



**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 54 (BULKLEY VALLEY)
APRIL 12, 2016
LAKE KATHLYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SMITHERS, B.C.**

PRESENT: Trustees: L. Kearns, B.J. Beaubien, F. Farrell, J. Williams, P. Michell, L. Collingwood

Regrets: D. Hanson (recused due to conflict of interest)

Staff: C. van der Mark – Superintendent of Schools
M. McDiarmid – Assistant Superintendent of Schools
D. Margerm – Secretary Treasurer
E. Hildebrandt, Director of Facilities and Maintenance
B. Kingsmill – Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm

2. TRADITIONAL WELCOME

- Chairperson Kearns acknowledged that we gathered on the home of the Wit'suwit'en Nation, traditional territory of the Gidmt'en.

3. OPENING REMARKS

- Chairperson Kearns welcomed all in attendance.
- Reviewed what has taken place since the January 19th, 2016 Board meeting where the notice to consider closure was issued based on a report from the Secretary Treasurer and Assistant Superintendent.
- Chairperson Kearns outlined process for the evening.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: *It was moved by Trustee Michell and seconded by Trustee Beaubien.*

"That the agenda be accepted as presented."

CARRIED

5. LAKE KATHLYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Superintendent van der Mark:

- The Board's values are used to review this decision; the educational situation for the students is the biggest consideration.
- SD54 has excellent instruction in all of our schools.
- Most services and programs existing at LKS also exist at other elementary schools. Specific unique programs could be accommodated or re-created at other sites.
- There were not viable options to address the facilities issues faced by the district that would assist in the budget shortfall when combined with the decreasing enrolment.
- Staffing reductions across the District are not viable and would be detrimental to students, employees and communities.
- The Board is proud to consistently provide staffing levels that result in good class sizes, while being progressive and recognizing opportunities to grow or expand opportunities.
- The Board must ensure to maximize facility use to provide the best service to all students, today and into the future.

- Recommendation: The facility of Lake Kathlyn Elementary be declared surplus to the educational requirements in the District, and that it be closed effective June 30, 2016.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Williams and seconded by Trustee Farrell.

“The Board proceed with the third reading for the School Closure Bylaw #5 – Lake Kathlyn Elementary School.”

Discussion:

Trustee Kearns:

- Very difficult decision to make as a Trustee and former school Principal.
- LKS does an excellent job, students are well serviced and the parents have done a good job showing how proud they are of the school.
- There are two important issues: 1) Do we have sufficient nearby space in other successful schools? Yes. WPS and TES have room for more students; they are successful, have strong, child-oriented staff and a variety of educational programs. If parents want to maintain the small school atmosphere, consider Telkwa Elementary.
- 2) How do we balance the budget with as little negative impact as possible, on students, families and staff, across the District? Money should be put into people and programs not into unnecessary, aging buildings.

Trustee Beaubien:

- Role of trustee is to make good, informed decisions for SD54 and make sure that education is both easily accessible and equitable to the students of the Bulkley Valley.
- LKS has been subsidized for 13 years and if it stays open, education at LKS will be compromised as well as the students at the secondary level.
- Reducing staff to account for financial losses would not be a wise decision.
- Full confidence in the senior staff and that every avenue has been explored.
- Decision will be based on what makes the most financial impact with the least impact on students and try to find the best solution for the district as a whole.

Trustee Michell:

- Very difficult decision that we are all facing.
- This discussion has been at the board since 2003, when enrolment was higher.
- It affects the quality of education we have to provide to all of our students.
- Appreciate all of the hard work that went into the presentations for the board.
- Know it is a poor decision to close the school, but faced with drastic financial decisions to produce a balanced budget difficult decisions need to be made.
- Proud that we have always had quality education for all of our students. We have pride in giving our students choices. It's the staff that gives the quality education that we want to give to our students.
- All of staff have had an impact on the students that have left our district. It's the staff that makes that change for our students. It's the staff that provided quality education to each child that enters into our district, regardless of where they are at. Their education will be first and foremost if they need to move to another school.
- Trustees are parents too, we know how it effects our children.
- The decision is for what's best for all the children in the district.

Trustee Farrell:

- Thanked all parents, stakeholders and fellow trustees for the information provided.
- There are chronic funding problems in education in this province.
- We have been discussing this for 7+ years. We the loss of funding protection, we have to make tough decision. We have a serious problem. We have had a reduction of \$680k. We have a surplus of facilities.
- What are the options? We have had consultation meetings, options have been presented. They are not feasible right now, due to surplus of facilities and declining enrolment.

- If we have to close LKS where will the students go?
- Attended the Grade 4 feast in Moricetown, all the schools were present, they were as one.
- WPS had a talent show recently. A special needs student danced, all students were attentive and cheering on the student to move and achieve. WPS is a great school, a great school is made of great people.
- Decision is based on budget and student achievement within the budget we have.
- Very confident we can do it. The decision is based on all the information provided.
- It is a positive future. There is hope.

Trustee Collingwood:

- Thanked all the community members for their involvement of this process.
- Small rural schools are highly beneficial for specific types of learning, however, the role of trustee is to produce high quality of education to all students within a balanced budget.
- Proud that in light of declining enrolment the District has been able to offer increased program choice. By keeping low capacity facilities operating, we would need to cut program choice for all students. That is not in the best interest for student learning or academic achievement.
- The transition for the LKS students will be positive experience.
- Agree with Trustee Kearns, we must choose people over buildings.

Trustee Williams:

- Understand the importance of small schools and their place in a community but also understand being fiscally responsible.
- Decision will not only impact LKS but the rest of the district and all students' quality of learning.
- Topic of surplus programs (robotics/jewelry making) was brought up, these program have their place in the system. Every program can show the potential of a student in some way.
- Have to make the decision that impacts the least amount of students and enables educational programming to continue effectively across the district.
- After all the Trustees spoke the Chairperson called the question:

Supported 6
Against 0

CARRIED

**SCHOOL CLOSURE BYLAW #5
Lake Kathlyn Elementary School**

**A BYLAW OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT 54 (BULKLEY VALLEY)
HEREINAFTER CALLED THE "BOARD" TO CLOSE A SCHOOL.**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 73 of the School Act, a board may, subject to the orders of the Minister of Education (hereinafter called the "minister") open, close or re-open a school permanently or for a specified period of time;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to School Opening and Closure Order, Ministerial Order 194/08, closing a school permanently means the closing, for a period exceeding 12 months, of a school building used for purposes of providing an education programme to students;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to said Ministerial Order 194/08, the Board has developed and implemented a policy that includes a public consultation process with respect to permanent school closures and made that policy available to the public;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to said Ministerial Order 194/08, the Board has applied the above-noted policy;

NOW THEREFORE the Board of Education of School District 54 (Bulkley Valley) hereby directs that Lake Kathlyn Elementary School (Facility #05454007), located on 7260 Highway 16 West, Smithers, BC be closed effective June 30, 2016.

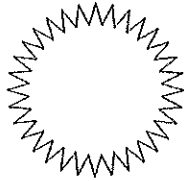
This bylaw may be cited as "School District 54 (Bulkley Valley) School Closure bylaw No. 5. Lake Kathlyn Elementary School".

READ A FIRST TIME THE 19th DAY OF January, 2016.

READ A SECOND TIME THE 19th DAY OF January, 2016.

READ A THIRD TIME, PASSED AND ADOPTED THE 12 DAY OF April, 2016.

NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED
Chairperson of the Board of Education



NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED
Secretary Treasurer

I hereby certify this to be a true and original School District 54 (Bulkley Valley) School Closure bylaw No. 5 adopted by the Board the 12 day of April, 2016.

NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED
Secretary Treasurer

6. CLOSING REMARKS

- Chairperson Kearns thanked all the Board personnel. Thanked the parents for coming to the meeting and showing the respect. He reminded everyone present that the hard work is not yet over, for the sake of the children we need the parents help to make the transition as smooth, stress free and positive as possible.
- The next regularly scheduled School Board meeting will be held on April 19th, 2016 commencing at 7:00 pm at the Moricetown Multi-Plex.

7. ADJORNED

- The Board meeting was adjourned at 7:04pm.

Approved by Les Kearns, Chairperson
of the Board of Education

Dave Margerm
Secretary Treasurer