

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

Division Office Board Room, Whitecourt, Alberta

February 13, 2024

OPENING

Call to Order and Roll Call

A. OPENING

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The February 13, 2024, meeting was called to order by Board Chair Gerry Steinke at 10:00 a.m.

Present at this time: Board Chair Gerry Steinke, Trustees Jim Hailes, Judy Muir, Barb Maddigan, Linda Wigton, Deb Koloski, Les Urness and Christine Peck; and Administrators Kevin Bird, Superintendent; Leslee Jodry, Deputy Superintendent; Tamara Spong, Secretary-Treasurer; and Nancy Whittaker, Recording Secretary. Board Vice-Chair Diane Hagman was absent from the meeting.

Lisa Bakos, Communications Officer, and Randy Lovich, Director of Facility Services, were present at this time, and two members of the public were present in the gallery.

A recording of O Canada was presented by Whitecourt Central School grade 5 students.

Treaty Land Acknowledgement

2. Treaty Land Acknowledgement

Trustee Barb Maddigan read the Treaty Land Acknowledgement.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

- a) Trustee Muir requested PSBC meeting attendance – added to Action Items.
- b) Item 2, Closed Session – Trustee Hailes. Trustees had roundtable discussion regarding ASBA requests for confidentiality and presentation of its documents in Closed Session.

4947-24

Moved to challenge the Chair regarding placement of an item in closed session.

Motion Defeated

- c) Board Chair Steinke added an item to Action Items to discuss ASBA requests for confidentiality and whether to bring the question forward at a Zone 2/3 meeting.

Acceptance of the Agenda

4. Acceptance of the Agenda

The Agenda for the February 13, 2024, Regular Public Board Meeting was accepted as amended.

Acceptance of the Minutes

5. Acceptance of the Minutes - January 16, 2024, Regular Board Meeting

The Minutes of the January 16, 2024 Regular Board Meeting were accepted as presented.

APPOINTMENTS AND DELEGATIONS

B.

APPOINTMENTS AND DELEGATIONS

Randy Lovich, Facility Services

Randy Lovich, Director of Facility Services, presented the 2023 – 24 Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal Plan to the Trustees.

4948-24

Moved that the Board approve the 2023 – 24 Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal Plan, as presented.

Motion Carried

Director Lovich left the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

Director Yaremchuk joined the meeting at 10:34 a.m.

Jason Yaremchuk, Information Technology

Jason Yaremchuk, Director of Information Technology, presented an update on the Evergreen Plan and current recycling program, infrastructure, changes to PowerSchool, and the addition of Student Aware, and secure online exams, to the Trustees for information. Questions regarding recycling of devices for reuse, as well as bandwidth in rural areas were answered by Director Yaremchuk.

Director Yaremchuk left the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS

Board Self-Evaluation

C. ACTION ITEMS

1. Determine Need for Board Self-Evaluation

The Trustees had roundtable discussion with the following ideas to consider:

- This is year three of a four-year term and with the addition of a new trustee – good opportunity for a review.
- Informal reviews should be done every year, a simple debrief of the past year.
- Formal review in Committee of the Whole in year three (once per term).

The item will be added to a future Committee of the Whole agenda.

PSBC Meeting

2. Attendance at PSBC Meeting February 8 and 9, 2024

Trustee Muir attended the PSBC Meeting as Trustee Urness' replacement and is seeking Board approval for reimbursement of expenses.

4949-24

Moved that the Board approve compensation for Trustee Muir's attendance at the PSBC Meeting on February 8 and 9, 2024.

Motion Carried

ASBA Confidential Items

3. ASBA Confidential Items

The Trustees had roundtable discussion regarding ASBA requests for confidentiality, Board transparency, and Board Policy (FOIPP).

Trustee Wigton will canvas other school divisions on how they deal with these issues and will also bring forward to ASBA the concerns of the Board, particularly how their requirements impact Board agendas, and how it is contrary to the Education Act regarding closed sessions.

INFORMATION/REPORTS D.

INFORMATION AND REPORTS

ASBA

1. Alberta School Boards Association

Trustee Wigton reported that ASBA Zone 2/3 discussed rural education supports at their last meeting, which could be a possible Board position statement for the Fall General Meeting. The Trustees discussed other ideas for position statements:

- Small high school funding flaws
- Raising awareness of rural education concerns
- Importance of dual credits for rural students
- Opportunities for transitioning students to post-secondary
- Collaborating with post-secondary institutions
- Cost of tuition

Trustees Wigton and Hailes will research what has already been presented.

The Zone 2/3 Advocacy Committee is requesting input from Boards if there would be interest in having an MLA event in June. The Trustees expressed interest and Trustee Wigton will complete the Zone survey.

PSBAA

2. Public School Boards Association of Alberta

Trustees Peck and Muir attended the PSBC Meeting on February 8 and 9. A session put on by the 60s Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta emphasized awareness of the 60s Scoop in addition to the issue of residential schools. The PD session on eSports garnered a lot of interest and could be considered as an option for students in our Division. Council is working on election preparedness.

Standing Committee Reports

3. Standing Committee Reports

The Support Staff/Contractor Compensation Committee report will be presented in Closed Session.

Trustee Maddigan reported on the two recent meetings of the Advocacy Committee and presented the draft brochure. The Committee is working on a 'one-pager' for the upcoming Rural Education Symposium.

Superintendent's Report

4. Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent presented his report to the Trustees for information.

Education Assistant Training

5. Education Assistant Training

Deputy Superintendent Jodry reported that the Division is participating in an Education Assistant internship pilot program developed by Edmonton Public Schools. Pat Hardy, Whitecourt Central and Onoway Elementary will each have one or two EAs and a mentor coach participating in the program.

Education Assistants from Fox Creek to Onoway attended a professional development day in Whitecourt on February 8th. EAs from Valleyview will attend a session in Grande Prairie in March. Attendance was mandatory and the Division is working on accrediting the modules.

Deputy Superintendent Jodry provided the names of the Division's three nominees for this year's Honouring Spirit Indigenous Student Awards:

- Creio Johnson, Grade 8 student at Percy Baxter Middle School
- Madison Mia Rose Alexis, Grade 12 student at Onoway Jr Sr High School
- Mary Christina Campbell, Grade 11 student at Hilltop High School

Financial Reports

6. Financial Reports

The financial reports and enrolment report for January, 2024 were presented to the Trustees for information by Secretary-Treasurer Spong.

Ward Boundary Review

7. Ward Boundary Review

Secretary-Treasurer Tamara Spong presented the report that was completed in 2020. Trustees had roundtable discussion with the following comments:

- The Education Act requires area population to be considered in addition to student population
- Current Board policy details other unique factors
- Change in number of trustees would not affect governance money as there is no cap

- Need to receive more current population information
- Proper representation is key
- Some boundaries need to be better aligned

Administration will provide a report with more current population numbers and potential cost savings before the next Board meeting.

Board Annual and Term Work Plans

8. Board Annual and Term Work Plans

The Board Annual Work Plan is up to date.

Motion Review Cycle

9. Motion Review Cycle

The Motion Review Cycle is up to date.

Upcoming Events

10. Upcoming Events

- February 26, 2024 – Finance Committee Meeting (virtual)
- February 27 and 28, 2024 – School Tours
- March 3 to 5, 2024 – Alberta Rural Education Symposium
- March 11 and 12, 2024 – School Tours
- March 19, 2024 – Regular Board Meeting
- April 16, 2024 – Regular Board Meeting

Trustee Reports

11. Trustee Reports

Trustee Hailes

Attending Growing the North Conference in Grande Prairie February 20 – 22, 2024 Recommends sending one or two Trustees to next year’s conference and meeting with municipalities during the year to open dialogue.

Trustee Peck

Attended school tours and elementary school council. Mental health concerns and supports continue to be a major issue.

Trustee Koloski

Attended Advocacy meetings and school council meetings.

Trustee Muir

Enjoyed school tours. Attended school council meetings – continues to be very good turnout.

Trustee Wigton

Busy month with Advocacy Committee. Percy Baxter is doing workplace safety presentations for students. Some parents would like to see more French programming. At Hilltop HS there has been an increase in lunches being provided to students, funded by Pembina.

Trustee Maddigan

Attended Percy Baxter School with a veteran to give awards to students for a poster contest. Two entries have been forwarded for further award consideration.

Trustee Urness

Attended Jim Countryman’s memorial. School tours were very enlightening. Attended OAP school council and answered questions regarding the new school.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

E. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

- Ward Boundary Review, updated report.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

F. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM ADMINISTRATION (BY BOARD MOTION)

Nil

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

G. MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- NGPS Vision Statement
- Approval of the 2023 – 24 IMR Plan
- Information Technology Overview
- Professional Development Session for EAs
- Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Award nominations

CLOSED SESSION

H. CLOSED SESSION

4950-24

Moved that the Board move to Closed Session at 2:38 p.m.

Motion Carried

Superintendent Kevin Bird, Deputy Superintendent Leslee Jodry, and Secretary-Treasurer Tamara Spong were invited to stay. Jason Yaremchuk was invited to present information on Division IT security.

Electronic Recording stopped at 2:38 p.m.

4951-24

Moved that the Board move out of Closed Session at 4:30 p.m.

Motion Carried

4952-24

Moved that the Board accept the recommendation from the Support Staff/Contractor Compensation Committee.

Motion Carried

ADJOURNMENT

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Board Chair

Secretary-Treasurer