



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE BOARD TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019

Minutes of the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, held on Tuesday, December 3, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the Father Kenneth Burns C.S.C. Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Meeting Call to Order – John Crocco, Director of Education/CEO/Secretary-Treasurer

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chief Executive Officer and Director of Education John Crocco, in accordance with section 208-4 of the Education Act.

Director Crocco thanked Bishop Bergie, Honorary Chair of the Board, the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School Choir, school and system administrators, special guests, family and friends for attending the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board for 2020.

2. Land Acknowledgement – Jade Bilodeau, Student Trustee

Student Trustee Jade Bilodeau opened the 2019 Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board with a Land Acknowledgement.

3. Opening Prayer – (Most Rev.) Gerard P. Bergie, D.D., Bishop of St. Catharines, Honorary Chair of the Board

Director Crocco informed the guests in attendance that at the Inaugural Meeting of the Board in 2010, the first action of the elected Board of Trustees was to approve a motion naming His Excellency - Bishop Gerard Bergie as the Honourary Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

On behalf of all in attendance, the Director expressed gratitude to Bishop Bergie for his faith filled leadership and support, as well as his valued partnership with Niagara Catholic.

His Excellency then thanked Director Crocco for his kind words and the opportunity to participate in the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board. He expressed appreciation for the partnership between Niagara Catholic and the Diocese of St. Catharines and for the honour of being an Honourary Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Bishop Bergie led the 2019 Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board with a dedicated Advent reflection and prayer.

On behalf of the Board and the students of Niagara Catholic, Director Crocco presented Bishop Bergie with a box of Christmas cards designed from artwork submitted by students of Niagara Catholic.

4. Roll Call

Director Crocco noted that all Trustees and Student Trustees were in attendance.

Trustee	Present	Present Electronically	Absent	Excused
Rhianon Burkholder	✓			
Kathy Burtnik	✓			
Frank Fera	✓			
Larry Huibers	✓			
Daniel Moody	✓			
Leanne Prince	✓			
Dino Sicoli	✓			
Paul Turner	✓			
Student Trustees				
Jade Bilodeau	✓			
Luca DiPietro	✓			

Special Guest:

Honorary Chair: (Most Rev.) **Gerard P. Bergie**, D.D., Bishop of St. Catharines
 Marc DiGirolamo, Board Solicitor

The following staff were in attendance:

John Crocco, Director of Education; **Yolanda Baldasaro**, **Ted Farrell**, **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**, **Frank Iannantuono**, **Pat Rocca**, Superintendents of Education; **Giancarlo Vetrone**, Superintendent of Business & Financial Services; **Scott Whitwell**, Controller of Facilities Services; **Anna Pisano**, Recording Secretary/ Administrative Assistant to Corporate Services

5. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Moody

Seconded by Trustee Burtnik

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the Agenda of the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of December 3, 2019, as presented.

CARRIED

6. **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No Disclosures of Interest were declared with any items on the Agenda of the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board.

7. **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School Choir**

Director Crocco, welcomed the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School Choir, Domenic Massi, Principal, Christopher Boyer, Vice-Principal, Eileen Wilson and Vanessa Dominski, Choir Directors.

The Choir from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School performed three songs for the Board.

Director Crocco, on behalf of Trustees, Senior Staff and everyone present, congratulated and thanked the students of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School for sharing their angelic voices to begin our meeting.

Trustees Fera and Moody joined Director Crocco in presenting the students with Niagara Catholic “Excellence in the Arts” pins to wear proudly with their elementary dress code.

8. **Election Procedures**

Director Crocco reviewed the procedures for the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair in accordance with Section 8 Subsection 4 of the Board By-Laws, asked if there were any questions of the procedures before proceeding and appointed Marc DiGirolamo, Board Solicitor and Superintendent Baldasaro, as scrutineers if required.

9. **Election of Chair**

Director Crocco called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Board.

Moved by Trustee Burkholder

THAT Trustee Huibers be nominated for the position of Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to hold office from December 3, 2019 until the December 2020 Inaugural Meeting of the Board.

Director Crocco asked Trustee Huibers if he wished to stand for the position of Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Trustee Huibers accepted the nomination.

Moved by Trustee Moody

THAT Trustee Fera be nominated for the position of Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to hold office from December 3, 2019 until the December 2020 Inaugural Meeting of the Board.

Director Crocco asked Trustee Fera if he wished to stand for the position of Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Trustee Fera accepted the nomination.

Following three calls for nominations there were no further nominations forthcoming.

Moved by Trustee Burtnik
Seconded by Trustee Prince

THAT the nominations for the position of Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board be closed.

CARRIED

Following the counting of the ballots, a tie was declared. A second vote was taken and was also declared a tie. In compliance with Board By-Laws, the two nominees drew straws for the position of Chair. Straws were drawn alphabetically by last name with the person drawing the long straw elected. Trustee Fera was elected by straw ballot to the position of Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to hold office from December 3, 2019 until the December 2020 Inaugural Meeting of the Board.

Director Crocco turned over the Chairship of the Annual Organization Meeting of the Board to Chair Fera.

10. Election of Vice-Chair

Chair Fera called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Board.

Moved by Trustee Burtnik

THAT Trustee Burkholder be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to hold office from December 3, 2019 until the December 2020 Inaugural Meeting of the Board.

Chair Fera asked Trustee Burkholder if she wished to stand for the position of Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Trustee Burkholder accepted the nomination.

Moved by Trustee Turner

THAT Trustee Sicoli be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to hold office from December 3, 2019 until the December 2020 Inaugural Meeting of the Board.

Chair Fera asked Trustee Sicoli if he wished to stand for the position of Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Trustee Sicoli accepted the nomination.

Following three calls for nominations there were no further nominations forthcoming.

Moved by Trustee Prince
Seconded by Trustee Moody

THAT the nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board be closed.

CARRIED

Following the counting of the ballots, a tie was declared. A second vote was taken and was also declared a tie. In compliance with Board By-Laws, the two nominees drew straws for the position of Vice-Chair. Straws were drawn alphabetically by last name with the person drawing the long straw elected. Trustee Sicoli was elected by straw ballot to the position of Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board to hold office from December 3, 2019 until the December 2020 Inaugural Meeting of the Board.

Moved by Trustee Moody
Seconded by Trustee Burkholder

THAT the ballots for the election of the Vice-Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board be destroyed.

CARRIED

11. Chair's Remarks

A copy of Chair Fera's remarks are attached to the Minutes for information and are posted on the *Board, and My Niagara Catholic* websites.
(Appendix A)

12. Vice-Chair's Remarks

A copy of Vice-Chair Sicoli's remarks are attached to the Minutes for information are posted on the *Board, and My Niagara Catholic* websites.
(Appendix B)

B. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

1. Board Committees

Director Crocco presented the Report on Board Committees, in accordance with Board By-Law 19 which calls for Trustee membership on Board Ad Hoc, Statutory, Standing and Liaison Committees until November 30, 2020.

Director Crocco stated that members to the committees are appointed by the Chair of the Board in consultation with the Vice-Chair of the Board. He asked that Trustees submit their completed form to the Office of the Director of Education by the December 17, 2019 Board Meeting.

In compliance with Board By-laws, the Chair, in consultation with the Vice-Chair will appoint trustees to the various committees of the Board. A report on the recommended names will be presented at the January 14, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting for a recommendation to the January Board meeting for approval of Board committees for 2020.

Moved by Trustee Sicoli
Seconded by Trustee Burkholder

THAT the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve the continuation of the following Ad Hoc Committees for the year 2020:

- Blessed Trinity Catholic Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee
- Denis Morris, Holy Cross, and Saint Francis Catholic Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee
- Growth and Retention Committee
- Lakeshore Catholic Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee
- Notre Dame College Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee
- Saint Michael and Saint Paul Catholic Family of Schools Attendance Area Ad Hoc Committee

CARRIED

C. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION FOR LIFE

D. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Moody
Seconded by Trustee Prince

THAT the December 3, 2019 Annual Organizational Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Minutes of the Annual Organizational Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board held on **December 3, 2019**.

Approved on **December 17, 2019**.

Frank Fera
Chair of the Board

John Crocco
Director of Education/Secretary -Treasurer

CHAIR FERA'S REMARKS

**Annual Organizational Meeting
of the Niagara Catholic District School Board
December 3, 2019**

Excellency Bishop Bergie, fellow trustees, senior staff, ladies and gentlemen:

I would first of all wish to express my gratitude to those trustees who supported me this evening to once again lead this Board.

Those of you who know me fully realize that if issues come before me, I will confront them directly and administer justice to promote the educational welfare of students and staff in the interest of this board. Walking away from issues does not solve problems, but rather complicates them.

Last year, with the assistance of the Vice-Chair and a couple of like-minded trustees, we dedicated our time in bringing the unions aboard to work cooperatively with senior staff in the interest of students – an achievement that no other Chair was able to realize in past years. As a direct result of this effort, the Director and the president of the unions are now working together to solve grievances, saving our board a great deal of money that can be utilized to better serve our students.

Furthermore, we have been told that staff morale has improved, and that our teachers are looking forward to the 2020 school year.

Also, through the leadership of Trustee Turner, a committee is being established to study our enrollment patterns across the system, and make recommendations to the Board. This positive outlook must continue as we embark on a journey to hire a new Director for the coming years.

I would consider this to be a task of paramount importance. Moreover, since our system is still somewhat scarred with wounds subsequent to the lockout, the new Director, apart from the many leadership skills that he/she brings to the Board, the one quality that must undeniably stand out is the ability to heal relationships between the Board and the teachers.

Accountability and transparency will continue to be priorities. To conclude, I will continue to exercise an open door policy in the interest of Niagara Catholic and assure you, once again, and admonish those sitting around this table that hypocrisy will not be tolerated and that you must be loyal to your oath of office and in the words of Saint John Paul II, and I quote, “If you want peace, work for justice.”

APPENDIX B

VICE-CHAIR SICOLI'S REMARKS

Annual Organizational Meeting of the Niagara Catholic District School Board December 3, 2019

Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher and mystic, delighted in telling the story of a revered rabbi in Jerusalem. One day, a young student of the rabbi came running into the Rabbi's study.

"Rabbi, Rabbi! It's true! The Messiah has finally come!" the student announced.

The rabbi calmly rose from his chair and walked over to the window. He looked carefully up and down the street. He then said to his excited friend that nothing seemed to have changed, and he quietly returned to his work.

If the rabbi in Buber's story were to look out of his window during our celebration of the Messiah's birth, he would certainly experience many different things: he would see lights, decorations and greenery, he would hear the songs of "joy to the world" and "peace on earth," he would be greeted with smiles and good wishes. But what would the rabbi see out of his window on December 26 or January 18 or in late February or on a hot day next July?

But the Messiah has come! What happened on that Palestinian night when a son was born to a carpenter and his young bride was a watershed moment in the history of humanity, the first light of a new morning, for all men and women of goodwill. But has the Messiah's coming made a difference? Has our world become a better place since the Son of God walked among us? Has anything changed?

May Christ's coming this Christmas be the beginning of a profound difference in our homes and hearts, transforming our attitudes and perspectives in the compassion and mercy of God.

I ask the God of compassion to bless my fellow trustees, myself, Senior Administration, our educational leaders. May this evening and our prayerful observance of this Advent season be the beginning of a profound difference in our Niagara Catholic School System, in our homes and in our hearts. May the dawning of your Christ be a new day of justice for all who are oppressed and rejected; may his coming usher in an eternal day of peace among all.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve you as Vice –Chair. Thank YOU