

Public Schools Branch
Thirty-Fourth Public Board of Directors Meeting
May 17, 2021

Minutes

The Board of Directors for the Public Schools Branch met on Monday, May 17, 2021 in the Southport Boardroom, Stratford Town Hall.

Present: Bethany MacLeod, Board Chair
Mary Jane Ready
Norman Beck

Also in Attendance:

Norbert Carpenter, Director of Public Schools Branch
Becky Chaisson, Director of Corporate Services
Sheri Gauthier, Confidential Board Secretary
Karen Redmond, Manager, Policy and Planning

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. Board Chair MacLeod welcomed all in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

05/17/01 **It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that the agenda be approved. Motion carried.**

3. MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 10, 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

05/17/02 **It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that the minutes of the February 10, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting be adopted as presented. Motion carried.**

3.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No business to report at this time.

4. DIRECTORS' REPORT

(The complete Directors' Report will be filed with the official minutes).

Director, Norbert Carpenter, shared the following report.

Director/Assistant Director

Graduation and Grade Level Closings - Schools are working to create operational plans for High School graduation ceremonies and grade level closings that meet CPHO guidelines and will provide a meaningful event for students and parents.

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Year-end Activities - Schools have been provided with a set of guidelines to support decision making around year-end activities and field tips. A variety of activities will occur depending on location, size of school, etc.

Certified Substitutes - Over 50 new certified teacher substitutes have been added to the list as of May 10th, with UPEI BEd graduates and teachers new to our province entering our system.

Retirement Celebration - The PSB is offering a virtual retirement celebration again this year with our retirees featured in a video. Retirees will also be celebrated with special gifts including a print by Maurice Bernard and several other gifts from the PSB and their unions.

PowerSchool - Training for the PowerSchool implementation has begun, starting with administrative assistants, Principals/VPs and optional sessions for teachers.

Mission Vision and Values - We have been working with our leadership team to develop new mission and vision statements, along with the identification of core values. These drafts will be finalized through a collaborative process and then shared and published appropriately.

Social Media Guidelines - The PSB is currently developing social media guidelines. The guidelines aim to promote a shared responsibility among staff, parents/guardians and students to use social media thoughtfully, respectfully and responsibly. They further aim to provide clarity regarding the expectations for PSB staff when using social media personally and professionally.

Plans for September- We continue to work with the CPHO and the DELL to plan for September. It is our hope that with vaccination targets being met, a gradual relaxing of school public health protocols will unfold in the early Fall.

Student Services

Counselors, Inclusive Education Consultants and Autism Consultants are well into transition planning and case conferences. These meetings are also attended by specialists in deaf and hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, speech and occupational therapy.

We continue to work with the population of students experiencing higher than typical levels of anxiety.

Transfer requests have been higher in volume than is typical, as have the appeals of transfers.

Student services continues to look at programming and how we deliver services to children. This is ongoing work that hopefully will streamline some of our practices to a manageable level.

Diversity education and work in schools will be one of our main focuses going forward.

Human Resources

Secured COVID-19 FTE support: 29 teachers, 3 school counsellors, 11 bus drivers, 12 youth service workers, 13 school admin assistants and 40 cleaners.

Staffing update: school staffing allocations were ready to release to principals on Monday, May 10; we were required to wait until the budget was passed. The budget passed on May 13 and schools received staffing numbers on May 14.

Pro-active staffing occurred with an initial focus on French Immersion positions: we posted 10 permanent positions; they will be placed after transfer and 370 applicants. We received 40 applications.

All new grads have been interviewed and our substitute list has been updated with more than 50 certified substitute teachers.

HR received \$15,000 of OLE (federal funding) to focus on French recruitment; we have contracted out the services.

Corporate Services

Finance - Year-end audit preparation is underway and the audit will be starting the third week of May. Tenders for school supplies and janitorial supplies are being completed with a delivery date prior to the end of the school year.

Payroll - Regular payroll cycles continue to be completed. In June, ROEs will be completed for all 10-month employees. Vacations and summer schedules also need to be input and this work has already begun. The department has had one employee move to a school; recruitment for that position will soon be completed.

Property - A request has gone to all schools in regards to summer maintenance projects they would like to have completed. This will help the Branch prioritize and plan for summer work across the system. Custodial summer vacation planning is underway as well. The department has had an employee move to another government position; recruitment for this position is underway. The PSB Property Services department is heavily involved in the planning for the five renovation/construction projects that are currently underway. In addition, they continue to manage day-to-day maintenance issues across the system.

School Safety Services - The review of the Safety program is almost complete and there will be a concerted effort to work with the entire system to better educate and train all employees on their rights and responsibilities. Work continues on various procedures within the overall program while day-to-day work continues for the system.

Transportation

The status of school buses and the status of school bus drivers remain the two most significant challenges facing the Transportation Division of the PSB.

Status of Buses - Following a 2007 audit of school buses conducted throughout the Maritime Region, a significant number of PEI busses were identified as requiring replacement. This occurred over the three years that followed. At the same time, legislation was implemented that restricted the lifespan of school buses to a maximum of 12 years for regular use (14 for spare use). Fast forward to 2021-22, and many of these buses are now legislatively required to be retired. Approximately 120 school buses will be required to be replaced within the next three years.

In addition, there is the goal to replace the fleet of Island public school buses with electric buses. While the new electric school buses have been well-received, they also present added pressures. For example, reskilling of mechanics will be essential; two of the 11 electric school buses received by the PSB earlier this year are currently back at their manufacturing plant in Quebec for repairs that are beyond the ability of our resident mechanics to address. In addition, the need for charging stations will require a full restructuring of the bus scheduling and management system, potentially adding additional time requirements along with significant infrastructure needs.

Status of Drivers - Since the school year began in September, the PSB Transportation Department has worked with HR to recruit, train, hire and/or manage the introduction of 55 new school bus drivers into our substitute pool. While this number and the efforts to achieve it are significant, in that same time frame 57 drivers have moved from our substitute pool to take permanent or long term driving positions with the PSB, or have left the system entirely for one reason or another.

Further, of the PSB's current 256 permanent school bus drivers, 174 will be eligible for retirement within five years – that's 68% of the PSB school bus driver workforce. Challenges regarding securing a sufficient number of adequately trained and caring drivers will be ongoing.

To date this year, the PSB has canvassed for new drivers via newspaper and written publications, social media, internet platforms, job posting sites, radio programs, and via word of mouth at every opportunity. We are scheduling school bus driver "job fair" information sessions at various locations throughout the province before the end of the school year. Our challenge is formidable, but our team is strong and we remain confident that we will get where we need to be.

5. FINANCIAL INVOICES FOR APPROVAL

5.1 Invoice # 323595 January 2021 Fleet Charges for the Charlottetown Depot

05/17/03

It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #323595 dated February 18, 2021 in the amount of \$124,136.62 for January 2021 Fleet Charges for the Charlottetown Depot be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.2 Invoice # 324715 February 2021 Fleet Charges for the Charlottetown Depot

05/17/04

It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #324715 dated March 22, 2021 in the amount of \$134,859.68 for February 2021 Fleet Charges for the Charlottetown Depot be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.3 Invoice # 325546 March 2021 Fleet Charges for the Cardigan Depot

05/17/05 It was moved by Mary Jane Ready and seconded by Norman Beck that invoice #325546 dated March 31, 2021 in the amount of \$115,976.05 for March 2021 Fleet Charges for the Cardigan Depot be approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.4 Invoice # 325866 March 2021 Fleet Charges for the Charlottetown Depot

05/17/06 It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that invoice #325866 dated March 31, 2021 in the amount of \$144,685.15 for March 2021 Fleet Charges for the Charlottetown Depot be approved as presented. Motion carried.

6. CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BRANCH DIRECTOR

05/17/07 It was moved by Norman Beck and seconded by Mary Jane Ready that the Board of Directors confirm the appointment of Norbert Carpenter as Director of the Public Schools Branch, effective April 1, 2021. Motion carried.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.