



## **MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH MIDDLESEX**

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

A Special Meeting was held on Wednesday November 28, 2018 at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers, Shared Services Building, Parkhill, with an invited delegation from the Thames Valley District School Board, in which a quorum was present.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Present:

Mayor Don Shipway - Absent  
Deputy Mayor Brian Ropp  
Councillor Ward One – Doreen McLinchey  
Councillor Ward Two – Joan Nichol  
Councillor Ward Three – Gord Moir  
Councillor Ward Four – Andrew Hemming  
Councillor Ward Five – Adrian Cornelissen  
CAO/Director of Finance(Treasurer) - Nandini Syed  
Clerk - Jackie Tiedeman

#### **DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

None

The Clerk provided an introduction to the Special Meeting and reminded members of Council that all questions to the delegation shall be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Brian Ropp welcomed everyone to the meeting and turned the Chair over to Councillor Gord Moir, Chair of the Local Schools Advisory Committee.

Chair Moir then asked the delegation for introductions for the record.



On behalf of the Thames Valley School Board:

Laura Elliott, Director of Education

Jeff Pratt, Associate Director

Riley Culhane, Learning Support Services and Technology

Mat Bradacs, Vice Principal of NMDHS

Also recognized in the audience were School Trustees Arlene Morell and Sean Hunt as well as members of the LSAC Committee.

Chair Moir asked Deputy Mayor Ropp to provide an economic development impact statement on behalf of the Municipality and the Economic Development Advisory Committee. The overview stated that schools are an essential element of the fabric of rural communities and an important and necessary link to the viability of local government. School closures impact the business community, property values, families, the workforce, student employment and the growth, retention and expansion of the community.

The following questions were provided to the delegation in advance of the meeting in order to have a discussion on these particular matters.

- **Discussion on the Service Agreement the Board has with Southwest Transportation Services (bussing to schools outside of North Middlesex)**

Response: Bus services are provided by private entities. The schools boards were asked to look into options in order to create cost efficiencies as their boundaries are now the same. As a result, Public and Separate school pupils share bussing.

North Middlesex DHS has a dual designation boundary with Strathroy District Collegiate Institute (S.D.C.I). As well, bussing is provided to those students wishing to access specialized courses (Tech, Auto, Construction, Hospitality/Culinary Arts) and as well as to French Immersion. Eighteen (18) students are transported from North Middlesex to S.D.C.I. Transportation needs of students is also stressful to the family and is much different in rural areas as opposed to the City where there are other alternatives available.

- **Has the Board looked at moving boundary's and programs to balance enrolment between our over and underutilized schools especially those affecting North Middlesex**



There was considerable discussion about the underutilization of some schools and overcrowding in other ones. Schools are closing while others are bursting and portables being brought in. It was noted at the present time that there is a moratorium on school closures imposed by the provincial government. The members encourage the Council to read the Annual Planning Report that was recently presented to the Board.

The members advised that it is a balancing act to receive advance communication to know where development is going to occur to be able to ensure adequate staff resources are considered within attendance review. Students are also “shopping” for appropriate schools that offer the specific courses. New schools are very appealing to students and families and therefore there is considerable competition between schools now because of this. The Board is continually monitoring these challenges they are facing and are trying to work on solutions.

- **Provide an overview of Re-Think Secondary Plan**

A copy of the Re-Think Secondary Learning – Translating Vision into Action document was provided. The purpose of the report touches on Responsive Learning, Equitable Accesses to Courses and Programs and Adoption of Global competencies.

- **What is the vision for programming in Secondary Schools ie: investing in agricultural programs and North Middlesex**
- **What is the vision for expanding programs to entice international students to agriculturally focused programs**

Mat Bradacs, Vice Principal of NMDHS gave an overview of his teaching background and some ideas he has brought to North Middlesex DHS. He advised that through some connections at the school contact was made with six area farmers that specialize in different aspects of the agricultural sector. Arrangements were then made with the teaching staff at North Middlesex to tour these facilities to get an understanding of what soft skills the students are in need of in order to succeed in the agricultural sector. This tour was well received by the staff and was a very positive first step. Council expressed their desire that somehow NMDHS can become one of the “specialized” schools in this sector for students to attend. Council expressed their willingness to open communication with the school for the betterment of the students and the community as a whole and welcomed the partnership.



The members from the Board then provided an overview of the recruitment process. They emphasized the extreme competitiveness with School Boards when attending these international events. With international students, it involves more than just trying to get enrolment. These students are required to pay tuition, approx. \$13,000.00 and require accommodations which can cost approximately \$8,000.00. The recruiter's role is to sell the school to the student and then the community needs to be welcoming of these students.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Chair Moir thanked the members of the Board and all those present for attending the meeting and agreed that this was a good first step in opening communication. The focus moving forward should be to mutually promote the value in rural schools.

ROPP/HEMMING: That the meeting adjourn at 10:45 a.m.

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MAYOR

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CLERK