Valley Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Shady Valley Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.
CARRIED.

Trustees expressed concerns about the small student population of this school, its rural nature and the length of the bus ride to neighbouring schools and declared a need for further investigation and discussion of this proposal.

Wildwood Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Wildwood Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted the problems that had arisen with the foundation of this building and expressed a desire to discuss with the community the cost of repairing the school and parents' concerns about their children traveling to neighbouring schools.

Quinson Elementary School

MOVED:

That the Board consider closing Quinson Elementary School, effective September 2003, with a final decision regarding the closure to be made after a 60-day consultation period.

CARRIED.

Trustees noted that this school was located in the Bowl west of Highway 97 and needed to be included in the discussion and investigation of options for that area.

6. RECESS

The Chairperson called a recess at 9:35 p.m.; the meeting reconvened at 9:52 p.m.

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

7.1 Approval of Committee and Liaison Appointments

Mr. Christie announced the addition of Mr. Rustad as a member of the Choice Committee and the Budget Review Committee.

The appointments were approved as amended.

8. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

8.1 Committee Report

There was no report from the Management and Finance Committee.

8.2 Capital Project Bylaw No. 1-2003 Valemount Secondary School

MOVED:

That Capital Project Bylaw No. 1-2003 be given first and second reading.
CARRIED.

MOVED:

That Capital Project Bylaw No. 1.2003 be given third and final reading.
CARRIED.

MOVED:

That the meeting continue until all the agenda items have been dealt with.
CARRIED.

9. **EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

9.1 Committee Report

Ms. Wick Thibault reported on the items discussed at the last meeting, which included the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, which was being conducted by Statistics Canada, and the third Provincial Adolescent Health Survey, which was being conducted by the McCreary Centre Society.

10. **EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE**

10.1 Committee Report

Mr. Hall reported on the items discussed at the last meeting, which included a letter received from the Prince George District Teachers' Association regarding BC Hydro, a report on school incidents and an update on the Green Buildings Initiative.

11. **POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

11.1 Committee Report

Ms. Marrelli reported on the topics discussed at the last meeting, which included a number of policies that would be brought to the next Board meeting for approval. She explained that Policy 5119 School Catchment Areas and Student Transfers was not being brought forward for approval that evening as originally planned, because new provincial legislation on the issue was expected. She noted that, depending on when the legislation was passed, it might be necessary for the Board to call a special meeting to deal with the issue.

11.2 Final Approval of Revisions to Policy 1110 Communications

Ms. Marrelli noted one change to the policy since it had received preliminary approval from the Board in November, and that was the replacement of the word “must” with the word “shall” in the preamble.

MOVED:

That the proposed revisions to Policy 1110 Communication be approved.
CARRIED.

11.3 Final Approval of Draft Policy 1222 School Planning Councils

Ms. Marrelli noted one change to the policy since it had received preliminary approval from the Board in November, and that was a change in the deadline date in Administrative Procedure 7, from May 31 to June 10. She noted that one further change was recommended by the committee, and that was to replace the word “must” to the word “shall” in Regulation 11.

MOVED:

That draft Policy 1222 School Planning Councils be approved.
CARRIED.

11.4 Final Approval of Draft Policy 7550 Opening and Closing of Schools

Ms. Marrelli noted one change to the policy since it had received preliminary approval from the Board in November, and that was the removal of the words “made by bylaw” from the preamble.

MOVED:

That draft Policy 7550 Opening and Closing of Schools be approved.
CARRIED.

12. **TRUSTEE REPORTS**

12.1 BC School Trustees' Association

Mr. McLeod reported that the next BCSTA Education Committee meeting would be held on February 14 and the next Provincial Council meeting on February 15, that the Northern Interior Branch was meeting over the coming weekend in Prince George, and that the annual general meeting would be held in Kamloops in April.

12.2 District Parent Advisory Council

Mr. Rustad reported on the topics discussed at the last DPAC meeting, which included the district's transfer policy, training dates for School

Planning Councils, a presentation on the OPTS program and the process to be followed for school closures.

12.3 District Student Advisory Council

Ms. Wick Thibault reported that she had been unable to attend the last DSAC meeting, but that the topics on the agenda had included BC Student Voice and an upcoming student leadership conference. The council had also reviewed its budget and decided to hold its meetings bi-monthly this year, instead of more frequently.

12.4 Budget Review Committee

Mr. Hall reported that the committee had one more meeting scheduled, and then it would be bringing a report and recommendations to the next Board meeting.

13. **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

14. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

15. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Christie drew the Board's attention to the item of correspondence included in the agenda for information, which was a letter dated January 14, 2003 from the Village of Valemount regarding Valemount Secondary School.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.