

School District #5: Baie Verte, Central, Connaigre
Regular School Board Meeting
February 18, 2003
MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE

Terry Brown, Chair
Education

Debbie Armstrong, Director of

Carolyn Andrews
Administration)

Terry Hillier, Assistant Director (Finance &

Clarence Brown

Bonnie Lane-McCarthy, Assistant Director (Human Resources)

Randy Edison
(Programs)

Frank Norman, Assistant Director

Robert Elliott
Recorder

Beverly Wells,

Raymond Gray

Albert Hodder

OBSERVERS

Gail Hoskins

Five people from Bay

d'Espoir

Winston Keeping

Sharon Mayne

David Morrow

Sean Power

Mabrey Winsor

ABSENT

Gregory Roberts sent regrets.

1. Invocation

The meeting opened at 7:05 p.m. with trustees repeating the invocation.

2. Presentations

There were no public presentations at this meeting.

3. Program PRESENTATION

3.1. CRTs

Frank Norman, Assistant Director (Programs), engaged the trustees in a study session on the 2002

Grade 3 CRT results. Board trustees were broken into three groups and responded positively to the sessions. Following are some of the comments they made when they reconvened with the whole Board:

- a. Board and staff may need to target weak areas;
- b. Senior team should visit the schools;
- c. Board should sponsor awards for creative writing and bring all the students together for a celebration;
- d. Find some success stories within the District and share them with everyone;
- e. Memorial University should be more in tune with what our schools are teaching;
- f. Find ways to strengthen the linkage between home and school; and
- g. School growth development plans should focus in on the CRT results.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*On motion the Agenda was approved. (Andrews/Winsor)
Carried.*

42-02/03

5. MINUTES OF January 21 & February 11, 2003

Albert Hodder said he could not remember making a comment on page 31 of the Minutes relating to the Ventilation System at Helen Tulk Elementary School. Sean Power said he was willing to have the comment credited to his name.

On motion the Minutes of the January 21, 2003, Regular School Board meeting, with the above change, were approved. (Power/Hoskins)

*Carried.
02/03*

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The February 11, 2003, Minutes were recorded from a teleconference meeting. Some trustees felt that the Minutes did not record enough of the discussions that occurred during the teleconference. The Director suggested that if somebody wanted his/her opinion recorded, s/he should forward it to her and the amendment would be made. The Director will check with legal counsel to ascertain if the Minutes are legal.

The trustees were informed that as past practice and in a previous letter from Michael Harrington, Legal Counsel, that decisions made through a teleconference should be formally ratified at a subsequent board meeting. A copy of that letter will be circulated to Board trustees.

It was agreed that a motion had been made at the February 11 teleconference meeting stating that since the government was not willing to finance the project fully, the project be terminated. The motion was defeated.

On motion it was agreed to approve the February 11, 2003, Minutes of the Board Teleconference, with the above amendments. (Gray/Winsor) Carried unanimously.

44-02/03

6. BUSINESS ARISING

At a recent meeting Board trustees asked that Board Meeting Agendas be shortened. One suggestion was that the Business Arising be covered in the Director's Report. The items that were covered in the Director's Report are printed verbatim below, in italics, for information purposes only.

6.1. Leo Burke Academy, Ventilation System

Nothing new to report. Contract work ongoing.

6.2. School Facilities in Bay d'Espoir

Ongoing discussions on the development and design issues.

Following the January 21, 2003, School Board meeting, the Board Chair wrote a letter on January 22 to the Minister of Education stating that the Board is adamant that the full cost of the Greenwood Academy renovation be totally funded by the Department of Education as they understood from comments made by Department of Education officials that this would be the case. The Chair told the Minister that since the Board holds strong convictions on this matter, they intend to stand firm on this intent and, if necessary, make it a public issue. The Chair also clarified the last two lines of the motion that was forwarded to the Minister of Education on December 16, 2002.

The Minister of Education responded to the Chair's letter of January 22, 2003, reiterating that the Department of Education is committed to providing \$1 million for renovations to Greenwood Academy, Milltown.

The Chair said after the teleconference meeting on February 11, 2003, he contacted the Minister of Education. There was no change in her position but he advised that the project should continue. He also advised her that the Board is not pleased with Works, Services and Transportation managing the Board's projects.

The meeting was advised that the project is ongoing with pre-tender work progressing with finishes and data wiring included.

Clarence Brown said he would like to spend the money being saved from closing Holy Cross School before the Government gets a chance to spend it.

Trustee Gail Hoskins said she felt she wasn't given a chance to say everything she wanted to say on the teleconference on February 11, 2003. The Board Chair gave her permission to say whatever she wanted to say. The comments that follow below are reprinted from Ms. Hoskins notes:

"After the teleconference call last week, I've had some time to think about the situation we are in in

Bay d'Espoir.

One thing I can say that the Board always stood its ground on was the savings from a school closure, until now. When we decided at the last meeting to send another letter to Minister Foote, I figured we meant what we said. It wasn't a bluff to my knowledge.

People are looking at us and saying, "What are you doing?" One minute/meeting we are going to do something and not even one month later, we change our minds. What credibility do we have with the public?

At the last meeting we discussed a PR committee. Already we are going against what this committee would be about. What is the point of having such a committee if we are going to back down on everything?

I hear all the time "for the sake of the children" as it pertains to Bay d'Espoir. I know you all must be tired of me saying this but we forgot about that when we gave up the new school.

Some say "no political will" for a new school. We as trustees/Board must also show some political will, not just Oliver Langdon.

During the teleconference I started to question the recent developments at Greenwood Academy over the last week. I was cut off because it was changing the topic. Sorry but I do not think so. These developments should have a major role in the proposed renovations:

- Ø So far up to \$1,000,000 from Foote. Letter from Gary (Hatcher) clearly states will want more than that. This now includes a \$50,000 humidifier. Why is this needed? Where is the report that tells why Greenwood needs a humidifier and costs of installation? Is it needed to address a health hazard?
- Ø 8-10 panels replaced, insulation, 2 x 6's. It started out as 2-3 panels. Even the principal sent a memo home saying two areas of dry rot in the base of the gym. This was almost the whole bottom section of that wall.
- Ø What about the top part? Other side of gym?
- Ø Say source is windows? Not sure though. My knowledge of this is to remove it and determine the source of water damage.
- Ø An offer was made by Parent Group to pay for a proper engineering assessment which might resolve these issues around the structural condition.
- Ø What is most shocking about this is the custodian told us that rotten wood has been there for a couple of years. Why wasn't it reported? There is something definitely wrong with this picture.
- Ø Once gym renovations start, will we run into other rotten panels? If so, what then? We know there may be a health hazard here that needs to be assessed and cost.
- Ø \$122,000—where is this report? I do not have it.

As for the mould...

- Ø I am no expert in this by far. But common sense would tell me not to leave it in the walls.

- Ø I think it is very premature for us to say everything is okay without having the results.
- Ø I do not think it is worth putting \$1M plus into Greenwood. We still do not know the true costs to have these buildings renovated. There are still too many unknowns. We know there will be more costs down the road...furniture & equipment, parking lot development, mechanical system—Rogers Report—and the gym...well we don't know about that. By the time all this is calculated into the picture, we'll be hitting the \$2M mark.
- Ø So what is the real plan here?
 - Hurry up, get the renovations done as soon as possible and once completed to a degree, cannot go back. Then if more problems, go back to government.

If we vote to continue with the Greenwood project and considering the true costs of renovating Greenwood and the health hazards to the students that may exist at Greenwood is financially irresponsible and seriously negligent in regard to protecting the health of Bay d'Espoir students."

Ms. Hoskins closed by saying that she is still in favour of a new school for Bay d'Espoir.

Carolyn Andrews said considering that a decision was already made by the Board to continue the project at Milltown, she did not appreciate the criticisms made by Ms. Hoskins against Board trustees.

Sean Power said he did not wish to revisit the decision but he would like to have an update on the situation at Greenwood Academy. Terry Hillier said there was dry rot in the gym before Christmas. There was also some concern that there may be an air quality problem at the school. It was the same concerns expressed by parents from Bay d'Espoir and by Board trustee Gail Hoskins. Mr. Hillier said Rogers Engineering was qualified to look at the perceived problems. In investigating the building, one mould sample was taken from the girls' washroom. The results of that sample have not yet been received by the School Board Office. Mr. Hillier said all the affected panels were replaced and that dry rot does not indicate an air quality problem. He said the Operations Manager advised him that windows in that area were removed years ago. The panel in the girls' washroom has been cleaned.

Randy Edison said Ms. Hoskins questioned the credibility of Board trustees right at the top of her remarks. He said she made contradictory remarks. Mr. Edison said the Board needs to work together as a Board.

Clarence Brown referred to a letter written by Lou Wilcott, a parent in St. Alban's (which was not forwarded to the Board Office). Mr. Brown said if the issues raised in the letter are true, they should be checked out. He suggested another examination of the building to make sure things are looked after appropriately. He said everybody should be able to make comments concerning this issue.

Bob Elliott asked the Board not to judge too cruelly Ms. Hoskins' passion since she is a very concerned person. He said if there are structural problems with Greenwood Academy, he would like for the Board to be sure before renovations begin.

David Morrow said he was defending Gail Hoskins. He took no offense to what she had said. Mr. Morrow said those issues needed to be brought to the Board table. However, he didn't agree with all that Ms. Hoskins had said.

Carolyn Andrews said she has a problem with trustees criticizing Board decisions after they have

been made and agreed to by the Board membership.

Sean Power said Buchans had an air quality problem that took years to confirm. Many of the antidotes in Ms. Hoskins' comments were similar to those in Buchans. He asked the Board to be sure before they proceeded with the renovations.

Sharon Mayne asked if the Board has any documentation to support the perceived health problems in Bay d'Espoir. The Director responded that there was no marked difference over the years. She said Health and Community Services did not determine any connection between Greenwood Academy and any sicknesses. Ms. Armstrong said there had been three air quality tests performed in Greenwood Academy over the past few years with the first test recommending remediation and the second and third tests showed no issues.

Robert Elliott said he was disturbed with the reaction to Ms. Hoskins' comments but he doesn't want people to be muzzled nor does he think trustees should be upset with each other.

Albert Hodder asked what structural analysis did the BAE Group do? He said Helen Tulk Elementary didn't work. Mr. Hodder said if other problems aren't stopped, the Board may have a problem that will cost more money.

Randy Edison said he doesn't want to muzzle anyone. However, he said the Board made a decision and had open discussions—it cannot now shoot down its ideas and approaches.

Gail Hoskins said she would not have said all that she did if she was not cut off from the teleconference on February 11.

Winston Keeping said he was told that the teleconference was to deal with connectivity and finishes on Greenwood Academy. When time began to run out at the telephone conference and those issues were not dealt with, he thought it was appropriate to ask that the issues be dealt with then.

It was moved that a structural inspection be done based on the letters from people of Bay d'Espoir and discussion around the Board table. (Brown/Morrow)

The Director suggested that the terms of reference for the BAE Group be revisited before engaging another assessment. She suggested checking to see if anything was missing from the BAE Group Report. Ms. Armstrong said the Board could check its own engineer to ascertain what is really a structural assessment.

Clarence Brown said he is concerned as to how much more rot and mould can be found in the gym walls.

Sean Power asked if the Board's engineer could peruse the BAE Group terms of reference and provide the Board with a professional opinion.

The motion made on page 42 was withdrawn.

The Director acknowledged that Gail Hoskins has concerns that she would like dealt with. Ms. Armstrong said trustees and the Minister of Education have an e-mail from a resident of Bay D'Espoir that needs to be acted on. Ms. Armstrong said there have been professionals crawling all over the building during the past month and they have not found anything nor have reported anything out of the ordinary to the Board. She asked for trustees to state any other concerns about

the school so employees of the Board can deal with them. A report will be given at the next Board meeting.

David Morrow said he wants to know if there is any more rot in the gym walls.

The Board Chair called for a short break.

The observers from Bay D'Espoir decided to leave the meeting and while leaving, vented their frustrations. One particular observer verbally attacked the Board and its employees.

On a motion it was decided to adjourn the meeting and table the other items on the agenda to the next meeting. (Power/Brown)

45-02/03

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Beverly Wells, Recorder

Terry Brown, Chair of the Board