Minutes for Mills Haven School Council

## Call to Order

A School Council meeting of Mills Haven Elementary was held on October 8, 2019 at Mills Haven Elementary Library. It began at 6:26pm and was presided over by Sherry J School Council Chair, with Becky M School Council Secretary taking the minutes.

## Attendees

Becky M.

Keri B

Garry R

Sherry J

Tanya L

Lisa H

Sarah G

Priya H

Annette H

## Approval of Minutes

No Changes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous September 10th, 2019 meeting was made by Sherry J and seconded by Tanya L.

## Review of Agenda

## School Report

Garry R provided school report

* 1. School Fees
     + Schools must consult with parents prior to setting fees. One consultation will happen in January at the School Council meeting. Another follow up consultation will take place in the fall.
     + Parents will also have the option to give feedback online
  2. Christmas Concert
     + School will be raffling off parking stalls as a fundraiser.
     + Information on the evening will be coming out soon
     + School population is down to 430 students so there will not be any tickets issued this year. There should be enough room for families to watch.
  3. The School has applied for funding for another EA. Approval was received for a Kindergarten EA.
  4. November 29,2019. The PD Day will be used for training on the new curriculum.
  5. FNMI Spirit Bear
     + Mills Haven has a Spirit Bear, a stuffed Teddy, that represents “No Child Left Behind”
     + The unique twist is the students of Mills Haven are teaching the Spirit Bear what they know
     + Elder Wilson will coming to the school to help name the bear
  6. D.A.R.E Grad for Grade 6 students is in December
  7. Linking Generations
     + Seniors in our community have been connecting with Grade 4 and taught them how to square dance
  8. 12 Days of Christmas
     + Collecting Food Bank donations between December 2-17
     + School is also doing Brown Bag Donation again
  9. Derek has purchased the leadership t-shirts for a total of $397.38
  10. School Photographer
      + A short discussion was held with parents about the current photographer. Opinions were mixed. Garry will look into other companies and also connect with the current company.
  11. Projector Update: Still waiting to hear back from company

## Chair Report

Chair Report was presented by Sherry M.

1. Staff Christmas Basket

* Becky M Volunteered to put together the Staff Christmas Basket
* Board members present agreed that $150 was a good amount for the basket.
* Not enough Board members were present to vote on the basket amount. Sherry J will send out an email for board members to vote

1. Movie Night
   * Scheduled for January 24th or 31th
   * Committee Needed
2. Decorating the Christmas Tree
   * Volunteers are needed to decorate the tree in December 2
   * Volunteers also needed in January to take the tree down
   * Lights and decorations are needed
3. St. Nicklous Tag
   * Usually takes place on December 6/19
   * Erin has a neighbor that can act at St. Nicklous
   * ORGANIZER IS NEEDED FOR THIS EVENT plus 4-6 volunteers to help in the hallways that day

## School Trustee Report

Annette Hubick introduced herself as the Trustee assigned to Mills Haven for the 2019/20 school year.

Full report submitted by Annette Hubick

**School Council Report**

**Trustee Annette Hubick**

***November 2019***

**2019-2020 Budget**

***Our Spring Assumptions***

As I’ve previously reported, school boards had to build 2019-20 budgets based on assumptions. EIPS chose to budget conservatively.

* Growth would not be funded
* Classroom Improvement Fund would not continue to be funded ($1.9 million)
* There would be no increase to any funding grants, for example the basic grant, transportation, PMO (plant, maintenance and operations)
* The nutrition program would not continue
* The costs associated with the teacher collective agreement that the government negotiated would not be funded.

For extra measures, schools’ staffing was capped at 95% of their budgets to allow for fall adjustments that would least likely impact staffing.

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***The insurance sticker shock***

Two weeks prior to the budget being tabled EIPS learned that our insurance premium for our facilities will increase by $1.5M for the 2019/20 school year. This was not factored in when building our spring budget so we were already bracing ourselves for having to make decisions to cover that unanticipated shortfall.

***The 2019-20 Provincial Budget Announcement and Impact on EIPS***

The Budget was tabled October 24, 2019, which revealed that we didn’t anticipate all the changes that would be made.

* Class size funding is suspended. For EIPS that equates to $7.9M.
* The school fee grant is suspended (this grant was brought in by the previous government when it passed legislation that prohibited school boards from collecting division-wide fees to cover supplies.) For EIPS, that equates to $1.22M.

These two grants, along with Classroom Improvement Fund Grant (which we correctly assumed would be suspended) were redirected to fund growth in terms of the Basic Grant and to provide Boards a one-time transition grant for the 2019/20 school year. Note: the Basic Grant has not changed since 2011.

Note: The Transition Grant is $203 for urban boards and $356 for rural boards. “Urban” is defined as a municipality with 30,000+ citizens. The government is not recognizing our unique “R-urban” makeup and is funding all EIPS students at the urban rate. This amounts to a 1.23M difference in funding to EIPS.

Between the budget shortfall and our insurance premium increase, EIPS is looking at a $5.5M mid-year adjustment.

***Context to “Reserves”***

It is often quoted that school boards are sitting on hundreds of millions of reserves and that these should be accessed to offset reductions in funding. As of August 31, 2019, we had a total of $19.7M in reserves. Here is some context as to what constitutes that amount:

* $6.3M in tangible assets, which is the current value of our assets that gets expensed over time. E.G. fleet vehicles, photocopier machines and technology licensing. This isn’t cash money that can be spent.
* $895K in capital reserves.
* This leaves $12.6M in operating reserves.
  + $1.6M is School Generated Funds, which are also not available for the school division to use. This belongs to the schools and represents the fees that parents have paid, and money generated from vending machines and cafeteria/canteen sales.
  + $2.7M is what schools and departments were allowed to carry forward to the following school year, which is a maximum of 2% of their operating budgets. Anything over and above that 2% gets returned to the division’s unallocated reserves.

**Allocated Reserves** is money that the Board has committed to something specific. Typically, these are one-time investments. We have money set aside for installing mechanical cooling in our portables, leveraging student achievement initiative funds, top up funds for furniture and equipment for our replacement schools, and new curriculum implementation costs, for example. As of August 31, 2019, we had $2.8M in allocated reserves.

(Trustee Report Continued)

**The remaining $6.2 million in reserves represents truly “discretionary” operating funds.**

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**Unallocated Reserves** are funds used to cover unexpected expenses that might arise mid-year like a significant mechanical failure. It is recommended that the Board maintains 2% of its operating budget in unallocated reserves, for EIPS that is $4M. As of August 31, 2019, we had $5.4M in unallocated reserves.

***How EIPS will Adjust for 2019-2020***

The Board met on October 31, 2019 to receive all the details of the provincial budget and determine how to best address the mid-year adjustment that will be required. The Board will move forward with a measured approach to minimize, as much as possible, learning in the classroom for the remainder of this year.

* The Board will be using $3.6M from its unallocated reserves leaving us with only $2.7M—well below our $4M threshold.
* The Board has also reversed some of its commitments from our Allocated Reserves, $800K. This will leave us by year end $90K in allocated reserves.
* The Board is also calling back all central department carry forward (that 2%), including the Governance budget. The only exception is Supports for Students as their work directly affects the classroom, e.g., specialized supports, new curriculum resources, etc.
* The Board practice is to allow schools to carry surpluses up to 2% forward into the next school year. For the 2019/20 school year it will be reduced to maximum of 1%. This will result in a total of $581K being called back from the 43 schools.

This will allow us to cover off the $5.5M shortfall so we can deliver a balanced budget by November 30.

***Going Forward***

Given that the government has indicated that education funding will remain at the 2018/19 level for the next 3 years the board will use this time to examine our programs, services and staffing levels to determine what we will be able to afford over the next 3 years. The Board will not be in the position to draw on any reserves for the next school year.

With the Education Budget being frozen at the 2018/19 level and our student enrolment and costs continuing to grow, our resources will require to be stretched to include more students. One thing we know for certain is that class sizes will increase over the next 3 years, which will mean increased workloads for teachers who may no longer be in a position to take on duties outside of classroom instruction, e.g., coaching, championing programs so there will be a greater need and opportunity for parents and community members to step into those roles.

Unfortunately, neither a replacement school for Sherwood Heights nor a new school to address enrolment pressures in Fort Saskatchewan made it on the province’s list of school infrastructure projects. This will also impact our planning going forward.

**New School Fee Process**

The Board has approved a new school fee process for the 2020-2021 school year. The changes encompass opportunities for school administration to engage with parents in developing and establishing fees. This new process arose at the direction of trustees in response to parent concerns and is one example of the governance work of your locally elected school board.

**Date Activity**

January Board will establish parameters for setting fees

January Principals will hold an initial consultation with parents (2-weeks’ notice requirement)

February Principals will establish proposed fees using specified parameters, principal discretion, parent feedback, and fee calculation tools

March/April Principals will hold a second meeting with parents to share proposed fees and rationale (2-weeks’ notice requirement)

April Principals will submit proposed fee schedules and declarations to Financial Services. School Council Chairs sign a document to confirm the consultation process was followed.

May/June Board will review/approve fee schedules

The board will continue its work in this area. Central administration has been tasked with developing a reporting process that accounts for the fees collected—providing assurance and accountability.

**Lead in water**

With the announcement of the federal government reducing the allowable limit of traces of lead in water, the issue significant media coverage recently. Here is the EIPS context:

Back in 2016, work was being done at a school, which involved testing the water. It was discovered that the amount of lead in the water exceeded the allowable limit. Although not required by law, EIPS decided to have the water supply tested in all its schools and found that 11 exceeded the guidelines 10 parts per billion. Under the new guidelines, 22 schools would have exceeded the limit.

These issues were addressed depending on the situation, e.g., pipes were replaced, water bottle fillers were installed to replace drinking fountains, line flushing protocols were established (because in many cases, it was noted that once lines were flushed, tests results were well below the limit) etc. The cost to the division was approximately $100,000.

(Trustee Report Continued)

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Trustee Report Discussion:

* Parent, Sarah G asked how the school was going to be accountable to parents concerns and/or opinions through the fee approval process. Discussion about a possible survey to parents. Annette agreed to follow up with trustees and schools about the process.

ANNOUCEMENTS: There will not be a meeting in December 2019. The New year meeting will January 14, 2020.

Sherry J. moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at 7:35pm.

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| Secretary  Mills Haven School Council |  | Date of Approval |