

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

**Members/:**

**Trustees** J. Ascough (Student Trustee)  
E. Crawford  
L. French  
W. Garrod  
D. Jackson  
T. Mahoney  
K. McGregor  
P. Murray  
A. Ross  
S. Ruttan (Chair)  
W. Sanderson (Student Trustee)

**Officials:** M. Babcock, Supervising Principal  
P. Babin, Superintendent of Business Services  
R. Bailey, Facilitator  
K. Burra, Superintendent of Education  
C. Downie, Planning Officer  
B. Fraser-Stiff, Superintendent of Education - regrets  
D. Fowler, Manager of Facility Services  
S. Gillam, Supervising Principal  
A. Labrie, Superintendent of Human Resources  
A. McDonnell, Supervising Principal  
J. Silver, Supervising Principal  
D. Rantz, Director of Education

**Recorder:** L. Strange, Records Management Coordinator

Chair Ruttan stated:

"Good evening Trustees, staff and those who are joining us this evening as delegations here at Yarker Family School, and those observing from the gymnasium at Odessa Public School. My name is Suzanne Ruttan. In my capacity as Vice Chair of the Board, I will be chairing tonight's School Enrolment/School Capacity (SE/SCC) Committee of the Whole Board Meeting to hear delegations concerning the *Final Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School*, as designated by the Chair of the Board under *Board Policy 7, Role of the Chair - Section 3.3.0 and Board Policy 8 - Role of the Vice-Chair - Section 1.5.0*.

Before we go any further, I will ask Director of Education Debra Rantz to share our acknowledgement of territory."

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

Director Rantz read the Acknowledgement of Territory:

"The Limestone District School Board is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. We acknowledge their enduring presence on this land, as well as the presence of Métis, Inuit and other First Nations from across Turtle Island.

We honour their cultures and celebrate their commitment to this land."

Chair Ruttan stated:

"Thank you, Director Rantz.

Here is the process for tonight's meeting so there is no confusion, or misunderstanding about what will occur tonight. This is a meeting of the School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee to hear delegations on the *Final Staff Report Regarding Yarker Elementary School and Odessa Public School*. Although we are in a school, this classroom will function as if it were the Board Room at the Education Centre. Approved delegations will be invited to present to Trustees in this room according to the order with which they were supplied ahead of tonight's meeting. They will await their turn in the classroom across the hall where they, as well as members of the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee, can view tonight's proceedings live. The presentations taking place in this Boardroom are being broadcast via live feed across the hall, as well as into the gymnasium at Odessa where observers were invited to attend. This meeting would normally occur in the Boardroom at the Education Centre, however, the meeting was moved to Yarker at the requests of parents. Due to space and accessibility limitations at Yarker, we had to unfortunately split our delegations and gallery.

I would like to thank the staff of both schools for accommodating our Board meeting tonight. Thanks to school, facilities and information technology staff for their diligent efforts to make arrangements for tonight – while ensuring the spaces are classroom-ready for tomorrow's classes at both schools.

Moving on to the process for delegations: Tonight's meeting will hear only from the approved delegations, and is not designed or intended to receive broader public input. As per Board Policy 9, delegations will have five minutes to make your presentation to Trustees. The presentations will be timed to five minutes. Manager Fowler will alert presenters with a yellow card when you have one minute remaining so that you may wrap up. He will then hold a red card when your time is up.

Following each delegation, Trustees may ask clarification questions ONLY to the content of the presentation. Because you have already received the presentations in advance for your review, we will be allotting five minutes for Trustee questions. Trustees, it is not necessary to ask questions of the presenters if there is no clarification needed.

I will point out that we have a lot of presenters tonight – 17 in total – and in order to respect and honour each and every presenter we will keep to the timelines as outlined. We will take a short recess at the half-way point. In keeping with this schedule, we should wrap up just before 9:30 p.m.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

I will also point out that senior staff will not be responding to questions tonight – from presenters or from Trustees. Senior staff had their opportunity to present their report and recommendation on April 24. Tonight is an opportunity for Trustees to hear directly from the delegations. There will not, however, be discussion by Trustees of this matter. We are here to listen.

With that, we will begin with the first delegation.”

**Action Items:**

**1. Delegation presentations concerning the Pupil Accommodation Review for Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School**

Jon Bennett & Jenny Munroe

J. Monroe spoke to the issue of low enrolment at Yarker Family School, and what the PARC sees as a biasedly low projection of enrolment numbers for future school years by the LDSB. She stated that the release of the Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) in the fall of 2016 led to parents choosing to send their children to other schools. When the PARC surveyed families who had chosen to send their children to schools other than Yarker Family School the top three reasons for the decision were to keep siblings together, to attend French programming, or a lack of child care available in the Yarker area.

J. Monroe also spoke to proposed Alternative Option of adding special programming to Yarker Family School and the response by the LDSB that the programming would be costly to implement and run, by suggesting that the LDSB use the skills and knowledge of staff that already teach in LDSB.

J. Bennett spoke to the PARC's proposed changes to busing and boundary changes, stating that improvements to school enrolment for Yarker Family School could be made by tweaking the bus planning application program.

Trustee Ross inquired about the parent response regarding lack of child care in the Yarker area. J. Munroe responded that there are no organized centres, and only three daycare providers in the area, which makes before and after care difficult for some families.

Trustee Ross inquired how many kids the proposed revised bus routes would capture. J. Bennet answered that the numbers are in the final staff report. Adding stops on McQuay Rd was not addressed in the Final Staff Report, and this would increase student number at Yarker. McQuay Rd. is only 5 kms to Yarker, but those children currently go to Enterprise.

Ace Kilgour

J. Kilgour spoke to her son's Asperger's experience prior to attending Yarker Family School:

“Hello, my name is Ace Kilgour and I am 5 years old. I live in Yarker with my parents, my brother and my two sisters. I have been hearing that our school might close and I wanted to share a little bit of my story.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

Most of my life I have heard a word to describe me called Autism. When I was very little I saw many doctors and they told me I had Aspergers. I remembered that word because it sounds like hamburgers. I don't know what it means but I have heard people say that I am shy, that I am quiet, that I am anxious and a little different. Mom just says that I am magic.

Before I went to school I was very nervous all the time. I counted my fingers over and over. I hit my ears because the world was too loud. When the world got too much for me I would scream and scream and mom and dad would have to wrap me up in a blanket so I couldn't hurt myself. I did not like to be touched and wouldn't let my parents hug me. I did not like looking at people and I cared much more about my toys than people. My two safe places were my home and my gramma's house and they were the only places I liked to go. My parents would try to take me to restaurants but I would shake and sweat and they would have to leave before the food came. I was too afraid to swim or ride a bike. I couldn't handle going to most places because it was too loud for my ears and too confusing for my brain.

And one day my mom asked me if I would like to go to Yarker Family school, the same school that she went to when she was a little girl. So I went to visit the school. I was nervous but the teacher didn't make me shake her hand. She told me they have ducklings in the spring and that made me excited because ducks are my favourite animal. The next time I came to visit she gave me a book. It was filled with pictures of the school, my class, my bus and even the bathroom. I spent that whole summer memorizing the book.

When I first came to Yarker school I didn't speak. I didn't speak for many months but no one made me feel bad. No one tried to hug or touch me and they seemed to just like me for who I was. The teacher gave me a pair of headphones to use when the world became too loud. She showed me a quiet spot where I could go if I was feeling overwhelmed.

The fall turned into the winter and the winter into the spring and I don't know when, but I forgot to count my fingers all the time. I was talking and meeting people. This is where I met my best friend David. He talked a lot and loved to hug. He taught me that a hug is not as scary as I thought. I started to hug my mom at home and at first she would cry a lot because she said she had been waiting a long time to feel my hugs.

Yarker Family School had become one of my safe places. And during the summer after JK I noticed that none of the other places seemed as scary. The teachers at the school had made me stronger and braver. I learned to use my tools and breathe. I went to a restaurant and it was awesome! I swam and the water was beautiful.

This year I am in Senior Kindergarten and I don't need to be reminded to look my teacher in the eye. I have learned to use my voice and I don't feel so trapped anymore. I still don't like to dance but I do love French. Ms. Chapman says I am un bon garcon.

If Yarker school closes I will be sent on a long bus ride and I will be in a much bigger class. Quiet children often fall through the cracks, but Yarker school doesn't let their students fall. I would ask that you please think of a way to keep this school open. My brain

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

is wired a little differently and maybe I could even help. This is the place where I learned to be more than just that A word, it's the place where I could just finally be myself."

Jill Kilgour

J. Kilgour stated:

"My name is Jill Kilgour. I am a resident of Yarker, a mother to four children, and I am a farmer.

I understand that most of the trustees here today are not from a rural background but I am going to start by asking you a rhetorical question: Where would you rather eat dinner tomorrow night? Aqua Terra, Grecos or Chien Noir, or would you rather have a box of nuggets from McDonald's? Very few people would choose McDonald's over an amazing home cooked or restaurant cooked meal. McDonald's is for people who are in a rush. They want it cheap, fast and easy.

I raise cattle, pigs and poultry for my family to eat. And I'm going to let you in on a secret: it's harder than buying beef at Walmart. It's not cheaper and it's more work. The bottom line is not great, but the result is priceless. Ethically raised food, whole meals and top quality for myself and my family.

I'm not trying to sell you a side of beef tonight. The point is, that what is happening to our education system (exactly what happened forty years ago to our farming community). The desire to make food cheaper and easier quickly overshadowed quality, sustainability and even taste.

Today our education system is being driven by the bottom line. Although there is capital funding to build new schools we can't seem to fix our current schools. Trustees are put in a terrible position where you have to think of finances over children.

But do you really? The current system is treating our families like they are the same as they were 100 years ago. The system is trying to fill the same number of seats in school when people are having 1 child instead of 5 and it is setting schools up for failure. Especially rural schools. The school board and trustees need to start thinking of a new formula and this involves thinking outside the box.

One of the alternative options that has been proposed by the PARC is a community sharing center, run from the currently unused kindergarten classroom. There are a few great things about this option:

First off, it reduces the capacity of the school but also can easily be moved if the school enrollment increases. This would allow a grace period for enrollment to climb as one of the other options, such as Outdoor Ed, is taking off.

Secondly, it supports the community hub concept and at the same time generates funds for the board. All additional funds go into the students which only further offsets costs. This means that instead of fundraising or worse, teachers dipping into their own pockets, that this thrift shop could directly invest back into the students and this school.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

Third, this sharing center option retains the amazing investment of \$650,000 for the FDK and please do not dismiss this. Our tax dollars paid for this addition and it would be financially irresponsible to sell this building so quickly after investing in these walls.

Lastly, this option keeps our smallest children closest to home.

The sharing center initiative is strongly supported by the township and the community. It will be initiated and run by community members and its main purpose is to keep the doors of Yarker Family School open.

The senior staff commented that this option would be more viable if this school was closed. At first I laughed but quickly I started to cry. I cried because if the school closes our community withers. Families move away and businesses follow. I cried because there will be no one to run a community sharing center if the school is gone because who will come and buy those used toys, books and clothes? In Yarker for 170 years this school has been our heart. If our heart stops, our town dies.

The option of the community sharing center is not idealistic it is evolutionary! It is a wonderful way to preserve the way of life at Yarker Family School while saving some money. As the township has already expressed, this option could be used as a model for other schools struggling with excess space. Instead of spending money on PARs we should be spending time thinking of more ideas like this to fill our schools and utilize these spaces.

Because, Trustees ... our children are not chicken nuggets. It has been said that children are the future and if we want our future to be bright we need people who gather together to create solutions. The Yarker community, parents and Stone Mills township want to create solutions, we want to keep schools open and see education evolve. We are simply asking that you join us. On June 5th please remember that this is not fast food education, our children are our most precious citizens, please vote to keep our school open."

Trustee Mahoney asked for a copy of J. Kilgour's speaking notes.

Harris Ivens

H. Ivans spoke to the PARC's proposal for implementing a French Immersion program at Yarker Family School, as students in the catchment area are currently being lost to French programs in other schools.

He also suggested addressing the low enrolment through bringing back a portable, or developing a partnership with other schools for the continuation of French programming begun at Yarker.

Trustees had no questions.

Christie Jefferson & Joanne McAlpine - Yarker Colebrook & District Community Association

C. Jefferson and J. McAlpine expressed their support of the recommendations from the PARC, specifically, increasing to grade 5, extending the boundaries, and enforcing AP 305: Student Transfer.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

They also spoke to the ongoing provincial Rural Schools Engagement sessions, suggesting a moratorium on school closures in the LDSB.

It was stated that the PARC Alternate Options report should have been presented at the April 24, 2017 School Enrolment/School Capacity meeting, instead of being included as an appendix to the meeting package.

Trustee Jackson asked the presenters to give their opinion of the PAR process itself.

The presenters answered that it would be a better process by including research on the socio-economic impact on the community where the school proposed for closure is located. It was further stated that the community felt there was no communication from the Board, and that the process did not work as a partnership.

Wayne Goodyear

W. Goodyear stated:

"My comments will refer to my Report titled "A Broader Context" designed to provide perspective on the Yarker/Odessa Review. As a result of my Municipal Freedom of Information Request I acquired VFA Extracts showing actual expenditures to L.D.S.B. elementary schools delivered March 10, 2017. On April 28, the Friday before the submission deadline, I was offered a TMA file on work orders for Yarker.

Two aspects of this process are alarming. First, both these data sets are electronically stored and could have been made available to the PARC and to Trustees months ago. (neither of these documents reveal the total expenditures I had asked for.)

Secondly, The April 28 letter gives the following admission:  
"Unfortunately, a single folder is not available in our financial system to provide the costs of maintenance work at a specific school site, such as Yarker Family School. Our financial system is designed to collect and report school operations and maintenance expenses on a consolidated basis and not on a school by school basis."

Obviously, the problem is that closures happen on a school-by-school basis. The above admission might help Director Rantz with her confusion over what the community's position is on support for Yarker. The admission above also casts doubt on the accuracy of my fee estimates (\$126,000 for all schools, \$11,000 for Yarker). If the data is unavailable then how could an estimate be prepared?

How is it possible that that the Trustees voted on a flawed Initial Staff Report and now are asked to close a school without financial accounting being available for expenditures at that school. This means that all other previous closures have taken place under the same circumstances.

Remember that my observations are based on a small portion of what the Board spends to maintain its schools. Last year there was an additional \$14 million spent from other grants but the accounting for these expenditures are unavailable. Please ask staff for a full accounting of this money as some of it may have been spent on Odessa and Yarker. In fact, you should not proceed without this data.

Now I'll highlight a few of the features that emerge from my research.

From Watson Report Analysis Pg. 7: This spreadsheet identifies which schools were candidates for "prohibitive to repair" and, of those, which received adequate funding to survive and which continued to be at risk. Seven Frontenac County schools received funding that improved their F.C.I.

From the "By Family" Spreadsheet, Pg. 8: The 2007 Watson Report indicates that the Ernestown and Napanee Families had total Renewal Needs of over \$31 million and actual spending to address these needs of \$1.53 million. Data for the 2012 to 2016 period from VFA Extracts shows Total Needs of \$36.77 million and actual spending of \$5.13 million including roofing costs, and \$2.65 million when roofing is excluded. (7.2%) Remember this is after liabilities were reduced by over \$6 million through the closure of Westdale, Langford and Sandhurst.

Compare these numbers to the levels of actual spending on Frontenac County Families. From the Rural vs Urban Spreadsheet, Pgs. 12 to 14: Note information on individual schools as opposed to families. Of the fifteen schools receiving the least support ten are in L. and A. County. Eight are rural schools.

From the Income Matrix, Pg. 20: This display deepens concerns as it adds median family income as an illuminating factor in viewing closure policies. Note how many of the lowest income areas may lose their schools.

From The "By EQAO" Spreadsheet, Pg. 21 to 22: This data illustrates that achievement in the face of adversity counts for nothing in the school closure process. Six of the schools at risk of closure achieved at or above the Board EQAO average, in some cases, in spite of adverse circumstances. Note that Yarker is the highest in achievement and the lowest in support.

From "The Maintenance Matrix By Student", Pgs. 23 to 24: This data reveals that rural students in targeted rural schools received \$260 less per capita than those on targeted urban schools.

From "School Profile", Pg. 25: This data indicates that of the 15 schools at risk of closure, only one hosts a special program. Collins Bay has an Autism program.

In conclusion, the lack of financial data makes it impossible for Trustees to make an informed decision. The missing information could actually dispel the fears of bias and discrimination that emerge from my preliminary analysis of the data I have been able to assemble. Copies of my Report will be sent to local County Councils and Provincial agencies."

Trustee Jackson asked Mr. Goodyear to explain the problems he faced during his information requests.

W. Goodyear stated that the Initial Staff Report didn't include a comparative table in the Yarker section for actual expenditures, and that he encountered difficulty it accessing this information.



**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

W. Goodyear further stated that the liabilities listed against the school have not been updated to include recent facility improvements, including the new septic system.

Gail Knowles

G. Knowles stated:

"In all the documents produced by the school board, its consultants and the ministry, test scores and the effects of closing a school on childrens' mental health are never mentioned.

The year the Grade 3 standardized testing was conducted, 10 students were tested. Yarker Family School pupils scored highest of all of the schools across the Limestone District School Board. While the small number of students being tested has been dismissed by Director Rantz, it is the same number as were tested at Collins Bay and Centreville Public Schools and two children below the number in Sydenham and Tamworth Public Schools.

If closing the Yarker Family School is about the lack of programs at the school, it would be interesting to see what programs are missing from the curriculum that would help students there achieve better results.

Instead of closing successful schools like Yarker why not study our school, find what is successful and implement that best practice in your other primary schools.

Besides the academic advantages there are many reasons why children enjoy attending the Yarker Family School. They have a positive experience with nature, also known these days as Green Time, and they have full access to the school's grassed playground and the equipment provided by the community. Students at our school have the full support of their parents, teachers and the community. Everyone feels they are members of a warm and welcoming family.

When the only school a primary youngster has ever known is closed, the child must be allowed the time to mourn the loss of familiar surroundings and friends. Pupils in this situation don't learn well and risk depression, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, alienation, low self-esteem, insecurity, and social defeat. The loss is acutely felt, something that is remembered long into adulthood. Reluctance to go to school is not a good way to start an academic career.

Professor Scott Davies of McMaster University noted in an article in the Toronto Star:

'Children who switch schools somewhere between kindergarten and Grade 3 not do as well on Ontario's standardized tests, a study of the province's own data shows.'

We all want the same things: to keep our children safe and secure, to keep them close by so we can keep an eye on them, to allow them to be youngsters as long as possible, and to instill a strong sense of belonging and community. Above all, we want our kids to have a first class education. All of this is available right now at the Yarker Family School.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

Director Rantz is in a hurry to have your decision right away. What's the rush? You've already delayed the review of the rest of the schools in Stone Mills Township. Why not delay your decision about the Yarker Family School, too?

What about looking at all of the schools in Stone Mills Township together? Boundaries can be rationalized and special programs added if needed so our rural children can attend school close to where they live. Make and implement a plan for the township as a whole, and keep the per pupil funding in our community.

If your job really is to balance the budget, join us as we petition the Minister of Education to change the Harper-era funding model that rewards school boards that close schools in good condition that are the right size for children to receive a first class education.

In 2016 only 20% of capital applications were funded because the ministry no longer recognizes closed schools as creating eligibility for new school grants. The closure of the Yarker Family School would generate the least amount of savings of any closure contemplated or executed by the Limestone District School Board. It is unclear why the Yarker school is being reviewed at all since the Ministry of Education has stated it has "a preference for refurbishing buildings rather than building new ones."

Help us press the ministry for a rural schools' policy so parents can continue to have the freedom to choose to move to or remain in our rural area. Stone Mills Township is very diverse. You can ensure there always will be a good mix of urban and rural families by keeping the Yarker Family School open.

The Yarker Family School's achievements are exemplary. It deserves to be encouraged, supported and respected by the Limestone District School Board."

Trustee Jackson asked if Ms. Knowles felt the LDSB should have dealt with all schools in the area at the same time. G. Knowles answered that she felt there should have been a plan for the whole Township.

Dr. Lori Forester

L. Forester offered her support of the PARC and the Alternate Options they had proposed. She also expressed her disappointed in the Final Staff Report.

She stated that smaller schools are the best for students as they offer the opportunity to amend programming to individual student needs, give teachers the best environment to perform in, provide better quality education, and allow for greater parent involvement.

She further stated that Yarker Family School was the best in the Board.

L. Forester offered the following suggestion to the Board:

- sustain existing small schools especially in areas like Stone Mills Township where the annual income is lower than the provincial average (census statistics)
- devote provincial grant money to maintaining small schools in good condition

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

- acknowledge and design for a maximum school size that retains the close family atmosphere and high scholastic achievement of a small school
- when considering the future of a school, consider socio-economic status as well as age of the building, number of students, scholastic achievement, student/teacher ratio, etc.
- support schools in small communities where there is only one school
- prepare and implement a rural schools policy that acknowledges and accommodates the significant differences between rural and urban life and the challenges faced by rural students

Trustee Mahoney asked what data Dr. Forester was referring to when she stated that she felt Yarker Family School was the best in the Board. She replied that she meant the standardized testing at grade 3 (EQAO).

Trustee Jackson asked if Dr. Forester was criticizing the provincial policy on school closures. L. Forested answered that she was critical of the provincial policy, and invited the LDSB to write a letter to the Ministry to ask for a moratorium on school closures.

Marilyn Fenwick

M. Fenwick stated that she was the product of a one and two-room school environment. She further stated:

"My name is Marilyn Fenwick. I am a parent, grandparent, community volunteer and a retired Registered Nurse. I live in the village of Enterprise, the Township of Stone Mills.

Firstly, I would like to extend my appreciation to the members of the PAR, Limestone District School Board Trustees and staff members, our Township Councilors as well to members of the public for having dedicated hours to this process.

Though we are here to address most specifically the effects on the Yarker community most of what I am saying tonight applies to many rural areas.

Selfishly, I am concerned about my ability to age in place in a ghost town. Studies have proven that school closures have caused the population to move closer to areas where there are schools. That means fewer young people to purchase real estate, let alone live close by parents and grandparents, or, for that matter, simply to have supportive neighbours.

I know personally, that often the first question asked, when someone is considering a home purchase is: Where is the school?

Business does not start up nor stay when no one lives there to use services or buy their products. This then leads to fewer places of local employment, private and public day care, butcher shop, grocery store, agriculture etc. sending everyone to towns and cities. Urban areas become crowded with less affordable housing where more likelihood of ghetto-like neighbourhoods become the norm. Rural areas, on the other hand, are more likely to support an array of people from all economic backgrounds where children and adults freely mingle and support one another.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

This last is seen in local volunteers providing playground equipment, ball/soccer fields, hockey arenas and coaching for these activities, volunteer led church (i.e. music) and camps, sports and outdoor activities, including community cleanup days. It is much easier for every child, not just a privileged few, to have the opportunity to be included since volunteers keep costs lower and activities are not kilometers from home.

I would especially like to mention the volunteer firefighters in Yarker (also Enterprise, Tamworth and Newburgh and Roblin) who are the first responders in almost any emergency situation. Some of their training is actually done by volunteer persons whose professions qualify them to do so. These volunteers come from every walk of life and every socioeconomic group. In rural areas, children see the importance first hand of this volunteerism and often experience it as their parent may well be one. This is a life lesson in the idea that not everyone needs to be well paid monetarily for their efforts. This type of volunteer can be of tremendous benefit also to the urban dwellers as they pass through to their recreational activities.

Yarker, also, uniquely has the Cataraqui Trail passing through it (as does Newburgh). This trail is partially cared for by volunteers from the Yarker based snowmobile club, the Lennox and Addington Ridge Runners. This is enjoyed by, not just locals, but many city dwellers as well.

I can speak personally to all of this as my husband was a volunteer firefighter for years and, I, a volunteer dispatcher. He remains an associate member assisting with fund raising. As well, we are remain members of the L&A Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club, and our local community group which supports the playing field, an outdoor skating rink, to which the school children can and do walk to for outdoor activities etc. I also volunteer at the school and for my church. Most of this has been done while working at our regular jobs and raising a family.

The same is true for all the Yarker area neighbourhood volunteer groups.

I wonder how much in actual dollar cost it would take to replace say, for instance, just the emergency responders if these volunteers disappear since those particular people tend to be young with families who need schools and jobs.

Could this climb to the hundreds of thousands of dollars in the next several years? These people are essential services, so must be replaced in some manner whether volunteer or fully paid professionals. The comfort here is that these dollars will not come from school board budgets but from fire services, health care. municipalities etc.

As a community dies there is no longer this life blood of younger persons to support these volunteer positions. I strongly urge you to consider the future cost to all of us, socially and economically as you deliberate the closure of Yarker Family School."

The Trustees had no questions for this presenter.

Robin Hutcheon

R. Hutcheon spoke to her background as a Parent Council and Parent Involvement Committee member.

She expressed her opinion that EQAO scores are very important, and disagreed with the Director's statement that test scores can't be compared between schools.

R. Hutcheon expressed concerns that Yarker students would face bullying, and exposure to violence and drugs if moved to a larger elementary school. She further expressed her disappointment over Yarker Family School Council being combined with Odessa, feeling that Yarker does not get adequate consideration.

R. Hutcheon also expressed concerns over the ride times produced by Tri-Board student transportation for current Yarker students to be driven to Odessa Public School.

Trustee Ross asked if R. Hutcheon considered Odessa to be an urban school. R. Hutcheon replied that she felt it was 'more urban' than Yarker, and that the classification of an urban school can be subjective based on the environment a person comes from.

Eric Smith (Reeve) & John Wise (Deputy Reeve) - Stone Mills Township Council

Deputy Smith thanked the LDSB for the opportunity to speak, and acknowledged the difficult situations school boards and municipalities face while balancing financial constraints. He further stated that the council had found the school closure process difficult, and that their focus had been on the possible closure of Yarker Family School. He expressed his hope that the LDSB would engage in further discussions with the Stone Mills Township over the possible closure of other area schools.

Deputy Reeve Wise spoke to the three Community Partnership meetings that had occurred during the Yarker-Odessa PAR process; September 28, 2016, January 23, 2017 and March 29, 2017. He stated that in response to these meetings Stone Mills Township staff were directed to prepare reports that could assist the Board in their decision.

Deputy Reeve Wise stated that the Council had contracted Doyletec to prepare a report on the economic and social changes the Township could incur if the process moved forward. The Township Council has also passed a municipal resolution seeking a moratorium on school closures that was forwarded to Minister Hunter.

Trustee Jackson asked for clarification on what the Township is suggesting. Deputy Reeve Wise replied that the Stone Mills Township Council would like the decision to close Yarker Family School to be deferred until the rest of the schools in Stone Mills are dealt with.

Trustee Ross asked for clarification on the offer of \$10,000 for use by the school. Deputy Reeve Wise replied that the money would be offered to help cover the rent for a Community Sharing Centre.

Trustee Mahoney asked if the Township had been satisfied with the engagement process. Deputy Reeve Wise stated that he was not satisfied, and felt that there been some misunderstanding on the part of the Township, as they hadn't realized their input would be required at the beginning of the process.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

Bryan Brown

B. Brown spoke to several statements made by Director Rantz at the April 24, 2017 School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee meeting, stating his opinion that he felt the Trustees were being directed to close the school.

B. Brown provided his views on potential missed opportunities for significant budgetary savings, specifically that the closure of Odessa Public School would be a better decision for the PAR. He acknowledged that due to the current 4276 vacant spaces in the Board that schools must be closed.

Trustee Jackson asked if Mr. Brown was suggesting that the Board should have conducted a broader analysis and data collection. B. Brown answered that he feels there is more than just the one option in this PAR process, and that the senior staff should have investigated scenarios beyond closing Yarker Family School. He further stated that the Board should expand the scope of its process and think outside the box. There is capacity within the system, with openings in Bath, Fairfield, and other Stone Mills rural schools that could accommodate students from Odessa if it were closed.

B. Brown stated that the Board should reject the FSR and re-examine options for better financial savings.

Eric DePoe

E. DePoe stated that he did not feel the PAR process had been procedurally fair, and that there had not been adequate public consultation.

E. DePoe stated that the library attached to Yarker Family School had been built in partnership with the LDSB, but that the potential closure of the school had not been discussed with the same transparency. He also stated that he did not feel that information requests had been answered adequately or in a timely manner.

E. DePoe stated that he felt that LDSB had not satisfied the legal requirements for school boards during this PAR process.

The Trustees had no questions for this delegate.

Roberta Lamb

R. Lamb stated that MPP Clark had recently asked for a moratorium on school closures, a request that Minister Hunter did not answer. She stated that due to the ongoing Rural Engagement Sessions with the Ministry of Education that the LDSB should defer the PAR for Yarker Family School.

R. Lamb stated that the Final Staff Report contained information that she felt should have been in the ISR. She also stated that there have been ongoing problems with the PAR process.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

R. Lamb stated that Trustees answer to the community, not the Ministry of Education.

R. Lamb quoted from the article 'School closures in the Modern Era:

'Continuing to make determinations regarding the closure of schools in rural and remote communities without any study of the consequences of this activity - including the potential exacerbation of the hollowing out of these communities - is not good policy making.'

Trustee Jackson asked if R. Lamb felt that the complexity of providing information reduced the ability of the PAR to produce alternate options. R. Lamb stated that Board staff and Trustees took more time in the PARC meetings than the PAR members, and that requests for information were not addressed quickly enough.

Beverly Trachy

B. Trachy spoke to the transportation section in the Final Staff Report, specifically appendix R3. She felt the data was incorrect because it had included in-boundary students only. She noted that many schools have a portion of their population made up of out-of-boundary students, including Odessa Public school.

B. Trachy questioned the proposed routes developed by Tri-Board Student Transportation. She stated when she has called Gord Taylor, CEO of Tri-Board, that he would not clarify the information in the report.

Trustee Jackson asked if Ms. Trachy was suggesting a move to hard school boundaries, i.e that students couldn't move to another school out of their boundary area.

B. Trachy replied that she wasn't suggesting that, but that she didn't think there'd been a fair evaluation of bus ride times.

Trustee Ross asked for clarification on the conversation with Tri-Board, specifically how forthcoming or not they had been. B. Trachy answered that she has asked if Tri-Board had tracked the actual location of students into the routes, and that the response was that it was a political situation, and Tri-Board didn't want to be involved.

Deborah Richmond & Joyce Bierma - Yarker District Community Association

D. Richmond provided an overview on the history of the village of Yarker, and the area school.

D. Richmond also expressed her disappointment about the potential loss of the library, due to the closure of Yarker Family School.

J. Bierma stated that she felt there was a need for a closer look at the situation, and asked that the Board reconsider the suggestion to close the school.

The Trustees had no questions for the delegates.

**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

Sandra Goodyear

S. Goodyear introduced herself as a former LDSB teacher, and a long-time resident of Yarker.

S. Goodyear referred to Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Need' and stated that this was the type of philosophy reflected at Yarker Family school.

S. Goodyear expressed her concerns over the possibility of young children having to ride buses with secondary students, citing the possibility of bullying and/or exposure to inappropriate behaviour and language.

S. Goodyear questioned:

1. Why only one option had been suggested by senior staff in their Initial Staff Report.
2. Why is the start time for Yarker at 8:15?
3. Why have the boundaries for the Yarker catchment area been reduced?

Trustees had no questions for the delegate.

Chair Ruttan stated that the proposed timing for the delegates was approximate. She had stuck with the five-minute limit so that all delegates had the same amount of time to present.

Chair Ruttan stated:

"Thank you everyone for coming this evening, and to those of you watching remotely at Odessa. We appreciate your commitment to this process and your willingness to present your thoughts to our Board of Trustees.

As for next steps Trustees will not begin discussion or deliberation of the recommendations until the next School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board Meeting scheduled for June 5, 2017. Once Trustees have come to a majority decision at that School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee on June 5, the recommendations will be taken to the Board Meeting immediately following for final approval.

Again, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, the time and effort that has been contributed to the Pupil Accommodation Review Process thus far. Our sincere thanks, in particular, to the members of the Yarker and Odessa PARC for your commitment of time and thoughtful participation throughout what we know is a challenging and often emotional process. And, again our thanks to the members of the public and larger school communities for their interest and input. I can assure you that this Board of Trustees take seriously our role in helping to ensure the best programming opportunities and accommodations for our students, now and in the future."

**Next Meeting Date**



**School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Limestone District School Board**

**May 9, 2017**

June 5, 2017

**Adjournment**

Chair Ruttan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*MOVED BY: Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Ross, that the meeting adjourn.  
Carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.