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Ashley St. Pierre, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

The February 11, 2025 **Committee of the Whole Public Session** of the Near North District School Board was held in person at the Head Office and via a Zoom video and/or teleconference.

Trustees Present:

Ashley St. Pierre ®
Howard Wesley
Jeanie Fuscaldo
Caren Gagne
Shane Hall ®
Chantal Phillips
Julie Bertram
Bill Steer ®
Louise Sargent
Student Trustee Trudeau
Student Trustee Sidhu ®

Administrative Staff Present:

Craig Myles, Director of Education
Gay Smylie, Superintendent
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business
Timothy Graves, Superintendent ®
Melanie Gray, Superintendent ®
Patricia Lupton, Executive Assistant
Deb Bartlett, Communications
Maureen Egan, Director's Office
Liana Blaskievich, Exec. Officer Corporate Affairs ®

Other:

Staff, media

Regrets: n/a

1.0 Call to Order

Vice-Chair Wesley called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

1.1 Land acknowledgement

Vice-Chair Wesley read the declaration aloud.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance indicated that 11 trustees were present including two Student Trustees.

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest n/a

2.0 Closed Session

Motion: CW 25-02-01, C.Gagne/J.Bertram

That the Committee move into Closed Session in order to discuss items pertaining to *The Education Act* R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2 section 207 (2) (a) and (b). – CARRIED

3.0 Approval of the Agenda

Motion: CW 25-02-02, L.Sargent/J.Bertram

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of February 11, 2025, be approved as amended. The amendment being the addition of 5.5 update on the McDougall letter to the Ministry and 5.6 update on the school board efficiencies letter. - CARRIED.

4.0 Review of Previous Minutes

Motion: CW 25-02-03, J.Bertram/C.Phillips

That the minutes for the Committee of the Whole meeting of January 14, 2025 be approved. – CARRIED.

5.0 Notice of Motion – Trustees Wesley and Fuscaldo

Trustees were referred to the Notice of Motion filed by Trustees Wesley and Fuscaldo contained in the agenda package regarding daytime CW and Board meetings. It was noted that to proceed to discussion, the notice required a seconder. Trustee Gagne seconded the motion. Trustee Fuscaldo introduced the motion and explained the long distances the majority of board members travel citing safety concerns, poor weather, limited cell service and late arrival to home. She invited trustees to discuss and comment.

Trustee Gagne agreed with the above issues but was concerned with public transparency if meetings are earlier in the day. She suggested deferring to the March meeting to allow for more data to be gathered.

Trustee Bertram noted the low public attendance and referred to a prior motion to record meetings thereby allowing the public to view at their convenience.

Student Trustee Riley queried whether her attendance would be required and whether it would affect school attendance.

Trustee Hall asked how daytime meetings would impact staff.

Director Myles advised that it would prudent for the Board to gather more data and make an informed decision. He would like to consider impacts on the community and whether we are bound in any way by legislation etc. He also noted that our bylaws refer to evening board meetings.

Further discussion included trial periods, addition of satellite offices. Trustee Sargent concurred with deferring the item to March with a possibility of a trial in April.

Motion to Amend: CW 25-02-04, J.Fuscaldo/J.Bertram

That “one time basis on March 18, 2025” be added to the motion. - DEFEATED

Motion to Table: CW 25-02-05, C.Phillips/C.Gagne

That the motion be tabled to the March meeting in order that relevant information can be gathered. - CARRIED

5.5 Status of Correspondence to Ministry

Trustee Fuscaldo asked whether the Ministry had responded to our October 2024 letter regarding McDougall PS given that the Board had asked for a response by the end of February. Director Myles responded that no response has been received to date in the Director's office and that in absence of hearing anything, we are compelled to move forward with original move management plan. Trustee Fuscaldo advised that MPP Smith told her of a Ministry meeting regarding the issue but trustees were not included. She advised that she will be submitting a motion to the March CW meeting for a final decision from our Board. The floor was opened for comment and discussion.

Trustee Sargent noted that since we are in a provincial election we may not hear from the Ministry, and that we should proceed with a decision and look seriously at the new build being 7-12 with k-6 at McDougall PS. She also suggested a review of the budget re funding.

Trustee Philips stated that she was unclear if there is a sitting committee for this. VC Wesley responded that the existing committee deals with financing and construction not pupil placement. VC Wesley noted the board would need information and data to support revisiting the committee's work and decisions. VC Wesley expressed concern that the Ministry had not responded to the Board's October letter. VC Wesley provided a brief summary of enrolment.

Trustee Bertram asked the Board for a decision at the next Board meeting noting it is the Board's decision not the Ministry's.

Trustee Steer asked for more data from the Director and defer so the decision is informed. Director Myles cautioned the Board noting we not only are bound by the Ministry financially, but we are also bound by legal contracts in place by earlier decisions. We may be placing the Board at financial risk. He also said that he would need time to determine the ramifications of reversing an ARC.

5.6 Cost Efficiencies Correspondence to Ministry

Trustee Sargent asked for an update on the letter recently written to the Ministry re efficiencies. Trustee Steer responded that it was going to be discussed at the next OPSBA meeting and noted one other board has written a similar letter.

6.0 Adjournment

Motion: CW 25-02-04, J.Bertram/C.Gagne

That on February 11, 2025 we do now adjourn at 7:24 pm. - CARRIED