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Craig Myles, Director of Education

The May 18, 2021 **Public Session Board Meeting** of the Near North District School Board was held via teleconference and videoconference.

Trustees Present:

Jay Aspin, Chair
John Cochrane, Vice-Chair
Al Bottomley
Donna Breault
Harry Fry
Rob Learn
Louise Sargent
Bill Steer
Student Trustee M. Paradis

Administrative Staff Present:

Craig Myles, Director of Education
Deb Bartlett, Information/Communication Officer
Gay Smylie, Acting Superintendent
Josh Casey, Communications Coordinator
Krista Messenger, Executive Assistant
Liana Blaskievich, Officer Corporate Affairs
Lisa Collins, Interim Executive Officer
Melanie Gray, Acting Superintendent
Tim Graves, Superintendent
Wally Easton, Interim Superintendent of Business

Trustee Regrets:

Nichole King

Other:

Media and community partners

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Aspin called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

Chair Aspin read the land acknowledgement aloud.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance indicated that eight trustees are present for the meeting.

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

NIL

2.0 Approval of the Agenda

Motion: 21-05-01, J. Cochrane/ H. Fry

That the agenda for the Board meeting of May 18, 2021 be approved as presented. -

Carried.

3.0 Approval of Previous Minutes

3.1 2021 04 20 Regular Meeting minutes

Trustees were referred to the meeting minutes contained in the package. The floor was opened for amendments, questions, or comments with none rose.

Motion: 21-05-02, R. Learn/ A. Bottomley

That the minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on April 20, 2021, be approved. – **Carried**

4.0 Business Arising

4.1 Climate Action- Resolution and Next Steps

Chair Aspin recalled for trustees the passionate plea made by Trustee Bottomley during the last meeting with regard to climate action. A resolution was passed to defer for a month to allow for consultation with staff. Chair Aspin invited Trustee Bottomley to speak to this item. Highlights noted as:

- Overview provided on ongoing chaotic weather events across the globe
- Encouragement offered on environmentally friendly initiatives that do not require fossil fuels (ie: solid state battery) on the horizon.
- Closing comments to share how acting now to reduce reliance on fossil fuels will have a positive impact on future generations of children.
- Trustees referred to the brief contained in the agenda package for an outline of the suggested resolution.

Chair Aspin thanked Trustee Bottomley for his comments and read the motion aloud.

Motion: 21-05-03, A. Bottomley/ B. Steer

Whereas the NNDSB acknowledges the seriousness of the climate emergency and its growing impact on the environment;

Be it resolved that NNDSB will endeavour to implement practices and procedures towards reducing its environmental impact(s) for our students' future. – **CARRIED.**

It is noted that the resolution was carried unanimously. Trustee Steer was invited to speak to further steps NNDSB will take by bringing this issue forward at the OPSBA Annual General Meeting. The goal will be to provide awareness to this issue and support collective action at the provincial level with a resolution.

Comment from Director Myles to thank Trustee Bottomley for bringing attention to the need for climate change and his passion for the environment, and for Trustee Steer for becoming involved through OPSBA.

Chair Aspin read the resolution aloud.

Motion: 21-05-04, B. Steer/ J. Cochrane

Whereas the OPSBA acknowledges the seriousness of the climate "emergency" and its' growing impact on the environment, the OPSBA will endeavour to promote practices and procedures towards reducing its environmental impact(s) for our students' future and

include “environmental” (or words appropriate through discussion) and amend its vision statement and update its Exemplary Practices on the OPSBA website. – **CARRIED.**

5.0 Communication to the Board

5.1 Information Items

5.1.1 Monthly Tender Report- May 2021 ✓

5.1.2 Professional Development Opportunities Calendar ✓

5.1.3 Student Trustee Election Report ✓

5.1.4 Graduation 2021 Update ✓

Chair Aspin referred trustees to the board reports submitted for information as part of the agenda package for each item. The floor was opened for questions or comments with none rose. Attention was drawn to the Student Trustee Election Report shared as an addendum. Chair Aspin offered congratulations to the Student Trustee Elect, Ms. Cecilia Darling.

Point of order to note that Chair Aspin allowed the next few agenda items to be reprioritized due to connectivity challenges. Items were discussed with a slight variation to the sequence presented on the agenda.

5.2 Consolidation Update

Chair Aspin referred trustees to the report contained in the agenda package. Acting Superintendent Smylie invited to provide a few remarks and noted work on phase two of the renovations at West Ferris and Chippewa Secondary Schools are progressing well. Highlight drawn to the modernized learning commons spaces, with conceptual drawing included in the report.

The floor was opened for questions:

- Trustee Sargent inquired about further consideration regarding the tracks.
 - o Response from Director Myles to recognize this as a priority on the horizon.

With no further comment to note, Chair Aspin thanked SO Smylie for the report.

5.3 Staff Presentation: Virtual Learning

Trustees referred to the report included in the agenda package. Opening remarks from the Director to recognize the intent to keep trustees updated on the board’s plans for virtual learning moving forward. Highlights from the update provided by Superintendent Graves:

- Overview provided on model definitions:
 - o Virtual and remote learning refers to the style of learning occurring right now, whereas online learning/ e-learning describes a style of learning that has been ongoing at the secondary level for years.
- Review of the ministry communication and media attention
- NNDSB has intentionally delayed the selection of a firm model to remain flexible for ongoing direction from the ministry, and to collect as much data as possible to make the right decision.
- Some boards have made a decision already and are now needing to revisit based on new information. NNDSB wants to provide a very clear picture to students and their families about

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what exactly each model entails so families can choose what suits their needs the most. It is expected that the information will be shared with families in the next three weeks.

- The floor was opened for questions:
 - o Question from Trustee Sargent regarding windows of opportunities for families to switch between modalities. SO Graves noted that this will be affected by the final model selected. Changes in exceptional circumstances are always accommodated, balanced with the need for stability.
 - o Comment from Trustee Learn to note his experience is that the “octomester format” is taxing on students. Comment from SO Graves to note the board is considering a “quad-mester” structure that allows students to have two courses on to promote a bit of variety.

With no further questions, Chair Aspin thanked Superintendent Graves for the report.

5.4 Director’s Update

Opening remarks to thank SO Graves, and the leadership team who are working extremely hard to work within the confines of public health regulations, the ministry directives, and the needs of our students and their families. Staff are working very diligently to find solutions to support students. Thanks to staff, union partners, and leaders across the system for the work to ensure NNDSB is doing the best job possible for students and their families. As part of his report, the Director highlighted:

- o Education Week- NNDSB was pleased to honour all contributions in support of service to students across the NNDSB community.
- o The Director’s Office honours extraordinary efforts by staff members. This month staff involved in preparing, organizing and assembling over two-thousand wellness kits to support students through the “Thrive in the Hive” wellness pledge were recognized. Appreciation is expressed to the leadership in the Student Senate for partnering with the NNDSB mental health team under the leadership of Acting Superintendent Gray.
- o A sincere thank you to all trustees for supporting the MYSP regional information sessions. More information will be shared during the MYSP report regarding the outcomes of the sessions and the feedback survey.
- o At our last Board meeting, trustees provided additional approval for staff to make changes to the 2021/22 School Year Calendar. Pleased to report the Ministry has confirmed approval for the 2021/22 School Year Calendar.

Chair Aspin thanked the Director for the report and opened the floor for comments, with none rose.

5.5 Chair’s Remarks

The Chair shared remarks regarding board and community engagement initiatives as part of the conversation following the Director’s Remarks. Highlights are noted as:

- The Chair echoed the accolades to trustees for their participation in the MYSP consultation. These events were a successful example of the teamwork between senior administration and the trustees.
- Two items of correspondence were included for review that were received by the Chair from the OPSBA.
 - o The first letter is related to special education. It is noted that this item will be deferred to the Special Education Advisory Committee for review and development of a recommendation back to the Board.

Motion: 21-05-05, R. Learn/ H. Fry

That the OPSBA correspondence be deferred to the SEAC Committee for review and development of a recommendation to come back to the Board regarding this item.

– CARRIED.

- The second is related to virtual learning. It is noted that the OPSBA has coordinated a province-wide effort to express concern to the ministry regarding the proposal on-learning learning that includes the expanded mandate of TVO/TFO. The floor was opened for comments regarding this letter:
 - Question from Trustee Fry on whether this removes control from local school boards. Response from Trustee Fry as the OPSBA rep that this is not the case.
 - Trustee Steer noted that this was thoroughly discussed at OPSBA meetings, and more information is included in the OPSBA report to the Board this month. This letter is fully supported by Trustee Steer.
 - Vice-Chair Cochrane expressed his support for acting collectively

Motion: 21-05-06, J. Cochrane/ B. Steer

That the NNDSB Board of Trustees has received and approved the correspondence received by the OPSBA regarding virtual learning, and is directing the Chair of the Board to sign on behalf of the NNDSB. **– CARRIED.**

- Information item shared with trustees to note the ministry has shared their intent to extend capacity for Boards to meet remotely for an additional year (until November 14, 2022). There are requirements regarding virtual meetings (trustees and the public must both have participatory electronic access) which NNDSB has instituted since the original shift to remote meetings. More information will be shared if this decision is confirmed.
 - Comments from trustees to note how meeting in person as a local Board is preferred, however it does speak to the environmental commitments made earlier in the agenda and open the door to further participation in meetings that would otherwise require expense and time to travel.
- Chair Aspin closed his remarks by sharing with trustees that he has invited Director Myles to compile a list of potential projects for trustees to consider regarding the remaining funds in the Trustee Initiative Fund. These funds are reserved to support educational initiatives across the system.

Trustees received Chair Aspin's report with thanks.

5.6 OPSBA Report

The Chair invited Trustee Steer to lead the Board through this item. Trustee Steer referred Board members to the report shared as part of the agenda package. It is noted that many of the salient points were discussed as part of other agenda items. The floor was opened for questions, or comments with none rose.

The Chair thanked Trustee Steer for his report.

5.7 Student Trustee's Update

The Chair invited Student Trustee Paradis to speak to this item. Student Trustee Paradis

referred trustees to the report shared as an addendum to the agenda package. Highlight shared regarding the outcome of the student senate election. This year's successful Student Trustee Elect is Cecilia Darling, a grade 10 student from Almaguin Highlands SS. Student Trustee Paradis has worked with C. Darling and spoke to her strong work ethic, motivation, and drive and wished her well in her role.

The Chair thanked the Student Trustee for providing her verbal report.

6.0 Items for Decision

6.1 Report from Committee of the Whole

Motion: 21-05-07, D. Breault/ L. Sargent

That the business of the Board of Trustees conducted during the In-Camera meeting be approved. – **CARRIED.**

6.2 Parry Sound Build Committee Recommendation

Motion: 21-05-08, J. Cochrane/ R. Learn

Motion: That the Board of Trustees of Near North District School Board approves the Parry Sound Build Committee's Terms of Reference as presented. – **CARRIED.**

6.3 Parry Sound Build Committee- Town Council initiation for approval

It is noted that the Near North District School Board received an invitation to present to Parry Sound Town Council regarding the status of the JK-12 build. The Chair invited Vice-Chair Cochrane to offer remarks on this item. Vice-Chair Cochrane was pleased to support this, noting council meetings are open to the public and all trustees would be welcome to attend. The presentation is tentatively scheduled for the June 1st council meeting. Trustees noted the value is remaining engaged with the town of Parry Sound through this means and expressed support for this presentation. Vice-Chair Cochrane noted also speaking with MPP Miller to attend in support of NNDSB.

Motion: 21-05-09, J. Cochrane/ H. Fry

That the Board of Trustees of Near North District School Board approves of a presentation being made to the Parry Sound Town Council regarding the Parry Sound JK-12 School Build. – **CARRIED.**

6.4 Finance Committee- Budget Manual for Approval

As the Chair of the Finance Committee, Vice-Chair Cochrane recognized the leadership of the finance department and was pleased to recommend this document for approval. Chair Aspin noted the timelines are very helpful. Trustee Fry noted he was pleased to see a business-focused approach to this document.

Motion: 21-05-10, A. Bottomley/ H. Fry

That the Board of Trustees of Near North District School Board approves the Budget Manual as presented, as recommended by the Finance Committee. – **CARRIED.**

7.0 Committee Reports

7.1 Standing Committees

7.1.1 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) Committee Report

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Committee Chair Steer invited to lead this item for the Board. It is noted that the minutes of the MYSP Committee meetings of April 13th and April 19th, 2021, are included for information purposes. Trustees referred to the report, roadmap, and data report contained in the agenda package. Trustee Steer provided an overview on the regional virtual information sessions, and the excitement over having all trustees become involved in these sessions. Director Myles spoke to the overall process of the MYSP that has led the committee and the Board to this point. Data gathered in surveys taken after each of the six virtual Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) sessions indicated that NNDSB has begun to earn stakeholder trust, as respondents stated the board has come a long way in building trust and cautioned the board to maintain a focus on excellence in relationships. Corporate Affairs Officer, L. Blaskievich noted the MYSP draft is in its final stages and will be edited and revised before it is finalized for presentation to the Board of Trustees at the June 2021 meeting. The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being is a living document that will be updated and modified to meet the needs of the entire NNDSB school community and Ministry-mandated expectations as they arise.

Chair Aspin opened the floor for further comments and questions:

- Question raised regarding stakeholder feedback left on the survey. It is noted that a report is contained in the package highlighting major themes, and the MYSP Committee was able to pour over the raw data.

Chair Aspin thanked Trustee Steer, and advised he is looking forward to receiving the final report for approval next month. Trustee Steer and Director Myles are recognized for their leadership to keep this process on track amongst all the challenges of the last year.

7.1.2 Parry Sound Build Committee Report

Trustees referred to the meeting minutes of May 6, 2021 contained in the package for information purposes. A report was included to share highlights from the Committee's meeting with the architect. As the Committee Chair, Vice-Chair Cochrane noted he is very pleased to see how knowledgeable they are regarding the process from a ministry perspective. Sub-committees have been struck to focus on specific aspects of the project (sub-build committee focused on construction components and sub-programming committee focused on accommodating student, move-management, and recommendations on new school programming aspects). Sub-committees will report to the Build Committee, who will bring forward updates and decisions to the Board as needed.

The floor was opened for questions with none rose. The Chair thanked Vice-Chair Cochrane for his report.

7.1.3 W.J. Fricker Build Committee Report

Trustees referred to the report in the package for information purposes. Committee Chair Steer highlighted how the board continues to work with Mitchell Jensen Architect and the ministry to move this project ahead.

The floor was opened for questions with none rose. The Chair thanked Trustee Steer for this report.

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7.2 Committee Meeting Minutes- Presented for information

7.2.1 SEAC- unofficial minutes- April 29, 2021

7.2.2 Finance Committee minutes- unofficial minutes- May 11, 2021

The Chair referred trustees to the minutes of the legislated committees contained in the agenda package for information purposes.

8.0 Next Meeting Date

Chair Aspin confirmed the Board of Trustees would meet next on Tuesday, June 15, 2021.

Board Chair Aspin took a moment to thank trustees for their involvement in all the projects the board is working on. Progress is dependent upon the dedication of each trustee, and together- there is much to look forward to. There being no further business to discuss, the Board moved to adjourn the meeting.

9.0 Motion to Adjourn

Motion: 21-05-11, J. Cochrane/ A. Bottomley

That we do now adjourn at 7:51 pm. – **Carried**


Jay Aspin
Chair


Craig Myles
Director of Education