

Committee to look at District Services Board representation

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The Recorder

MINDEMOYA—An ad hoc committee is being set up by the Manitoulin Sudbury District Services Board (MSDSB) to look at board representation.

"The board has agreed that an ad hoc committee will be set up to look at apportionment-representation on the board," said Fern Dominelli, CAO of the Manitoulin DSB, after a board meeting last Thursday. Prior to the board regular meeting the annual general meeting of the board was held in Killarney earlier in the week.

"The board has agreed that each area (within the DSB) will have one member on the committee to review the representation model," said Mr. Dominelli.

"We want to look at restructuring the seats and representative structure of the DSB Board," said board member Derek Stephens. "The current representation structure was put in place about 1998 and in every term this issue has been brought up by an area or municipality to look at this." He said the ad hoc committee will include one representative from the seven DSB zones.

"The board is not necessarily in favour of changing the representation structure,

but we agreed an ad hoc committee should be formed to look at it," said Mr. Stephens. "The original representation was done based on populations. I'm always leery about making changes in things like this. If it ain't broke don't change it."

Mr. Stephens added that the ad hoc committee and the work it will carry out will be paid by the DSB municipalities, not the board itself.

Mr. Dominelli had explained previously that the Sudbury East Municipal Association (SEMA), which includes Markstay, Warren, St. Charles, French River, and Killarney, had asked to make a presentation to the board in April looking for additional representation on the board. Currently SEMA has four seats on the board and would like this increased to four.

Mr. Dominelli told the annual general meeting, "The total number of board members for each of the 10 District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) is set out in the DSSAB Act and Regulations. Any increase or decrease in the number of board members or any change to the boundaries of an area requires a change in the provincial regulations. In the past, the province has clearly stated they would not

consider a regulation change regarding the board member distribution unless there is a clear double majority support for the requested change."

Mr. Dominelli said there are no provincial guidelines, regulations or legislation that dictates or provides guidance on how to develop a board representation model. The DSSAB steering committee hired the Randolph Group to develop a board representation model in 1998. The model developed by the Randolph Group was approved by the DSSAB Steering committee and by a double majority vote as defined by DSSAB Act regulations in 1998.

The current board representation model is based on population. "In 1998 the total population was 31,977 and there is on average one board member assigned per 2,284 in population," said Mr. Dominelli. He explained the current representation model includes Espanola with a population of 5,306 and two board members; Sables-Spanish Rivers, Baldwin, Nairn and Hyman with a population of 4,244 and two board members; French River, Killarney, Markstay-Warren, St. Charles with three board members and a population of 6,305; Chapleau with a population of 2,766 and one

board member; Billings, Burpee and Mills, Cockburn Island, Gordon and Barrie Island and Gore Bay with a population of 2,185 and one board member; Assiginack, Central Manitoulin, Northeast Town, and Tehkummah with a population of 5,096 and two board members; as well as Territories without Municipal Organization (TWOMO) with a total population of 6,075 and three board members.

"Over the past 14 years there have been many discussions at the board level around the current representation model," said Mr. Dominelli. "The DSB 2009-2011 strategic plan recommendation #209 states that the issue of representation be discussed at a special meeting of the DSB, and was reviewed by the strategic planning committee of the board in May, 2009. The conclusion was that municipal representation is appropriate based on the populations within the organized municipalities in the board's jurisdiction."

As Mr. Dominelli told the board, SEMA is asking the board to revisit this issue. They have stated the selection of board members should not rely solely on population but must include the financial contributions made by a municipality or group of municipalities.

He pointed out the DSB is made up of seven separate areas, and each area will send the names of who they want on the committee by June 15 and report back to the board by June 28.