

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SUNSHINE COAST BOARD OF EDUCATION (SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 46)
Held on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at 7:00 P.M.,
At Chatelech Secondary School, 5904 Cowrie Street, Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0**

PRESENT: TRUSTEES: S. White, Chair; K. Sinnott, Vice-Chair; F. Heppell;
J. Scott; L. Fielding; D. Mewhort; G. Russell

STAFF: D. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools
D. Hierck, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
D. Ready, Secretary-Treasurer
C. McPhedran, Confidential Secretary

#34 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chair White welcomed the audience and acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on the traditional territories of the Sechelt Nation.

#35 Public Question Period (10 minutes in total)

An audience member asked if the three schools were to amalgamate as one at Kinnikinnick, what busing arrangements would be made in the case of emergencies? She noted that with the distance and lack of public transit, it would be difficult to reach the children quickly.

Chair White said this would all be looked at if it became an issue, and that it currently does not come up as a problem at Kinnikinnick.

#36 Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION: Russell/Fielding

“That the agenda be adopted as circulated.”

Carried.

#37 Approval of Minutes of Prior Meetings

MOTION: Mewhort/Sinnott

“That the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 10, 2009 and Record of the Closed Meeting of November 10, 2009 be adopted as circulated.”

Carried.

#38 Reports

(a) Executive Report:

In addition to the information items included in the report provided in the agenda, the following topics were reviewed:

- (1) Cheques issued for the month of November 2009.
- (2) Expenditures by Object as at November 30, 2009.

Secretary-Treasurer Ready reviewed the report, stating that the figures were very close to the projected numbers. She noted that the Long-Term and Short-Term Sick accounts are higher than expected and may be attributed to the H1N1 illnesses.

ACTION ITEMS:

- (1) Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement.

Superintendent Palmer reviewed the report and explained what it pertains to.

MOTION: Russell/Mewhort

"That the board accepts the Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement as presented."

Carried.

- (b) Chairs Report

Chair White reviewed his report mentioning the BCPSEA meetings and the BCSTA Learning Academy that the trustees attended. He also reported that School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) had been singled out at the workshop for our new Values Statement.

Chair White reviewed the request for a first and second reading of changes to Bylaw 7.2.

- (1) MOTION: Mewhort/Sinnott

"That the motion to amend Bylaw 7.2 as follows be read for a first time."

Amend Bylaw 7.2 by removing "at the meeting prior to first reading and"

FROM: 7.2 Written notice of intention to propose a bylaw shall be given at the meeting prior to first reading and in the notice of the meeting where the bylaw is to be proposed.

TO: 7.2 Written notice of intention to propose a bylaw shall be given in the notice of the meeting where the bylaw is to be proposed.

Carried.

- (2) MOTION: Mewhort/Sinnott

"That the motion to amend Bylaw 7.2 be read for a second time."

Carried.

The board agreed unanimously that the motion to amend Bylaw 7.2 proceed to a third reading.

(3) MOTION: Mewhort/Sinnott

“That the motion to amend Bylaw 7.2 be read for a third time, passed and adopted.”

Carried.

(3) MOTION: Mewhort/Scott

“Move that an Ad Hoc Committee be struck to review local and provincial policies on school attendance (catchment) areas / cross boundary transfers and report back to the board with recommendation or options for our February public meeting.”

Carried.

(c) Committee Reports:

(1) Education Committee – November 23, 2009

MOTION: Scott/Russell

“That the recognition awards be referred to senior management for recommendations.”

Carried.

(2) International Education Committee – November 9, 2009

As presented.

(3) Trustee Russell’s Report

Trustee Russell reviewed his report and also mentioned the Change Wars Conference. He was very impressed with the speakers.

(4) Trustee Fielding’s Report

Trustee Fielding reported on the recent District Parent Advisory Committee (DPAC) meeting, which was well attended from all groups in the district. She said this was a great movement with Sharon MacKenzie at the helm. She thanked all those that were involved and mentioned that there had been very positive feedback.

(5) Strategic Plan Update

MOTION: Mewhort/Heppell

“That the reports be received.”

Carried.

#39 Correspondence

- (a) John Les, Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services – letter
- (b) Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Education – letter.

- (c) Tom Pinfold, President Sechelt Rotary – letter.
- (d) Jakob Knaus, B.C. Ferries Student Fares – letter.
- (e) Jan Williams, My dream for the Caren – letter.

MOTION: Mewhort/Sinnott

“That the correspondence be received.”

Carried.

#40 New Business – Committee of the Whole

MOTION: Mewhort/Scott

“That the meeting would move to Committee of the Whole.”

Carried.

(a) Report on Consultation Process

Chair White stated that at the two public meetings, which were well attended, the board was given the chance to hear diverse opinions from people representing all three schools. He said the board appreciated the written feedback that was received prior to the deadline of December 10, 2009 and explained that this would not be made public due to respect for confidentiality.

Trustee Mewhort reported that over 50 consultative meetings had taken place in regards to this subject at which time Gibsons and Pender Harbour had been resolved but Sechelt had not. When the ‘Engaging the Community’ Committee was formed this fall, it was an attempt for real consultation. During the long process, it was obvious that because of West Sechelt’s high enrolment it would be left out of the mix. In his opinion, although Davis Bay Elementary should be left alone, the existing problem cannot be ignored.

Trustee Mewhort said that during the consultations, five to one speakers wanted Davis Bay to remain open. He felt that the savings from closing Davis Bay would be much less when you factor in busing costs and the loss of the ‘small school’ grant. He acknowledged that financially it may not be the wisest choice, but the community clearly wants this school.

Trustee Russell stated that he had a different take on the scenario. He focused on the educational benefits. He said that these benefits were considered when the Superintendent developed the criteria. After reviewing the letters from the public he is aware of the large support from Davis Bay parents but he also had to look at the financial aspects. Administrations time for principals in these smaller schools is limited and they are not able to do their jobs, as they should, and it becomes a real challenge. He went on to say that the operating budget to keep these smaller schools open would not be available next year and he worries what will be lost due to financial pressures if the schools are not combined. Trustee Russell acknowledged that Kinnikinnick is equipped for special needs and he is in favour of consolidating the three schools into this one location. He does not consider a school of 300 students to be large. He stated again that he is focusing on what can be offered educationally to these students.

Trustee Sinnott thanked all those who gave input. He said that it was difficult and sad to make a decision and at times it seemed like a competition. He considered the pros and cons that were given and realized that a decision had to be made. In order to come to this

decision, he looked at many aspects. He really heard the Davis Bay folks. He believes that people move to these small areas for a purpose and acknowledged that there is a community to think about. Davis Bay is what it is. With a few more kids attending Davis Bay from the run off, it could be close to capacity. He also considered the busing costs and possible changes in the catchment areas. Although there is history with Sechelt Elementary, he stated that Sechelt is not functional for students with disabilities. He said that Bill Conway, who spoke at the public meeting regarding his own disabilities, moved him. He believes that Davis Bay should remain open and to close Sechelt, moving the 66 students to Kinnikinnick. He discussed the possibilities for the use of the Sechelt site.

Trustee Scott thanked the public and acknowledged that there were no clear and easy answers. He would like to see Davis Bay remain open, as he has always been a supporter of neighborhood schools as long as they are viable. He recommends that Sechelt consolidate with Kinnikinnick at the Kinnikinnick site. Kinnikinnick has more pros with its accessibility and feels it would be a shame to let go of this. Although further away and busing is not ideal, he does not consider it to be that far away. It is located in a nice area and he thinks it to be a better site. He said that Sechelt is a sprawling school and not as accessible and would require a lot of work to update it. He stated that there is a projection of growth in the Sechelt area and the community could use the site.

Trustee Heppell reported that she agonized over her decision and found herself agreeing with the audience each time they spoke with passion. She was swayed back and forth during the discussions. But, she said at the end of day trustees have an obligation to more than just special interest groups. She realizes it is impossible to keep the three schools open and she would like to see the three schools consolidate. She acknowledged that neighbourhood schools are ideal, but not feasible at this time. She is unable to see any other way forward but to consolidate. She was impressed after visiting Kinnikinnick and said it would be her choice because of its wheelchair accessibility. She thanked the public for all their submissions.

Trustee Fielding at first thought that combining the three schools would be ideal. She attended a large school and knows how this is. Her children go to Madeira Park, a relatively small school, and after listening to the Davis Bay community desiring a small school for their children she believes that Davis Bay should remain open. Because Sechelt is so small, she would like to see this school combine with Kinnikinnick.

Trustee Russell said that because of accessibility and that the Sechelt Band Council would like to keep their children in the same school, he also chooses Kinnikinnick. He appreciates Kinnikinnick and what it has to offer. He acknowledged that there is some work to be done at Kinnikinnick but said that most schools need work. He clarified that the 'small school' grant of \$126,000 does not go to Davis Bay alone. He stated again that if the three schools were to remain open it would be costly. He referred to Roberts Creek and Gibsons Elementary and the benefits that these larger schools have such as more than one class per grade, peer choices and also teacher choices. With the three schools combined at Kinnikinnick it would still be considered a small school. Although he does not like to see Davis Bay closed, he considers that if the three schools do not combine they would not benefit financially. He feels the best way to show support is to listen to the educators.

Trustee Sinnott replied that he agrees with Trustee Russell. You will get the money and the programs but people in Davis Bay live there for a certain lifestyle and the school was built for this smaller number. He would like Sechelt and Kinnikinnick to get through the hump. He struggled with his decision and feels that people choose a life style and businesses rely on them. The ripple affect became evident.

MOTION: Mewhort/Fielding

“That the board resume the regular meeting.”

Carried.

Trustee Mewhort brought forward a Notice of Motion:

“That a bylaw to close Sechelt Elementary School in Sechelt, British Columbia be read for a first and second time at the January 12, 2010 Regular Board Meeting.”

#41 Questions and Inquiries From the Public Relating to the Board Meeting

A member of the audience asked if this meant that Davis Bay is to stay open?

Chair White said it that this is the indication from trustees at this point of the process.

A member of the audience said that he heard a rumour that the board of trustees met privately with the Davis Bay PAC and asked if this was true?

Chair White responded that this was not true.

Trustee Mewhort confirmed that he did have coffee with two members of the PAC to review the process.

Chair White reviewed how things would progress from here.

At this point in the meeting, Secretary-Treasurer Ready assumed the Chair.

#42 Elections of Board Chair/Elected Chair Assumes Chair

Trustee Russell nominated Trustee White. Trustee White accepted the nomination and he was acclaimed to the position.

Chair White assumed the chair.

#43 Election of the Vice-Chair

Trustee Sinnott nominated Trustee Mewhort and Trustee Heppell nominated Trustee Russell for the position of Vice-Chair. Both trustees accepted the nomination. Trustee Russell spoke regarding his desire to support the Chair. Upon voting, Trustee Mewhort was declared the Vice-Chair and assumed the seat.

#44 Election of Board Representatives

(a) B.C. Public School Employers' Association

Trustee Fielding nominated Trustee Mewhort for the position. Trustee Mewhort accepted the nomination and as no other trustees were nominated he was acclaimed to the position.

(b) B.C. School Trustees' Association Provincial Council

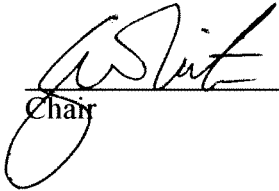
Trustee Russell nominated Chair White and Trustee Mewhort nominated Trustee Fielding for the position. Chair White declined the nomination and Trustee Fielding accepted the nomination. As a result, Trustee Fielding was acclaimed to the position.

#45 Next Meeting

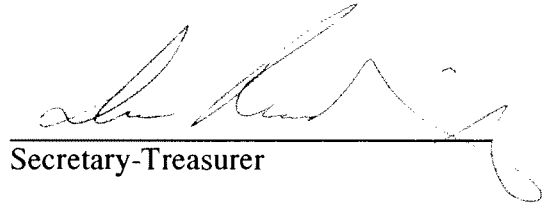
The next board meeting will be held on January 12, 2010 at the School Board Office at 7:00 p.m.

#46 Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



Chair



Secretary-Treasurer