

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
BATTLE RIVER REGIONAL DIVISION #31, HELD ON MARCH 8, 2001,
COMMENCING AT 9:36 A.M.**

PRESENT

LORNE ENRIGHT
MICHELE MULDER
GERRY OBERG
GWENDA POYSER
JACQUIE SCHAFFTER
BILL SEARS
WAYNE THRONDSO (left the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and returned at 4:55 p.m.)
ROXANE WOLOSHYN (joined the meeting at 10:25 p.m.)

ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

WARREN PHILLIPS, Chief Deputy Superintendent of Schools
WILLIAM SCHULTE, Secretary-Treasurer
SYLVIA LAUBER, Recording Secretary

M. MULDER IN THE CHAIR

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

#29/01 G. OBERG – That the agenda be approved with the distributed add-on sheet and the following items:

Business Arising Out of the Minutes

1. WAN to Rural Customers – G. Oberg

New Business

17. Sparsity and Distance Grant – G. Poyser
18. High School Math
19. Letter from Camrose Composite High School - School Council Chairperson and Principal

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

#30/01 L. ENRIGHT – That the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees held on February 8, 2001 be approved as presented.

CARRIED

WIDE-AREA NETWORK (WAN) TO RURAL CUSTOMERS

Trustee Oberg questioned whether Battle River Regional Division #31 could provide Internet service to rural customers. Chairman Mulder noted that the provision of Internet service by Battle River Regional Division #31 for villages and towns is being investigated.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

The Director of Maintenance and Operations, Pat Spelliscy, joined the meeting at 9:47 a.m. and presented his report of the work in progress, and that completed, by the Maintenance Department.

Air Quality in Schools

#31/01 G. POYSER – That the Director of Maintenance and Operations prepare a plan for implementation of rotational testing of air quality in all Battle River Regional Division #31 schools.

CARRIED

Property in Hardisty

Trustee Poyser suggested that a meeting of a Capital Plan Committee member, Trustee Poyser, Secretary-Treasurer Schulte and the playground committee for Allan Johnstone School for the purpose of determining if the land available in Hardisty adjacent to the school would be suitable for playground development. Mr. Schulte will explore the possibility of cost sharing of this development with the Town of Hardisty.

Modernization of the Elementary Wing – Central High-Sedgewick Public School

Trustees agreed by consensus that a meeting with the School Council Executive at the Central High-Sedgewick Public School be arranged with the architect to review the modernization plans. It was also agreed that School Council representatives be invited to attend future site meetings at the school. Trustee Enright, Chair of the Capital Plan Committee, will arrange the above-noted meeting.

Building Quality Restoration Projects (BQRP)

Secretary-Treasurer Schulte reviewed the school-requested BQRP projects and an analysis of the BQRP balance sheet.

Mr. Schulte noted the BQRP recommendations would be brought to the next Board meeting.

MEETING RECESS

The regular meeting recessed at 10:49 a.m. and reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

PACE FACILITY UPDATE

Mr. Schulte updated Trustees with respect to the PACE Outreach School proposed facility.

Mr. Spelliscy left the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

ADDITION TO THE AGENDA

#32/01 W. THRONDSOON – That the following item be added to the agenda:

New Business

20. East Central Health Presentation – 1:00 p.m.

CARRIED

2001-02 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

#33/01 W. THRONDSOON – That the Board of Trustees approve the 2001-02 school year calendar with the Easter break as presented.

Amendment to Motion #33/01

#34/01 L. ENRIGHT – That an amendment be made to motion #33/01 such that the 2001-02 school year calendar with the Easter break shows a school start date after Labor Day, and that the days-in-lieu of interviews be changed from Mondays to Fridays.

DEFEATED

Amendment to Motion #33/01

#35/01 B. SEARS – That an amendment be made to motion #33/01 such that the 2001-02 school year calendar with the Easter break permit the schools to determine their own days-in-lieu of interviews.

DEFEATED

Amendment to Motion #33/01

#36/01 L. ENRIGHT – That an amendment be made to motion #33/01 such that the 2001-02 school year calendar with the Easter break shows the days-in-lieu of interviews be changed from Mondays to Fridays.

DEFEATED

Motion #33/01

The main motion, motion #33/01, was returned to the table and voted on.

#33/01 W. THRONDSOON – That the Board of Trustees approve the 2001-02 school year calendar with the Easter break as presented.

CARRIED

MEETING RECESS

The regular meeting recessed at 12:00 noon and reconvened at 1:02 p.m.

EAST CENTRAL HEALTH UNIT PRESENTATION (1:02 p.m.)

Chairman Mulder welcomed Dr. Olson and Irwin Huberman from the East Central Health Unit to the meeting and invited their presentation.

Mr. Huberman noted that on March 7, 2001 an 18-year old student attending Augustana University College (AUC) was diagnosed with meningitis. Mr. Huberman indicated that personnel from the Health Unit are seeking out people who are pivotal in the community to explain the situation and how the Health Unit is addressing the situation. He noted that the principals of all the schools in Camrose have been contacted. The media had also been informed. Dr. Olson met with student representatives and administrators at AUC as well as personnel from St. Mary's Hospital. Mr. Huberman stressed that this is a sporadic case with two cases being reported in this area this year. The first one was in Sedgewick and the two cases are not related.

Dr. Olson indicated that he has notified all physicians who practice in Camrose and outlined for Trustees what meningitis is. Dr. Olson indicated that public health is notified when a case of meningitis is diagnosed and personnel begin contact tracing all persons who may have been in contact with the meningitis patient. These people are treated for two days with an antibiotic. Dr. Olson informed Trustees that meningitis is spread by saliva and encouraged prevention by not sharing of any items such as lip-gloss, water containers, candy, cigarettes, etc. Dr. Olson noted that currently a vaccine is available for only four organisms out of six that cause meningitis and that it takes two weeks for the vaccination to be effective from the time it is received.

Trustees were informed that this health region is next in line for the province-wide vaccination program and that currently personnel are waiting for the vaccine to be produced. It is expected that this will occur in May and that the immunization will likely start in schools.

Questions about meningitis can be directed to a health nurse who is on call from 6:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. at the toll-free number of 1-866-811-2345.

Dr. Olson and Mr. Huberman were invited to address the administrators at their meeting on March 13, 2001 at the Chester Ronning School.

Dr. Olson and Mr. Huberman left the meeting at 1:24 p.m.

MUSIC FESTIVAL REQUEST – CITY OF CAMROSE

#37/01 G. POYSER – That the Board of Trustees provides \$1000 to the Camrose and District Music Festival in lieu of registration fees for schools within Battle River Regional Division #31.

CARRIED

POSSIBLE REVIEW OF POLICY IHCD ‘ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

Trustees reviewed a letter received from the School Council chairperson for the C.W. Sears Schools noting that a policy review of medical procedures within the school indicated that there is limited tracking of administering medication at the school level. Dr. Phillips will investigate an appropriate tracking system.

NEW NORWAY SCHOOL COUNCIL (1:34 p.m.)

Chairman Mulder welcomed a delegation of four persons representing the New Norway School Council to the meeting and invited their presentation. Bettyann Skagen, School Council chairperson, served as spokesperson. Ms. Skagen noted that today she was presenting some questions and comments and would like response to these at a later meeting with the Trustees.

Ms. Skagen expressed the following concerns/questions with respect to the Facilities Viability Study:

- The methodology in the report indicates that the input of staff, parents and the community was encouraged, however input from the School Council was never sought, and parents in the community had no such input.
- The proposal to remove the four portables will eliminate or significantly reduce the quality of the programs currently offered.
- How accurate are the demographics, which show a decline in student population? Were home schooling students included in these calculations?
- Four of the key programs at New Norway School utilize the four portables that have been proposed to be removed.
- By removing the portables and negatively affecting the programs, the study is making New Norway School less viable and less desirable.
- The utilization rate calculated in the study shows New Norway School at 61%, whereas the calculation done by the School Council shows a utilization rate of 86%.
- According to the School Facility Evaluation Project Final Results, New Norway School's performance indicator of 260 shows that it is adequate for intended use and expected to provide continued service life with average maintenance.
- The financial implications of demolishing the four portables need to be reviewed, as the figure quoted appears low.

Ms. Skagen noted in closing that New Norway School, because of its portables:

- Provides appropriate size class rooms;
- Provides appropriate care of special needs students;
- Provides an elementary computer lab with access to the world wide web giving their young students an awesome and vital learning opportunity; provides an extensive CTS program giving their students an early start, a necessary beginning, in the changing world of technology; and
- Provides students the opportunity to study music.

Mrs. Mulder responded to the presentation noting that the Ten-Year Capital Plan is not “written in stone”, and that the Board is planning to discuss the next steps in consultation with a broadened and enhanced model.

Mrs. Mulder noted that the Board first saw this report on December 12, 2000 and understood that it had to be submitted to Alberta Infrastructure by the middle of January 2001. Given these timelines, the Board chose to forward the report with option 2 as a proposed course of action and release the report to communities and the public simultaneously. Alberta Infrastructure has now moved the timelines and this has caused some concerns. The response from AB Infrastructure will not likely be received until May, in part due to the election call for March 12, 2001.

Mrs. Mulder conceded that the programs in the New Norway School are there because the Board told Divisional Office planners that this is important and directed the programs and portables to be put in place. However, even if option 2 is not the solution, the Board must still deal with the issue of small enrolments in the schools because of a decline in rural populations. Mrs. Mulder noted that the enrolment numbers were prepared by an expert demographer. When the Board observes that a drop of 20% in enrolment has occurred in the Division and that is extrapolated over the next five years, Trustees have to be concerned about this decline as there will not be enough students to maintain the status quo in the future.

Ms. Skagen pointed out that the provincial government indicates that there are not enough classroom spaces. Mrs. Mulder agreed that that is true when applied to Edmonton, Calgary and other large urban centers.

The question of spending more money on a survey to look at exactly what the population will look like was posed to Trustees. Mrs. Mulder responded that these issues will have to be explored because each community is unique, but was unsure exactly how a survey of this type should be done.

Trustee Oberg noted that when the Board looks at the long-term, it needs to look at the direction given by the consultants.

Dr. Phillips noted that school communities who have expressed their concern to Trustees indicate the high quality of programs and educational

achievement in their schools. Dr. Phillips expressed his concern that these meetings tend to present a “we” – “they” situation. The Board has worked hard to maintain quality programs in difficult times and has to do this throughout the entire division. There is a common problem and a search for common solutions must happen. The problem is that there are not enough children to maintain the programs and buildings as they currently exist. There is a much better opportunity for success at arriving at these understandings if everyone works together. The report [Facilities Viability Study] does contain inaccuracies, but that is not the point – the report provides a direction.

Trustee Thronson noted that in a perfect world the Division would have had a year to prepare the report; however, at the time, it was suggested to the Board that Alberta Infrastructure was going to disburse a lot of dollars for capital projects by March 31, 2001, and if a report was not submitted by a Division, that Division would not receive any capital funding. Given the short timelines, Group 2 Architects did the best they could within that tight timeframe working with the assumptions at the time.

A member of the delegation questioned what the timelines were now.

Mrs. Mulder replied that the timelines appear to be continually moving particularly with the upcoming election, as following the election there may be a new Minister of Infrastructure. Should that happen, an endorsement from the Minister on any plan would not likely happen before May. Mr. Malcolm Johnson from Alberta Infrastructure informed Mrs. Mulder that there are many requests for new buildings and that the buildings most in need, as identified in the School Facilities Audit, would be reviewed first as they present safety hazards. Given that, it appears that the wait for word from Alberta Infrastructure on the Ten-Year Capital Plan could be longer than May. In hindsight, it appears that the Board would have had more time to prepare a Capital Plan.

Trustee Poyser noted that the Trustees have been aware for quite a while of the pressures and stresses in the Division [with respect to declining enrolments and building utilization and maintenance]. Following the planning session with the school administrators, the Board decided to proceed with the Plan. This was one way to bring the issues forward to the communities.

Tuesday, April 10, 2001 at 7:30 p.m. was scheduled by the Trustees and New Norway School Council delegation to meet to discuss the above-noted concerns.

An observer at the meeting, Patricia Zeniuk requested permission to speak. Ms. Zeniuk noted that the Round Hill School Council was meeting tonight to discuss possible solutions to the concern they have about the possible closure of their junior high program. She questioned if it was correct to say that Alberta Infrastructure has not yet accepted the proposal.

Mrs. Mulder indicated that she understands that the Plan is on hold until Alberta Infrastructure hears from Battle River Regional Division #31 that

the communities support the Plan. With all the high needs schools to be reviewed, this could be a while yet, allowing for the possibility of amendments to the Plan.

Trustee Woloshyn noted that even if Alberta Infrastructure approves the Plan, it still comes back to the Board for the final decision.

Dr. Phillips noted that the Board develops a Capital Plan every year, and even though it might be a ten-year plan, it is updated every year taking into account any priorities that may arise. This is all part of the process. The Plan is changing and ongoing with Charlie Killam School and Camrose Composite High School top priority this year.

Trustees Schaffter emphasized that the Board needs to submit a long-term plan to have in place if the demographics are correct. Currently Charlie Killam and Camrose Composite High School are a priority, but the Board must also have a contingency “what if” plan.

The New Norway School Council delegation left the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Patricia Zeniuk, School Council chairperson from the Round Hill School noted that her Council will be exploring ways of attracting students to their school and questioned how the Board will view that. Would there be any funding available for alternate programming, e.g. multi-leveling by grouping grades together?

Mrs. Mulder responded that any alternative program request would be submitted in proposal form to the Board. Divisional Office administrators would review the feasibility of such a program and bring a recommendation to the Board.

Trustees were also presented with a letter on behalf of nine School Councils, all of whom request that the proposed Ten-Year Capital Plan be rescinded and school councils work together with the Board to provide a positive alternate solution.

NEXT STEPS/PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Trustees discussed the next steps with respect to public consultation on the Ten-Year Capital Plan and determined that an invitation will be sent to the School Council chairpersons to attend a meeting similar to the School Council/Board of Trustees Liaison meetings. This meeting will involve small group discussions with respect to the current demographic situation in Battle River Regional Division #31, what schools will look like in five years and how to ensure viable programs continue in these schools.

Trustees agreed that there is a need to hear from all school councils in the Division in addition to those whose schools may be adversely affected [by the Capital Plan]. It was noted that the Capital Plan involves the

entire region and if the province maintains the utilization factor throughout the region, whatever is done in one area will impact on another area.

Trustees decided to proceed with a meeting as noted above, with a format to be developed by Divisional Office administrators to facilitate the process.

MEETING RECESS

The regular meeting recessed at 3:05 p.m. and reconvened at 3:10 p.m.

PRESENTATION – TAYLOR AND COLLEEN REED (3:10 p.m.)

Chairman Mulder welcomed Taylor and Colleen Reed to the meeting and invited their presentation.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed requested permission for their son, Devan, (DOB January 2, 1997) to attend kindergarten with the start of the 2001-02 school year.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed left the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

CALL FOR BYLAW AMENDMENTS, ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Trustees had no bylaw amendments to put forward to the Alberta School Boards Association for consideration at the Spring General Meeting.

GRADE NINE PROGRAM – STROME SCHOOL

#38/01 J. SCHAFFTER – That, effective with the 2001-02 school year, the grade nine program at the Strome School be closed, and further that the grade nine students be directed to the Daysland School.

CARRIED

MOTION TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE CMOS SCHOOL

#39/01 W. THRONDSOON – That the name CMOS Centre (school code 0326) be changed to Battle River Online.

CARRIED

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRINCIPAL(S)

#40/01 W. THRONDSOON – That the Board of Trustees delegate to the Superintendent of Schools, or designate, the authority to appoint acting principals.

CARRIED

2002 SUMMER GAMES

Trustees reviewed a letter from Dale Toogood, Games Chairman of the 2002 Summer Games, outlining several issues surrounding the installation of a track and field facility on the grounds of Camrose

Composite High School. The letter also requested a substantial financial contribution to the project.

Trustees directed administrative personnel to further investigate this request and bring a recommendation to the Board at its meeting in April.

STUDENT ACTIVITY WAIVERS

Catherine Jensen, Business Manager, joined the meeting for discussion on the Student Activity Waivers.

Trustees directed Mrs. Jensen to obtain a draft Student Activity Waiver that is worded such that the Division is held responsible for negligence when students participate in high-risk activities.

MEETING RECESS

The regular meeting recessed at 3:59 p.m. and reconvened at 4:11 p.m.

LETTER FROM CAMROSE COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL AND PRINCIPAL

Trustees reviewed a letter received from School Council Chairperson and the Principal from Camrose Composite High School (CCHS) wherein a request was made for the Board to approve a survey of current students, parents and staff at CCHS in order to determine the opinions of those who have experienced, first-hand the pros and cons of having Grade 9 students included with Grade 10, 11, and 12 students.

Trustees indicated that a survey was not needed as those who wished to present their views on this could do so at the public meeting in Camrose on April 9, 2001.

BAWLF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES (ECS) SOCIETY (4:16 p.m.)

Lynn Keith, Norma Stewart, and Gwen Stordahl, representing the Bawlf ECS Society were welcomed to the meeting and invited to present their request.

The Bawlf ECS Society requested that Battle River Regional Division #31 consider incorporating the Bawlf ECS program within its operational responsibilities. The delegation noted the following reasons for this request:

- Declining enrolments in the Bawlf ECS program make it difficult to financially operate the program;
- It is difficult to ensure continuity in expectations, monitoring and performance outcomes in curriculum as the program is overseen by a volunteer board of parents who are not professionals in the field of education and whose membership changes yearly;
- The teacher does not have the opportunity to share and exchange resources and ideas with other teachers within the system;

- The coordinator and volunteer board of parents are responsible for applying for grants and cannot possibly know the difference sources of funding that are available; and
- It is difficult to maintain parent involvement in the program at the level that is required to provide a quality service.

Mrs. Mulder noted that if the Bawlf ECS were to become a Board-run program and the enrolment numbers in that program were too small to make the program viable in any given year, there would be no guarantee that the program would remain in Bawlf. Students would then be bused to another ECS center. Mrs. Mulder also noted that there would be no guarantee that the person currently teaching the program at Bawlf would be employed by the Division. That position would likely be advertised and the teacher would be welcome to apply.

The delegation left the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

SPARSITY AND DISTANCE GRANT

Trustee Poyser questioned how the sparsity and distance grants are allocated to school divisions. Divisional office personnel will do some research on this.

HIGH SCHOOL MATH

Trustees were informed that a high school student who was a member of the Advocacy Council, as well as several parents, have asked if an evaluation will be done on the Pure Math 30 course. Dr. Phillips indicated that Mr. Stephen Smith, Deputy Superintendent, will be doing a detailed analysis of the diploma examination results, particularly in pure math. The diploma examination results have not been received in the Divisional Office at this time.

ECS ENTRANCE AGE APPEAL

#41/01 G. POYSER – That the Board of Trustees adhere to policy and deny the request by Taylor and Colleen Reed to allow their son, Devan (DOB January 2, 1997) to enter ECS with the start of the 2001-02 school year.

CARRIED

BAWLF ECS SOCIETY REQUEST

Trustees directed Divisional Office personnel to investigate the projected enrolment and any transportation concerns with respect to the Board assuming the Bawlf ECS as a Board-run program. This information is to be brought to the continuance of this meeting on March 22, 2001.

IN-CAMERA SESSION (4:52 p.m.)

- #42/01 J. SCHAFFTER – That the regular meeting recess to allow the Trustees to meet in-camera, and that all persons except Trustees, Chief Deputy Superintendent of Schools Phillips, Secretary-Treasurer Schulte, and Recording Secretary Lauber be excluded.

CARRIED

The in-camera session recessed at 5:12 p.m. and the regular meeting reconvened at 5:12 p.m.

RATIFICATION OF PAYMENT OF THE ACCOUNTS, FEBRUARY 2001

- #43/01 G. OBERG – That the Board ratify payment of the accounts for the month of February 2001.

CARRIED

MEETING RECESS

At 5:15 p.m., Chairman Mulder recessed the meeting until 9:30 a.m. on March 22, 2001.

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