



Jay Aspin, Chair

963 Airport Road North Bay, ON P1B 8H1
Phone: 705.472.8170
Website: www.nearnorthschools.ca

Craig Myles, Director of Education

The October 11, 2022 **Committee of the Whole Public Session** of the Near North District School Board was held via video and/or teleconference.

Trustees Present:

Jay Aspin, Chair
John Cochrane, Vice-Chair
Bill Steer
Caren Gagne
Donna Breault
Louise Sargent
Nichole King
Allen Lewis Trodd, Student Trustee
Cecilia Darling, Student Trustee

Administrative Staff Present:

Craig Myles, Director of Education
Gay Smylie, Superintendent of Education
Deb Bartlett, Communications Officer
Krista Messenger, Executive Assistant
Melanie Gray, Superintendent of Education
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business
Tim Graves, Superintendent of Education

Other:

Staff, media and community partners

Trustees Absent:

Al Bottomley
Rob Learn

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Aspin called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Thanks was expressed to trustees and all meeting attendees for convening earlier than usual to accommodate the agenda length.

1.1 Land acknowledgement

Chair Aspin read the declaration aloud.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance indicated that nine trustees are present, including both student trustees.

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

NIL

2.0 Approval of the Agenda and Previous Minutes

Chair Aspin noted there has been much interest expressed by members of the community in an agenda item, and so the agenda will be adjusted to include Question Period as an item in advance of Adjournment.

Motion: J. Cochrane/ C. Gagne

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of October 11, 2022, is approved as amended, and the minutes of the previous meetings of September 13 2022, be approved as presented - **Carried.**

3.0 In-Camera

At this time, Chair Aspin advised the Committee of the Whole would be moving into a private session. Members of the public were excused and advised they would be permitted back into the meeting once the Board arose in public session.

Motion: B. Steer/ D. Breault

That the Committee of the Whole move into an in-camera session. - **Carried.**

A brief pause was noted to coordinate the appropriate video conference controls.

4.0 Arise and Report

The Committee arose and reported in the public session of the Committee of the Whole. A brief pause was noted to coordinate the appropriate video conference controls to permit members of the public to re-enter the virtual meeting.

Chair Aspin noted that a Question Period had been added to the agenda as item 7.0. It is noted that the Board's process is defined in bylaw BL-114. As the Board is meeting virtually this evening, members of the public can direct questions to the Executive Assistant or review the MS Forms survey link in the Zoom chat. Further instructions will be shared when this item is broached.

5.0 Business Arising

Chair Aspin noted this is a nil report this evening.

6.0 New Business

6.1 NNDSB Charity Works Report- Structure Update

Trustees were referred to the report included in the agenda package. It is noted that the recommendation coming forward from the Charity Works Committee is recommending it remain structured as a charity, with enhancements to capitalize on community fundraising opportunities. The Committee's vision is to see the constitution updated, governance policies developed, and a multi-year fundraising plan created. Consensus is being sought to identify this as a priority for the new Board to action so that the momentum is maintained.

Comment from Trustee Steer to note a more robust charity will provide many opportunities for NDNSB students and will strengthen the board's work as part of the strategic commitment to excellence in relationships.

With no further comments raised, it is noted that consensus has been achieved regarding the recommendations presented.

6.2 Governance Policy Report

Trustees were referred to the report included in the agenda package. Chair Aspin noted this item follows the Board's decision in September to approve the creation of two new governance policies. The drafts are included for review and have been published on the website for input as part of the 30-day consultation period. It is noted that consensus is being sought to approve the draft governance policies conditional on the positive acceptance of the community so it can be completed by the current Board.

Comment from Trustee Sargent to note her support for the Student Trustee policy. The recognition of the role of the Indigenous Youth Circle in support of the Indigenous Student Trustee is well articulated and is aligned with the Board's vision for this role.

With no further comments raised, it is noted that consensus has been achieved regarding the recommendations presented.

6.3 Dreamcoat Update

It is noted that a report is included in the agenda package with regard to this item. Chair Aspin noted that trustees are fully supportive of administration's decision to not renew the expired lease with Dreamcoat Fantasy Theatre. The Director was invited to provide further comments and noted NNDSB makes decisions based on student safety and well-being and core instruction as a priority. For the reasons stated in the report, the board is not able to continue offering space to the group. NNDSB wishes Dreamcoat well and trusts that another community partner can support them and their valuable community program.

6.4 Notice of Motion- Trustee Gagne

It is noted that Trustee Gagne provided a Notice of Motion in alignment with NNDSB Bylaw 102. Chair Aspin referred trustees to the brief included in the agenda package and advised Trustee Gagne would be given one minute to speak to this item and then the floor would be open to discuss and determine consensus.

Remarks from Trustee Gagne to note she is seeking consensus to bring a motion forward recommending that NNDSB writes a letter to the Ministry of Education advocating for a stronger commitment to student transportation supports. Though this is a concern shared across the province, bus cancellations are particularly disruptive in the zone represented by Trustee Gagne.

Chair Aspin inquired if a trustee was willing to second the proposed motion as outlined on Trustee Gagne's Notice of Motion. Trustee Steer noted he would be pleased to and requested that OPSBA receive a copy of the letter as this is an item discussed on an ongoing basis.

Chair Aspin opened the floor for discussion on this item and the proposed amendment. With no further comments raised, it is noted that consensus has been achieved regarding the amended Notice of Motion presented.

6.5 Notice of Motion- Vice-Chair Cochrane

It is noted that Vice-Chair Cochrane provided a Notice of Motion in alignment with NNDSB Bylaw 102. Chair Aspin referred trustees to the brief included in the agenda package and advised Vice-Chair Cochrane would be given one minute to speak to this

item and then the floor would be open to discuss and determine consensus.

Remarks from Vice-Chair Cochrane to note he is seeking consensus to bring a motion forward recommending NNDSB develop a thorough report regarding the information stated in a letter received from the Town of Parry Sound with regard to the area population and the impact on the JK-12 Parry Sound build and correct any misinformation circulating about NNDSB and this issue. Following receipt of the letter, Vice-Chair Cochrane was invited to a meeting with Town officials. Unfortunately, the Mayor was not in attendance. Concerns were expressed regarding the population growth as it relates to the building size and amenities. Vice-Chair Cochrane recognized the need to bring this forward to the Board to ensure it can take action to consider the information

Chair Aspin inquired if a trustee was willing to second the proposed motion as outlined on Vice-Chair Cochrane's Notice of Motion. Trustee Gagne noted she would be pleased to second the Motion.

Chair Aspin opened the floor for discussion. With no further comments raised, it is noted that consensus has been achieved regarding the Notice of Motion presented.

6.6 Notice of Motion- Trustee King

It is noted that Trustee King provided a Notice of Motion in alignment with NNDSB Bylaw 102. Chair Aspin referred trustees to the brief included in the agenda package and advised Trustee King would be given one minute to speak to this item and then the floor would be open to discuss and determine consensus.

Remarks from Trustee King to note she is seeking consensus to bring a motion forward recommending the Board receive an updated report regarding the actions taken and continued next steps to support the healing process following the damage to the PSHS Shapatuan. It is noted that Board representatives attended a Talking Circle organized by Wasauksing First Nation where commitments were made on next steps to strengthen relationships and support the students' healing process. The Notice of Motion is intended to ensure this planning remains on track with respect to these plans.

Chair Aspin thanked Trustee King for bringing forward this motion, as the Board values the relationships with First Nations partners. Chair Aspin inquired if a trustee was willing to second the proposed motion as outlined on Trustee King's Notice of Motion. Vice-Chair Cochrane noted he would be pleased to second the Motion.

Chair Aspin opened the floor for discussion. With no further comments raised, it is noted that consensus has been achieved regarding the Notice of Motion presented.

7.0 Question Period

Chair Aspin noted that the Board would be adapting the procedure for Question Period to the virtual meeting environment. It is noted the process is defined as part of BL-114 so it is strictly the way in which the questions are submitted that need to be amended as the information and responses will be delivered in the same way.

It is noted that an MS Forms survey has been posted in the Zoom meeting chat forum

in order to submit a question for review. Chair Aspin called for a short recess to allow a final opportunity for questions to be submitted.

At 7:10 PM, Chair Aspin called the meeting to order. It is noted that the Board is prepared to dedicate 20 minutes to this agenda item, with any remaining questions to be responded to outside of the meeting.

Question one was submitted from C. Murton Stoehr in relation to agenda item 6.3. The question reads, *“Given the importance of Dreamcoat Fantasy Theatre to arts in North Bay, and how incredibly crucial it is to so many local children’s mental health right now because of covid, what actions has the NNDSB taken to save this critical relationship?”*

- In response, Chair Aspin noted that the NNDSB’s lease with Dreamcoat is expired, though the TOROS program will continue. NNDSB wishes Dreamcoat well to find another community partner that is able to offer space.

Question two was submitted from J. Murton in relation to agenda item 6.3. The question reads, *“Most of the Board’s reasons for cancelling the lease with Dreamcoat seem to relate to storage of sets, etc. Dreamcoat primarily needs space to rehearse. Why can’t this be granted at West Ferris or another site?”*

- In response, Chair Aspin noted that in alignment with Ministry guidance, the NNDSB’s primary reasoning is to use the space for instructional purposes and not storage.

An inquiry was raised from the floor by a community member that included a request to speak to their question directly. Chair Aspin noted the Board would permit this.

Question three was submitted by S. Clausen in relation to agenda item 6.3. The question reads, *“I would like to ask the Board if they could make a vision of the ideal relationship/partnership with Dreamcoat what would this look like? If there was a solution that allowed Dreamcoat to access the Schools for Community use as a rehearsal space would you see this as part of that vision”*

- In response, Chair Aspin noted the Ministry’s number one guiding principle for the community use of schools is that school activities take priority. Leased areas used by the community, must be areas that are not needed for instruction. It is noted that, should there be surplus space, this can be revisited.
- S. Clausen clarified her interest in hearing more about the vision, noting her understanding that the lease was strictly related to storage space.
 - Director Myles was invited to speak to this item but experienced a technical difficulty when attempting to respond. Chair Aspin noted the agenda would carry forward.

A point was raised from the floor by a member of the community to suggest a separate meeting be held in order for the community inquiries to be fully addressed.

Question four was submitted by D. Hewitt Colborne in relation to agenda item 6.3. Chair Aspin invited D. Hewitt Colborne to read the question aloud. The question reads, *“What are you doing to find alternative space for Dreamcoat?”*

- It is noted that D. Hewitt Colborne expressed support for the suggestion to host a special meeting to continue discussion, in order to explore future opportunities

for space and out of respect for the long-standing relationship.

- Chair Aspin noted that administration has explored this and details are included in the report shared in public session.

A point was raised from the floor regarding the suggestion for a separate community meeting. Chair Aspin noted discussion is ongoing currently, and trustees have expressed support for administration's decision-making regarding the expired lease. Chair Aspin noted he would be pleased to bring the suggestion regarding a further meeting to the trustees for their consideration.

Question five was submitted by M. Beam in relation to agenda item 6.3. Chair Aspin invited M. Beam to read the question aloud. The question reads, *"Missing from the NNDSB report to Trustees was the fact that DFT made an investment in WFSS in the amount of a \$58,000.00 award. This award from AVIVA Community Foundation would not have been awarded if it had been aware that NNDSB was not planning a long-term commitment to support the children of the community. Cost offset does not include any mention of school or NNDSB use of Dreamcoat equipment and properties at no charge – the use of Dreamcoat sound board for WFSS for a number of years, the use of props, costumes, set pieces for a variety of school productions both in class and extra-curricular, the loan of microphones to TOROS for over 10 years at no charge (rental fees would have been as much as \$100.00 per unit – 17 units per show since 2013) and other school productions at Widdifield, West Ferris, and FJ McElligott. Dreamcoat is not asking for an extension of the lease agreement that provided storage, just asking for the children's rehearsals to be accommodated and to continue the partnership of supporting each other in the pursuit of wellbeing, covid recovery through arts education. Examples of instances that Dreamcoat did not honour West Ferris' need for prioritizing school activities. NNDSB Staff Recommendation: Asking the trustees to support the staff work being done to conclude the partnership (not lease agreement) partnership – a partnership in Arts programming that currently provides the streaming of students to NNDSB schools and provides a critical pathway to all of the mental health strategies, student success and well-being goals that the NNDSB espouses in the documents they are planning to present to trustees tonight. How is this possibly good for kids and why would the NNDSB ask to conclude a partnership that as mentioned above provides such a clear alignment with what you espouse in your BIP Student Achievement and Well-Being?"*

- Chair Aspin thanked M. Beam for posing this question and confirmed it will be referred to administration for a response.

Question six was submitted by C. Phillips in relation to agenda item 6.3. Chair Aspin invited C. Phillips to read the question aloud. Prior to beginning, C. Phillips expressed confusion regarding the Question Period process. Linkages were drawn to the board's commitment to excellence in communication within the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The question reads, *"What are you doing to find alternative space for Dreamcoat?"*. *Does the Board know that there were no consultations on this issue with parents or providers?*

- Chair Aspin noted Dreamcoat is not a NNDSB program, but a partner.
- C. Phillips requested a response from all trustees regarding the lack of consultation aspect of the question.
 - Director Myles was invited to respond and noted that NNDSB approached

this decision with due diligence. It is noted that meetings were held with Dreamcoat where the next steps were shared and met with amicable agreement. Dreamcoat advised other options were being pursued. As a community organization, Dreamcoat would be in the best position to comment on its community reach out.

- Closing comment from Chair Aspin to note in formal response to the question, consultation did occur with representatives from Dreamcoat.
- Further emphasis was expressed on the need to hear directly from all trustees. Attendees were redirected to the public report that outlined the major themes regarding administration's decision, which has the Board's full support.
- It is noted that the themes do not contain much detail, and it is slanderous to not present further evidence. Comment from Director Myles to note the lease between NNDSB and Dreamcoat contains a strict confidentiality clause that restricts NNDSB's ability to speak further to this item.

Question seven was submitted by N. Landry in relation to agenda item 6.3. Chair Aspin invited N. Landry to read the question aloud. The question reads, "*In regards to the school board, they do have "community use for future of our facility" on the website. There is funding that has been given to NNDSB for the use of Silver Birches Public School. I'm just wondering now that aside from the lease, could Dreamcoat request space in another school with a stage as a fresh start for a use of the schools?"*

- Chair Aspin invited Director Myles to comment.
- Director Myles concurred that Community Use of Schools (CUS) is an important part of school functions. The Ministry of Education notes that schools need to prioritize instructional use and as a result, unfortunately CUS is not always possible.
- Question raised from the floor regarding the request to host a special session for further discussion. Chair Aspin noted he agreed to bring this forward to the Board for further consideration.

8.0 Motion to Adjourn

Motion: J. Cochrane/ B. Steer

That we do now adjourn at 7:50 PM. – **Carried**