

# Minutes of the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting of Northern Gateway Public Schools

February 9, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.

Division Office in Whitecourt, AB via Zoom

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## Opening

### A. Opening

Meeting to be recorded – started at 10:02 a.m.

## Call to Order and Roll Call

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting was called to order by Chair Wigton at 10:02 a.m.

Chair Linda Wigton, Trustees, Barb Maddigan, Diane Hagman, Jim Hailes, Sherry Jeffreys, Judy Muir, Christine Peck, Anita Portsmouth, Gerry Steinke Administrators Kevin Andrea, Superintendent, Michelle Brennick, Deputy Superintendent, Leslee Jodry, Assistant Superintendent, Tamara Spong, Secretary Treasurer and Wendy Robertson, Recording Secretary.

Lisa Bakos, Communications Officer, Randy Lovich, Director of Maintenance, Rhett Czaban, Director of Transportation, were present at this time.

## Treaty Land Acknowledgement

### 2. Treaty Land Acknowledgement

Trustee Barb Maddidan read the Treaty Land Acknowledgement.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

**3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda**

- 12. School Tours
- 13.a) Rural Caucus Report

Acceptance of Agenda

**4. Acceptance of Agenda**

4379-21

Moved by Trustee Hagman– that the agenda for the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Regular Board Meeting be adopted as amended.

Motion Carried

Appointments and Delegations

**B. Appointments and Delegations**

Transportation Report:

Rhett Czaban, Director of Transportation presented his transportation report.

MELT (Mandatory Entry-Level Training)/Bus Drivers:

- we now have 6 spare Whitecourt bus drivers – most we've had all year
- still need spare bus drivers for the Valleyview area
- Golden Arrow Contractor is training a new trainer as they lost theirs to a former company.
- all this could change as soon as we have a COVID case on a school bus that takes the driver out.
- the additional 5% from the Government that we passed on to the contractors satisfied their funds for training.
- MELT is mandatory in pre-level training. Continues to be a hot topic in my association and contractors.
- Contractors want to have Government lessen the number of MELT hours and treat each driver as an individual depending on their previous experience.
- Government moving slow on this MELT.
- Positive note on the MELT training is that it is turning out very competent drivers.

Discussion:

Q. What are they paying bus drivers?

A. Between \$17.00 to \$20.00/hr.

So they are paying bus drivers barely over minimum wage, with a huge responsibility of transporting our students.

Has anyone ever approached the Government regarding this problem? They can get hired out in industry for a lot more than \$17.00 an hour. This may be part of our problem recruiting bus drivers.

There isn't more money coming from Government.

The 5% increase for additional insurance cost was passed on to Contractors, and Northern Gateway has no say in what Contractors compensate their bus drivers.

This Board in the last term moved towards a Contractor system from an employer system. Northern Gateway paid bus drivers more when they were an employer of this division.

Director of Transportation to send out a query to his association to see what is written into their Contractors contracts regarding pay for their bus drivers and report back to the Board.

Rhett Czaban, Director of Transportation, completed his report and left the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Maintenance Report:

Randy Lovich, Director of Maintenance presented his IMR and Three Year Capital Plans for approval.

## Action Items

2022 – 2025 Capital Plan

## D. Action Items

2022 – 2025 Capital Plan

4380-21

Moved by Trustee Hagman – that the Board of Trustees accept the 2022-2025 Capital Plan as presented.

Motion Carried

2020 – 21 IMR Plan

2020 – 21 IMR Plan Approval

4381-21

Moved by Trustee Muir – that the Board of Trustees approved the 2020-2021 IMR Plan.

Motion Carried

Randy Lovich, Director of Maintenance, left the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Additional Action Items

Additional Action Items

Nil

Minutes of the  
January 12, 2021  
Regular Board Meeting

C. Minutes of the January 12, 2021  
Regular Board Meeting

4382-21

Moved by Trustee Hailes– that the minutes of the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Regular Board Meeting be adopted as presented.

Motion Carried

Information/Reports

E. Information/Reports

ASBA/PSBAA

ASBA/PSBAA

ASBA: (Linda Wigton)

To submit proposed ASBA Bylaw Amendments for the 2021 Spring General meeting, the deadline for submission is March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

### ASBA Zone 2/3: (Jim Hailes)

- Discussion re: ECS funding – Action Item
- Discussion re: pooling information on compensation for St. Administration.
- First call for Policy positions due February 16
- ASBA awards nominations due ASAP:
  - Trustee long service awards (more than 2 terms) I need names and terms and years. Wendy has already sent this to ASBA and PSBAA.
  - Edwin Parr nominations due March 9
- New ERLC Rep: - Linda Wigton, Alternate Joan Crockett
- PD presentation – Social Media Protocols by Katy Campbell ASBA Director of Communications
- Advocacy Report:
  - ASBA Leadership Academy re Advocacy Feb. 8
  - The January Coffee and Conversation was a huge success next session is planned for March 9.
- PD Session: ASBA's Coordinated Approach to Communication – Zone Directors
- Zone action items will be sent under separate cover for discussion.

### Action Items for Board Feedback:

1. No Concern
2. No Concern
3. Deadline Feb. 16
4. No Concern
5. Letter sent to Minister – need to send to ASBA
6. No Concern
7. No Concern

### PSBAA: (Christine Peck)

Feb. 12, 2021 PSBC Meeting and Governance Sessions:

9:00 a.m. PSBC Meeting

1:00 p.m. – Overview of Bill 32 – Impact on Union Dues Election

2:00 p.m. – How Does Assurance Framework Impact the School Council/Trustee Relationship?

Registration closes at 11:45 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Standing Committee Reports

### Standing Committee Reports

Advocacy – Trustee Peck to send out email to committee members.

### Superintendent's Report

### Superintendent's Report

Report provided for information.

Deputy Superintendent – Michelle Brennick  
Update to COVID Guidance Documents:

Further to the information presented in the Superintendent's Report re: COVID, I add:

1. A brief meeting was held with the School Administrators to share the key pieces of the *Path Forward*, as per the February 8<sup>th</sup> update,
2. A thorough examination of Alberta Government's key documents in relation to the various departments/organizations will be undertaken,

3. This review is then correlated to the updated information – measures,
4. Another meeting will then be held with School Administration to review all the updates in relation to our NGPS 2020-21 COVID Handbook, and to examine content within our Handbook that may need be changed or adjusted to align with the updated measures, and
5. The necessary changes will be made, within the Handbook, and the updated NGPS Handbook will be circulated to NGPS staff and posted on the NGPS website.

Samantha Steinke, Oscar Adolphson School Council Chair, and Amanda Beekman, Principal, Oscar Adolphson School, entered the meeting at 12:53 p.m.

#### Appointments and Delegations

School Council Reports -  
via Zoom

#### B. Appointments and Delegations

School Council Reports – via Zoom

Oscar Adolphson Primary School:  
Amanda Beekman – Principal  
Samantha Steinke – School Council Chair

School Council Chair:

- Has served on the council for 3 years, first year as the Chair.
- Do parent council meetings once a month.
- Meetings are being held virtually due to COVID.
- Keep our fundraising society separate from Parent Council.

- Looking forward to meeting in person again as a council.
- Had a good turnout in the beginning but that has lessened some now.
- Miss being involved with the kids.
- This year we found some new and exciting ways to give the kids things they would normally not have. We purchased snowshoes.
- Playground is different this year by breaking it into different zones.
- We purchased some crazy carpets for zone 3.
- We started doing Coding this year. Purchased a little mouse and name it Cody.
- Getting a new principal this year has benefited the school so much. Amanda has brought great ideas to the council. Kids appreciate having fresh ideas and new things to do.

Principal:

- Working closely with parent council.
- We purchased floor decals this last month. Through an organization called "Ever Active".
- Spirit Wear is now available with the "OPIE" logo on it.
- School Council is providing our breakfast program. Individually packaged items.
- New Math resources provided to school from the School Council.
- Winter Equipment has been purchased - Snowshoes that leave dinosaur prints in the snow.
- Created some little packages of games and equipment that can be used outside for gym classes and recesses.

Samantha Steinke, Oscar Adolphson School Council Chair, and Amanda Beekman, Principal, Oscar Adolphson School, left the meeting at 1:16 p.m.

Finance

Finance



Reports provided for information.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> installment of the Government of Canada Safe Return to Class Funding will be sent to Northern Gateway in February in the amount of \$826,000.00.

### **Assurance Framework/ 3 Year Education Planning**

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PowerPoint presentation from Leslie Jodry, Assistant Superintendent, attached for information.

### **Sustainability of Rural Communities**

### **Sustainability of Rural Communities**

Presentation by Trustee Sherry Jeffreys:

Northern Gateway Division covers an extremely large geographical area and all of our schools are affected by Rural Sustainability.

Alberta Education completed a study on the Impact of Schools on Rural Communities in 2017.

The study showed that trends causing rural depopulation are the largest challenge facing schools in rural communities. These trends are persistent and unavoidable. They place a backdrop on rural education against which some small communities, and their schools, appear to have little chance to succeed.

But the sustainability of schools in rural communities is a direct function of community vitality. Alberta Education stated that "Schools in rural communities play a vital role in Alberta." They bring educational opportunities to the places where the people live. Schools in rural communities are a hub of

activity, celebrations, events engagement where residents can build social networks and relationships and build community.

Schools in rural communities contribute significantly to the cultural fabric of Alberta.

Sustaining schools in rural communities is a continuous struggle without simple or universal solutions. These schools should be given more funding.

PowerPoint presentation attached for information.

**Correspondence**

**Correspondence**

Letters provided for information.

**Board Annual Work Plan**

**Board Annual Work Plan**

Provided for information.

**Motion Review Cycle**

**Motion Review Cycle**

Provided for information.

**Deferred Motion  
No. 4358-20**

**Deferred Motion No. 4358-20**

4383-21

Moved by Trustee Hailes– that the Board write a letter to AHS questioning why COVID notifications/information is not being shared with school divisions and cc to the Minister.

Motion Defeated

**Trustee Reports**

**Trustee Reports**

Diane Hagman

- Attended two parent council meetings
- Mayerthorpe High only had one parent participate
- Principal, Dafydd Thomas announced his retirement at the end of this school term.
- Elmer Elson had a good attendance – two students from student council attended.

Sherry Jeffreys

- Attended two parent council meetings - Elmer Elson and Sangudo Schools
- Great conversation at Sangudo Parent Council meeting on Rural Community with parent and staff opinions.
- Attended the YRL Trustee Orientation workshop on Feb. 25 with Trustee Muir. Was done virtual with a two hour program. Great refresher. This service is greatly underutilized by our schools – our Division is paying for this service and would be great for schools to use more of this service.

Barb Maddigan

- Attended four parent council meetings:

Percy Baxter:

- Talked about pandemic online learning and how attendance has been almost 100%.
- Went over their numeracy and literacy initiatives working with Jig Saw learning. Teachers were working to improve their own First Nations, Metis, and Inuit learning.

Whitecourt Central:

- Parents were talking about -25 and bussing and if students had enough social distancing while waiting in the Community Centre. They were assured there was.
- Wct Central is purchasing the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Resource Kits.
- Their Mental Health Capacity worker spoke of all the initiatives they are involved with, within the school.

Hilltop High:

- Went over school Advancement Plan
- Went over their First Nations, Metis, and Inuit goals
- Had a parent speak about students not moving up to the next grade if not performing at that grade level.

Pat Hardy:

- Long meeting at Pat Hardy – parents are vocal about their concerns etc.

Christine Peck

- Onoway High moved to a quarterly system this 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Four out of the five high schools are now on this system.
- Principal, John Lobo announced his retirement at the end of this school term.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 12 – PSBC Council Meeting via Zoom
- March 16 – Regular Board Meeting
- School Tours

School Tours Discussion:

- Have principals do something – a 3-5 minute video of challenges and successes within their school.
- Special things they have done because of COVID
- Classroom performances
- Outside activities
- Brief video of their school
- Principals commented during the Board meeting, they are feeling overwhelmed already and do not want any more added to their workload.

4384-21

Moved by Trustee Hailes– that the Board of Trustees direct Administration to request brief submissions from all schools in a video manner detailing their year up to this point.

Motion Carried

**Additional Report Items**

Rural Caucus Report

**Additional Report Items**

Rural Caucus Report

Report presented by Trustee Hagman:

I received an e-mail message from the Chair on Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and forwarded it to Trustees. In summary of the message – Chair Sherry Cooper and Vice Chair Darcy Eddleston attended a virtual meeting with Minister LaGrange on Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

With regards to a COVID-19 update – Minister LaGrange reported that the goal of the government is to get back to September case numbers or better. There are concerns over the variant and how that will affect schools and students and communities. The government has changed their definitions of outbreak to

Alert: 1-4 cases and Outbreak: 5+ cases. There are more tracers hired now to help with contacting and informing the necessary people regarding quarantining. Minister LaGrange was asked about the idea of regionalizing the decisions on school closures and remote learning to reflect what is happening in rural communities where in many cases the spread is considerably less than in larger centers. She responded by mentioning that the December 2020 decision was based on the marked increase in cases in Alberta and that the entire province was under Enhanced Public Health Measures.

Re: PUF funding changes: Sherry and Darcy noted that the changes were giving boards some additional challenges with less funding complicated by lack of services in smaller communities especially with RCSD services reduced and AHS supports more remote than some schools are able to access. They also brought up that the red tape reduction wasn't happening because the reporting remained the same from the old model. Minister LaGrange recognized that they want to review the PUF program and tweak it to help boards who are struggling and she is asking for boards to bring their suggestions forward to her.

Minister LaGrange asked about some of the Mental Health challenges families and students are facing. She is asking us to weigh in on some best practices as well as challenges we face in schools in helping students and families as well as staff to ensure they get the help they need. Sherry and Darcy committed to having a discussion with member boards to bring back to her this spring.

Minister LaGrange also mentioned that there will be a Technology Pilot coming soon to an education system near you and could only give a brief overview, but that we should look for more

around the time the budget is announced. The Rural Caucus Board is working on setting up a virtual meeting with a guest speaker on the Mental Health best practices in schools and school divisions to give feedback to the Minister. Arrangements for the date are being coordinated with the minister and the quest speaker – likely towards mid to late April.

During that April meeting, on the Agenda will also be budget discussion and how to best handle presenting it to the member boards for vote.

Sherry thanked Darcy and Clara for agreeing to stay on the executive for an extra year.

4385-21

Moved by Trustee Jeffreys– that the Board of Trustees accept Information/Reports E1- E13 as information.

Motion Carried

Topics for Future Discussion

#### F. Topics for Future Discussions

##### 1. ASBA Friends of Education Award

4386-21

Moved by Trustee Hailes – that the Board nominate *Pembina* for the *Alberta School Boards Association Friends of Education Award* and have administration provide background information.

Motion Carried

For clarity, Pembina refers to the Pembina Pipeline Corporation.

## Requests for Information

### G. Requests for Information

1. Progress Report – Health Care Aide program in Mayerthorpe High School. (Is there an obstacle preventing program moving forward)?

## Meeting Highlights

### H. Meeting Highlights

1. Transportation Report
2. Approval of IMR and Three Year Capital Plans
3. Oscar Adolphson School Council Report
4. Safe Return to School Funding
5. Assurance Framework Presentation
6. Sustainability of Rural Communities Presentation

## In-Camera Items

### I. In-Camera Items

4387-21

Moved by Trustee Jeffreys – that the Board move into In-Camera at 3:06 p.m., and Kevin Andrea, Michelle Brennick, and Tamara Spong were invited to stay.

Motion Carried

Electronic recording of meeting discontinued at 3:06 p.m.

4388-21

Moved by Trustee Maddigan – that the Board move out of In-Camera at 3:52 p.m.

Motion Carried



Kevin Andrea, Superintendent and Michelle Brennick, Deputy Superintendent left the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

4389-21

Moved by Trustee Maddigan – that the Board accept the ATA Memoranda of Agreement as presented.

Motion Carried

4390-21

Moved by Trustee Hailes – that the Board of Trustees approve to hire an ASBA Consultant.

Motion Carried

**Adjournment**

**J. Adjournment**

4391-21

Moved by Trustee Hagman - that the meeting be adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

Motion Carried

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Board Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer