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Erika Lougheed, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

The December 13, 2022 **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:

Erika Lougheed, Chair
Howard Wesley, Vice-Chair
Ashley St. Pierre *
Chantal Phillips
Jeanie Fuscaldo
Julie Bertram
Louise Sargent
Shane Hall
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

Other:

Staff, media and community partners

* arrived following roll call. Attendance noted within the minutes

Trustees Absent:

Bill Steer

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Lougheed called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1.1 Land acknowledgement

Chair Lougheed 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

Trustee St. Pierre has joined the meeting.

2.0 Approval of the Agenda and Previous Minutes

Motion: L. Sargent/ J. Bertram

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of December 13, 2022, and the minutes of the previous meeting of October 11, 2022, be approved. -

Carried.

3.0 Business Arising

3.1 Transportation Supports- Correspondence

Trustees referred to the draft letter included in the agenda package. It is noted that this is in follow-up to a Notice of Motion tabled by Past Trustee Gagne regarding enhanced transportation supports. Introductory comments to note that NNDSB divests the coordination of student transportation to the Nipissing Parry Sound Student Transportation consortia, along with the three other local school boards. It is recognized that the best way to advocate for enhanced services from a governance perspective was to draft a letter to the Ministry of Education, to ensure the Board does not extend itself into the operations of the consortium.

The floor was opened for questions or comments. Trustee Bertram raised a query on the historic practice of late bus runs. This provided an opportunity for students in extra-curricular activities to be transported home and there are students who are not able to participate in activities without the service. Chair Lougheed noted this point as something to consider in future.

With no further comments raised, it is noted that consensus has been achieved on the draft letter. A motion will be presented during the regular session to confirm approval.

3.2 Parry Sound Demographic Data Report

Trustees were referred to a report included in the agenda package in response to a Notice of Motion tabled by Past Vice-Chair Cochrane regarding correspondence received from the Town of Parry Sound, and other narratives circulating around demographic data. Highlights of the discussion are noted as:

- Introductory comments to note NNDSB has a strong reputation regarding enrolment projections, as it has been consistently within plus or minus two per cent of projected to actual enrolment. Note that enrolment trends do not always move in the same direction as the overall census data.
- Projections are very sophisticated and involve complex data analysis in alignment with professional agencies and provincial colleagues.
- It is noted that the report outlines the ministry funding process for district school boards, and the differences in funding between education taxes and ministry funding.

The floor was opened for questions or comments, with none rose. Chair Lougheed confirmed consensus has been achieved regarding receipt and approval of the report.

It is noted that the Chair permitted the next two items to be discussed in reverse order from the appearance on the agenda.

3.3 Parry Sound Shapatuan Healing Report

Trustees were referred to the update included in the agenda package. It is noted that this item is brought forward in response to a Notice of Motion tabled by Past First Nation Trustee King regarding the ongoing actions of NNDSB to support the students' healing process at PSHS. Opening comments to note the update reflects a high-level overview of the continued efforts of NNDSB to build relationships with the Parry Sound area First Nations and PSHS students. Superintendent Gray was invited to provide further

highlights. It is noted that the vandalism events were very distressing. The Indigenous education team continues to have conversations with staff, students and community to support the healing journey. It is noted that Student Trustee Lewis has provided the Board with updates from the Indigenous Youth Circle as well.

The floor was opened for comments and questions. Trustee Phillips commended NNDSB for the report presented. Question raised regarding any efforts to address prejudices and discrimination in the school community to complement the support being offered to Indigenous students, staff and community. Response shared regarding the formal education provided to all NNDSB regarding Indigenous culture and history, days of cultural significance honoured throughout the year, the efforts of Indigenous Education leads, and the efforts to have student voice represented through the Indigenous Youth Circle.

With no further questions raised, Chair Lougheed confirmed consensus has been achieved regarding receipt and approval of the report.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Notice of Motion- Trustee Fuscaldo

Trustees were referred to the Notice of Motion filed by Trustee Fuscaldo contained in the agenda package with regard to the addition of the national anthem to the Board and Committee of the Whole opening procedures.

It is noted that in order to proceed to discussion, the notice requires a seconder in addition to Trustee Fuscaldo. The floor was opened for expressions of support. Trustee Sargent noted she will second the motion. Chair Lougheed noted Trustee Fuscaldo is permitted to speak first for up to three minutes, and then the floor will be opened for discussion by trustees. Vice-Chair Wesley will assist the Chair by recognizing speakers and monitoring the time. Highlights are noted as:

- Opening comments by Trustee Fuscaldo to note the playing of the national anthem symbolizes unity and tradition. Preliminary research indicates other school board meetings include O'Canada as part of the opening process.
- Trustee Sargent expressed support for further discussion on this item. It is noted that the OPSBA's Public Education Symposium is being held at the end of January and would present an ideal opportunity to speak with provincial trustee colleagues regarding their perspectives and processes.
- Trustee Bertram noted more research is needed to make a decision.
- Trustee Phillips requested further insight from Trustee Fuscaldo regarding the motivation to bring this forward. Trustee Fuscaldo noted it stems from a desire to unite the Board and provides recognition for the past while looking to the future.
- Trustee St. Pierre noted the national anthem symbolizes cultural genocide, silence, and assimilation for the Indigenous community. The playing of the national anthem makes the Land Acknowledgement seem disingenuous and erodes trust in the Board's commitments to truth and reconciliation. This is an inappropriate action in this day and age.
- Closing clarification comments from Trustee Fuscaldo to note the scope of the request extends to the public Board and Committee of the Whole meetings.

There is a rendition of the anthem in both official languages and Cree language that could be considered.

With no further trustee comments to note, Chair Lougheed offered further perspective for discussion. In conversation with other Board Chairs, this is no longer a common practice. Reconciliation involves much learning and unlearning. Many Indigenous students and families are still working through the trauma of colonial practices. NNDSB's Indigenous education team was invited to offer perspectives. Note that many Indigenous staff and students choose to remain seated when the anthem is played during school morning exercises out of recognition for the nation-to-nation relationship, and with respect for truth and reconciliation. To face this decision once again at Board meetings is disheartening and makes attendance more complicated. NNDSB has committed to the Calls to Action. Truth is an imperative first step in truth and reconciliation recognition. This includes a deep respect for differing viewpoints and the ways in which people move through the world. Creating an environment where some participants stand and some do not is divisive.

As the Secretary to the Board, Director Myles noted he is compelled to advise the Board when its actions bring disrepute. Trustees were urged to consider the impact this action will have on the Board's relationship with First Nation communities and how this decision will be interpreted through the MYSP's commitment to Excellence in Relationships.

At this time, Trustee Fuscaldo moved to defer the motion to provide the opportunity to share the inclusive rendition. The motion to defer was seconded by Trustee Sargent in favour of bringing the discussion back to the table in February. The motion to defer was put forward to the floor- with no support expressed for this action. It is noted that the motion to defer is defeated and so the question was called.

Chair Lougheed noted a recorded vote will be called to determine if consensus is achieved. Recorded vote results are noted as:

Trustee:	In Favor	Against	Abstain	Absent
Bertram, Julie		x		
Fuscaldo, Jeanie	x			
Hall, Shane		x		
Lougheed, Erika		x		
Phillips, Chantal		x		
Sargent, Louise		x		
St. Pierre, Ashley		x		
Steer, Bill				x
Wesley, Howard		x		
TOTAL:	1	7		1

It is noted that the motion has failed to achieve consensus. Chair Lougheed thanked trustees for their participation in this conversation.

4.2 Parry Sound Aquatic & Recreation Centre Fund Raising Committee- Correspondence for review

It is noted that the Board was approached by the Parry Sound Aquatic & Recreation Centre Fund Raising Committee to provide a letter of support regarding a community aquatic centre. A draft letter confirming support was included in the package to prompt discussion. The floor was opened for discussion. Highlights noted as:

- Acknowledgement for being thought of as a stakeholder to provide a letter of support. It is noted that this represents progress towards the MYSP's goal to create opportunities for collaboration and partnership, as part of the strategic commitment to Excellence in Relationships.
- Reservation expressed noting the contentiousness within the West Parry Sound community. Concern was expressed regarding the limited information on hand to provide an informed decision on a six-lane or four-lane pool. Further perspective offered on the funding challenges and municipal political challenges.
- Inquiry to confirm the proposed location is within the Municipality of McDougall.
- Question to confirm if the strong proposed language would translate into financial support obligations. Director Myles noted this could be something to seek legal support for confirmation.
- Trustee Bertram noted the personal impact the aquatic facility in West Nipissing has had on her family and the wider community. A local pool provides opportunity for swimming lessons, water safety education and youth employment opportunities in lifeguarding. From the information presented, having a six-lane pool would be very beneficial.

Based on discussion, it is noted that references to size (i.e., six lanes) will be removed from the letter. Further edit noted to temper "firm support" to "support" to limit the appearance of financial support. With these amendments, it is noted that consensus is achieved to submit a letter of support. This motion will be forthcoming in the regular session.

5.0 Motion to Adjourn

Motion: C. Phillips/ S. Hall

That we do now adjourn at 7:03 PM. – **Carried**