



**Peace Wapiti School Division No. 76**

# **Electoral ward boundary report**

**August 2012**

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Note: the *PWSD76 Electoral Ward Boundary Report Executive Summary Report* is published on the PWSD web page. Alternatives listed in the *Executive Summary* have been renumbered to make it simpler for future public presentations: Appendix 1 in the *Executive Summary* corresponds to Alternative 1.1 (p.16) in the original *Electoral ward boundary report August 2012*; Appendix 2 corresponds to Alternative 1.2 (p.18); Appendix 3 corresponds to Alternative 4 (p.20); Appendix 4 corresponds to Alternative 5 (p.21).

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**Peace Wapiti School Division No. 76**  
**Electoral ward boundary review**

**I. Introduction**

**A. Background**

At the regular meeting of June 14, 2012, the Board of Trustees of the Peace Wapiti School Division passed the following motion:

***Resolution #BM20120614.1006***

*Moved By: Richard Lappenbush*

*that the Board enter into an agreement to conduct a review of Peace Wapiti School Division's electoral boundaries*

***CARRIED***

S. Cymbol, Education Consultant with the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), was engaged to assist the board with the electoral ward boundary review and determine the number of school board trustees necessary to provide effective, efficient and representative governance. The board also identified a number of situations and factors that needed to be considered in the conduct of the review.

**B. Division description**

The Peace Wapiti School Division has one of the larger school boards in the province with a total of nine trustees; this places it within the top 20% of all school boards. The median number of trustees per school board in Alberta is seven, which also happens to be the mean. Of the 11 boards that have nine trustees, nine have characteristics that could be viewed as being similar to those of Peace Wapiti.

The division covers a large geographic region and there appear to be some significant impediments to communication and travel between certain areas of the division. The

northern portion of the division is the most sparsely populated and the communities are located primarily in an east-west alignment along provincial Highway 49. The towns and villages in this area have small populations and do not reflect the potential for any significant growth in the near future. The largest centre in the area is the Town of Spirit River, with a 2011 population of 1,025, which is a slight reduction from the 2006 value of 1,148. Travel access to the southern portion of the division and the central office located in Grande Prairie is primarily by means of provincial Highway 2. The topography between the northern and southern portions of the division also provides a physical separation and restricts travel and ease of communication. It may well be that the residents of the northern portion do not see themselves as being economically and culturally all that similar to their southern counterparts.

The southern portion of the division is more heavily populated and the communities are also aligned in an east-west direction. The population growth is by and large a consequence of a combination of agricultural, commercial, service and resource based activities. Much of the urban growth may be attributed to the proximity to the City of Grande Prairie. A number of the communities in the area may be viewed as being “bedroom communities” dependent upon the city for continuation and growth. This is the portion of the division that holds the greatest potential for growth. Between 2006 and 2011, the City of Grande Prairie and the County of Grande Prairie experienced population growth of 16.8% and 13.5% respectively.

The far eastern portion of the division is separated from the remainder of the division by the Smoky River and the general topography. Access to the central office and the remainder of the division is by means of provincial Highway 43. The area is sparsely populated, primarily agricultural and robust growth cannot be expected.

A portion of the division lies south of the Wapiti River and the bulk of the population is primarily a result of individuals wishing to experience a semi-rural life style outside of an urban setting. Significant population growth is not expected.

While the population throughout the division appears, at first glance, to be reasonably homogeneous, with a large portion of its members sharing similar values; there are some differences along geographic and occupational considerations. The northern area, with its agricultural base and small communities, may feel somewhat different from what might be viewed, by some, as the more cosmopolitan south. Population growth in the southern portion is largely in urban settings such as Sexsmith and Beaverlodge and throughout that part of the County of Grande Prairie surrounding the City of Grande Prairie. The eastern edge of the division is also very rural and may have a greater commonality throughout in sharing a particular way of life and a spiritual view.

The student population served by the division was slightly in excess of 5,300 during the 2011-2012 school year. This would place it in the top 25% of rural school authorities in terms of the total number of students served. The division operated 31 schools, which encompassed a wide range of educational environments. Although student and school numbers are not noted in the legislation as being specific considerations for the determination of electoral ward boundaries or trustee numbers, they are significant indicators of the complexity of the overall system and require some attention and recognition.

### **C. Current electoral ward configuration and trustee numbers**

#### **1. Historical**

The current electoral ward configuration and trustee numbers are based upon the arrangement that occurred at the time of the regionalization of school boards, which took place in the mid 1990's. At that time, the County of Grande Prairie, the Spirit River School Division, a portion of the East Smoky School Division and the

Grovedale School District joined to form what was then known as the Peace Wapiti Regional School Division #33.

Under the terms of the legislation governing the formation of regional school divisions, each of the participating school authorities – regardless of population numbers – was to become a ward in the newly created regional division. Therefore each authority, regardless of size, was guaranteed a locally elected trustee.

Jurisdictions with larger populations could have the ward divided into electoral subdivisions or have a greater number of trustees in the ward elected at large. The legislation also provided a mechanism for a ward to withdraw from the regional division should circumstances warrant and the electors agree.

Under the terms of the regional school division agreement, Grovedale School District and that portion of the East Smoky School Division were each established as a ward in the newly created entity and each allocated a single trustee. The Spirit River School Division was also established as a ward and, since the population was greater than that of Grovedale and East Smoky, was therefore allocated two trustees. The County of Grande Prairie was established as a ward and allocated five trustees as a result of its larger population.

In 2004, the board made a request to the Minister to convert the Regional School Division into a School Division. This change was completed by means of Ministerial Order 086/2004, dated December 20, 2004. By becoming a school division, the school board was not bound by the terms of the original regionalization agreement and was given additional flexibility in determining its electoral ward boundaries and procedures for the selection of trustees. Any changes still required the approval of the Minister, however, and the process for doing so was defined in the legislation. The current arrangement of trustee selection and numbers is a consequence of the

Ministerial Order and can only be altered by the Minister through another Ministerial Order.

## 2. Present organization

Currently, the school division has nine electoral wards with a single trustee elected in each. The present arrangement can be described approximately as follows:

- Ward 1 – forms the north-eastern portion of the division and was originally the eastern area of the previous Spirit River School Division. Contains the following:
  - Village of Rycroft;
  - Village of Eaglesham;
  - Lands contained within the Birch Hills County;
  - Lands contained within the Municipal District of Spirit River;
  - A portion of the lands within the Saddle Hills County.
  
- Ward 2 – forms the north-western portion of the division and was originally the western area of the previous Spirit River School Division. Contains the following:
  - Town of Spirit River;
  - Majority of the lands within the Saddle Hills County.
  
- Ward 3 – forms the south-western portion of the division and was originally the south-west portion of the County of Grande Prairie. Contains the following:
  - Town of Beaverlodge;
  - A portion of lands contained in South West portion of the County of Grande Prairie.
  
- Ward 4 – forms the western edge of the division and was originally north-west portion of the County of Grande Prairie. Contains the following:

- The Village of Hythe;
  - A portion of the lands contained in the north-western portion of the County of Grande Prairie.
- Ward 5 – forms a portion of the southern boundary of the division and was originally a portion of the southern edge of the County of Grande Prairie. Contains the following:
- The Town of Wembley;
  - A portion of the lands along the southern edge of the County of Grande Prairie.
- Ward 6 – forms a portion of the eastern edge of the division and was originally the south-eastern edge of the County of Grande Prairie. Contains the following:
- The Town of Sexsmith;
  - A portion of the lands in the south-eastern portion of the County of Grande Prairie.
- Ward 7 – forms a central portion of the division and surrounds the City of Grande Prairie. Contains the following:
- The Village of Clairmont;
  - That portion of the County of Grande Prairie surrounding the City of Grande Prairie.
- Ward 8 – forms the eastern edge of the division and was originally the area brought in from the East Smoky School Division. Contains the following:
- Debolt (unincorporated);
  - A portion of the lands within the Municipal District of Greenview.

- Ward 9 – forms the southern edge of the division and was originally the Grovedale School District. Contains a portion of the lands within the Municipal District of Greenview.

#### **D. Estimated population of each electoral ward**

The ability of a school board to alter its electoral ward boundaries, or determine the number of trustees to be elected to the board, is governed by provincial legislation and requires the approval of the Minister. Sections 210 and 262 of *The School Act* identify the process and procedures that must be followed. Although the legislation does not identify all of the factors that a board must consider when redrawing electoral ward boundaries, it does explicitly identify population as a primary consideration. The legislation recognizes that other influences may impact upon any changes being considered and therefore includes the phrase “*if practical*”.

*262(7) A bylaw passed under this section shall, if practicable, provide that the number of trustees to be elected in each ward is in the same proportion to the total number of trustees of the board as the population of the ward is to the population of the district or division, as the case may be.*

School trustees are elected to represent the members of the public and not specific groups or geographic locations. Therefore, the democratic belief that each elector’s vote should have approximately the same value as that of any other elector must be considered and taken into account. Although population numbers would appear to be a rather concrete measure, it is not. All electors within a geographic area may not be electors of the board undergoing a possible change. For example, where a separate school authority has been formed, some of the adult population will be electors of that board. For the purpose of determining the populations of each of the existing – and possibly newly created – wards, there will be no attempt to remove the separate school supporters from those of the public board. Determining exact numbers of residents of

the Catholic faith in a given region is a difficult task. Faith is a matter of conscience and the distribution of the membership is not consistent throughout a total geographic area.

In addition, strong reliable information is not readily available for the determination of the religious faith of the residents – based upon self-identification. Statistics Canada data is most commonly used and is provided on five-year intervals. Recent information is available from Statistics Canada based upon the 2011 census, so the data should be reasonably accurate. However, since the school division wards do not coincide with those of the municipal authorities upon which Statistics Canada data is reported, it will be necessary to make a number of approximated values. It should also be noted that municipal authorities can and do undertake a census when they deem it appropriate to do so. That information is filed with Alberta Municipal Affairs and can be accessed in order to support Statistics Canada data.

Population of wards (*Statistics Canada*)

<b>Ward 1</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Rycroft	628	638
Eaglesham	119	112
Woking	106	99
Birch Hills County*	1,582	1,470
Spirit River MD*	570	530
Saddle Hills MD*	228	245
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,233</b>	<b>3,004</b>

  

<b>Ward 2</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Spirit River	1,025	1,148
Saddle Hills MD*	2,060	2,212
Spirit River MD*	143	133
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,228</b>	<b>3,493</b>

  

<b>Ward 3</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Beaverlodge	2,365	2,264
County of Grande Prairie*	2,409	2,123
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,774</b>	<b>4,387</b>

<b>Ward 4</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Hythe	820	821
County of Grande Prairie*	2,828	2,501
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>3,322</b>

<b>Ward 5</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Wembley	1,383	1,443
County of Grande Prairie*	5,067	3,926
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,450</b>	<b>5,369</b>

<b>Ward 6</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Sexsmith	2,393	1,959
Bezanson	121	137
County of Grande Prairie*	4,644	4,119
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,158</b>	<b>6,215</b>

<b>Ward 7</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Clairmont**	1,652	2,012
County of Grande Prairie*	3,748	3,307
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,400</b>	<b>5,319</b>

\*\* Statistics Canada does provide a population value for Clairmont – but Clairmont is also included in the population value for the County of Grande Prairie and the County also includes it in its census data. For the purpose of this review, it will be placed in Ward 7.

<b>Ward 8</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
Debolt	133	128
MD of Greenview*	1,855	1,912
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,988</b>	<b>2,040</b>

<b>Ward 9</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2006</b>
MD of Greenview*	2,120	2,186
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,120</b>	<b>2,186</b>

\* Represents an estimated population value

Total number of residents in the division using 2011 data and not correcting for those of the Roman Catholic faith:

Total residents = 37,999

Average number per ward based on nine wards = 4,222

#### **E. Basis for consideration of a reorganization**

The board has requested that a ward system remain in place for the division. Therefore no other arrangement has been given any examination or consideration. However, the board's request is in fact the only arrangement that could be considered in view of the division's size, complexity, history, topography and the location of population centres. It, therefore, presents a perfectly reasonable and acceptable position.

Prior to moving forward with either an electoral ward boundary change or a determination of trustee numbers, the reasons for doing so need to be clearly identified and communicated.

##### 1. Financial

It is incumbent upon all organizations to ensure that available financial resources are distributed and utilized in the most efficient and effective manner possible. This responsibility may weigh more heavily on school boards as any inefficiencies result in diminished opportunities for the students for which the board has responsibility.

By examining information obtained from the two previous Audited Financial Statements, the total annual costs of the elected board members for remuneration, benefits and expenses can be obtained.

2010-2011 fiscal period:

Total jurisdiction expenditures = \$68,528,000

Total cost of elected board members = \$258,638

Percentage cost of board to total expenditures = .38%

2009-2010 fiscal period

Total jurisdiction expenditures = \$65,289,000

Total cost of elected board members = \$234,528

Percentage cost of board to total expenditures = .36%

The overall direct expenditures incurred by the board are slightly in excess of one-third of one percent of the total yearly jurisdiction expenditures. Put another way, each trustee, on average, cost the system \$28,738 in 2010-2011 and \$26,059 in 2009-2010.

It must be kept in mind that trustees also require administrative support and these costs have not been included in the above-noted costs. The greater the number of trustees on the board, it might be assumed that the greater the administrative costs would be. It is difficult to quantify what the exact relationship is and if the assumption is, in fact, correct. In the case of the division, it is unlikely that a reduction in the number of trustees would result in a reduction in the number of administrative staff. But it could be assumed that there would be some reductions in other expenditures and improved efficiencies in board operations. Again, any savings would be difficult to quantify with any level of certainty.

## 2. Population representation

As noted previously, the legislation requires that board examine population when changes to electoral ward boundaries or trustee numbers are under consideration. Each resident's vote should have the same approximate value as that of any other resident, regardless of geographic location or other factors.

With a total estimated population of 37,999, the average number of residents in each ward would be 4,222 if the population were evenly distributed throughout the nine wards. But, from the approximate population values determined for each ward, this is not the case:

Ward 1 – 3,233

Ward 2 – 3,228

Ward 3 – 4,774

Ward 4 – 3,648

Ward 5 – 6,450

Ward 6 – 7,158

Ward 7 – 5,400

Ward 8 – 1,988

Ward 9 – 2,120

Knowing that it would be extremely difficult, or impossible, to design a system of representation that would ensure an equal number of residents in each ward, it has generally been accepted that a differential of 25% (plus or minus) would be sufficient to meet any legal requirement. Applying this factor would provide a range (band) of 3,167 to 5,277.

Within the division, five of the nine wards fall outside of the generally accepted band. It might also be assumed that the disparity will continue as there is little evidence to view the imbalance as being temporary or self-correcting. In many ways the entire area is not experiencing population growth outside of the City of Grande Prairie and surrounding area of the County of Grande Prairie. For example, during the period between 2006 and 2011:

The Province of Alberta experienced a growth rate of 10.8%

The City of Grande Prairie experienced a growth rate of 16.8%

The County of Grande Prairie experienced a growth rate of 13.5%

The Town of Sexsmith experienced a growth rate of 22.2%

The Town of Beaverlodge experienced a growth rate of 4.5%

All of the other areas in the division experienced minimal population growth or some, in fact, had a decline. Therefore significant growth away from the area surrounding the City of Grande Prairie cannot be anticipated.

### 3. Service efficiency

It is often assumed that smaller boards are more efficient and likely to be more focused. A small board is less likely to need to make use of committees as all members may be able to participate and be involved. Could a case be made for a smaller board in Peace Wapiti in terms of the desire to achieve a greater level of efficiency? It is believed that smaller boards tend to be less parochial in that the area served by each elected member is larger.

## F. Legislative requirements

1. The establishment of ward boundaries and the number of trustees to be elected from each ward and for the division in total falls within the power of the Minister. Sections 210 and 262 of the *School Act* are the appropriate sections. The board may only request that the Minister approves of any changes to previous bylaws that govern elections and the number of trustees.
2. Since there are currently wards within the division as established by Ministerial Order 086/2004, the process would be to seek Ministerial approval to amend the existing order. This is crucial first step.

### ***Rearrangement***

**210** *The Minister may, in respect of a school division,*

*(d) redivide a school division into wards*

While it is customary to devote attention to Section 262 as both the title and content deal with the election of trustees and the need for the board to pass a bylaw to request the Minister to make any changes to existing practice, in reality, Section 210 is the actual determinant. At this point, the board needs to identify both the number of wards that will comprise the division and the lands that will be included in each ward. This can be a time consuming step and needs to be dealt with prior to the passage of any bylaw under Section 262. It is suggested that this step be concluded within the 2012 calendar year, if at all possible, if changes to the 2013 election are desired.

3. The next general election is set for October 2013. If any changes are to take effect at that time, the bylaw passed under Section 262 must be passed prior to March 1, 2013. Knowing that there must be three readings, it would seem advisable to ensure the process gets underway in January 2013. Section 69 of *The School Act* outlines the procedure for the passage of a bylaw.
4. A request to the Minister under Section 210 could involve a number of items such as:
  - number of trustees in total for the division
  - number of wards
  - number of trustees in each ward

## **G. Ward size**

The board requested that a literature review be undertaken to determine if there has been any research that would assess the correlation between ward size and voter satisfaction. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any research specific to local elections, either municipal or school, correlating ward size and voter satisfaction. Casual observation over the past few years would indicate that it is the emergence of local issues that motivates voters. Ward size does not appear to be a significant factor in determining voter satisfaction. In addition, it is difficult to identify indicators of satisfaction on a factor

such as ward size. The Alberta experience has shown that local elections, either municipal or school, do not generate significant enthusiasm.

Information on the 2010 election might indicate that voter satisfaction is fairly high with the present structures in the province. For example:

- 71% of those school trustees elected in 2010 were incumbents
- 54% of those incumbents were acclaimed
- In 12 school boards, 100% of incumbents were returned to the board by acclamation

It would be difficult to prove this was a consequence of satisfaction or a combination of other considerations.

## **II. Possible reconfigurations**

### **A. Background**

The board requested that consideration be given to possible ward structures that would accommodate either nine, eight, seven or six trustees. In addition, various other factors were to be taken into account, such as:

- Ease of transportation and communication within the ward;
- Commonality of interest, similarity of culture;
- Service or trading area;
- Location of schools;
- High school representation; and
- More than one trustee representing a high population ward.

## **B. Alternatives**

Any consideration of redefining the current ward boundaries will be faced with a number of significant underlying structural issues that may be difficult to resolve:

1. Accommodating the current Ward 8, which is physically separated from the remainder of the division; has a small population base which is not likely to grow; and may be viewed as an independent unit in providing educational services to the area. If this area were combined with another area in order to raise the population significantly, the residents may view themselves becoming disenfranchised; and
2. The vast area of the previous Spirit River School Division contained within Wards 1 and 2 is combined with a small population base, which does not portray a promise of significant growth. The area also contains three high school attendance areas which serve only students within the two wards; and
3. The disparity in population growth between the rest of the division and the area surrounding the City of Grande Prairie, which will continue to grow and exacerbate the differential; and
4. The Central Office is located in the southern part of the division and in the most heavily populated area. Residents in this area might be assumed to have an increased opportunity to provide input into board decisions and receive service. Therefore it might be argued that wards in this area should approach higher population values.

### **Alternative 1 (9 wards with 9 trustees)**

1. Retain the current structure

The current structure, while it does violate the representation by population principle, has some positive features:

- Maintains representation in each of the areas that joined to form the division;
- Ward sizes are maintained at what might be deemed a reasonable geographic size;

- Residents are familiar with the current structure and appear to have accepted and understand it; and
- Would provide a “holding position” until new legislation is passed governing local elections and permit an opportunity for an appropriate response.

The current structure presents some serious issues that make it difficult to continue to support it for the following reasons:

- The population disparity between the wards and projected growth in high population wards is not satisfactory in meeting the spirit of the legislation or the “democratic principle”;
- There is little to merit the continued existence of the current Ward 9:
  - The population is below the generally accepted band and there appear to be few prospects for significant growth;
  - Contains a single small school – ECS to 9;
  - High school students attend in Grande Prairie at the Peace Wapiti Academy;
  - Communication and trading is directly north into the area of the City of Grande Prairie; and
  - There would appear to be a cultural similarity with the area immediately north of the Wapiti River;
- The Hythe-Beaverlodge service area continues to be separated and this is not consistent with desire to maintain high school attendance areas or transportation and communication networks.

However, if the decision is to remain with nine trustees then the current arrangement may continue to have some acceptability.

## 2. Possible alternative to current structure

Recognizing that this alternative also does not totally correct the population inequities between the wards, it does provide some remediation.

- Combine the current Ward 9 with the current Ward 7 minus the Hamlet of Clairmont: this would provide a resident population of 5,520 and assist in maintaining the high school attendance area within the ward and also relates to communication and transportation networks.
- Create an additional ward from the current Wards 5 and 6, taking the Bezanson area from the current Ward 6 and the Hamlet of Clairmont and surrounding area from Ward 7 and combining them into a new ward. Ward 5 and 6 have a resident population of approximately 13,608 at the present time and contain the areas of the greatest population growth. The three wards could contain approximately 4,536 residents each and would provide for anticipated growth. Although the projected population values are low, this will not be the case as the disparity is self-correcting and will provide for future growth.

### **Alternative 2 (8 wards with 8 trustees)**

Alternative 2 would provide for a population band of between 3,562 and 5,938 and be organized in the following manner:

- Wards 1 (3,233), 2 (3,228), 4 (3648) and 8 (1,988) would remain essentially as currently constituted with some minor adjustment to shift some population numbers.
- Ward 3 would be the current Ward 3 plus those lands from the current Ward 5 of 2,081 (Town of Wembley 1,383 and County of Grande Prairie 698) for an estimated population of 6,862.
- Ward 5 would be the current Ward 6 minus the area South of Highway 43 (2,000). Estimated population to be 5,158.
- Ward 6 would be the current Ward 7 minus the Clairmont area between provincial Highways 43 and 2, plus the current Ward 9 and those lands on either

side of Highway 43 that are part of the Grande Prairie High School attendance area (2,000) and that are currently included in Ward 6. Estimated population to be 7,520.

- Ward 7 would be current Ward 5 (6,450) with the removal of Wembley area (2,080) plus Clairmont area (2,000). Estimated population to be 6,370.

This alternative essentially removes Ward 9 and combines it with Ward 7 and then makes some adjustment with populations among the current Wards 3, 7, 5 and 6. This does not represent a significant change; it just attempts to address the population disparity in Wards 5 and 6. Major area of change: adding Wembley to Ward 3 (Beaverlodge).

### **Alternative 3 (7 wards with 7 trustees)**

Alternative 3 would provide for a population band of between 4,071 and 6,785 and be organized in the following manner:

- Ward 1 remains as the current Ward 1. While far below the established population band, it is justified upon the basis of the contained area and separation from the remainder of the division. Population estimated to be 3,233.
- Ward 2 remains as the current Ward 2. While far below the established population band, it is justified upon the basis of the contained area and separation from the remainder of the division. Population estimated to be 3,228.
- Ward 3 is composed of the current Ward 3 plus all the lands from Ward 4 west of a line extending north on the boundary between Ranges 8 and 9. Would include County Wards 6, 7, and a portion of 5. Population estimated to be 7,622.
- Ward 4 is the current Ward 5. Population estimated to be 6,450.
- Ward 5 is the current Ward 6 plus those lands added from the current Ward 4. Population estimated to be 7,958.
- Ward 6 is the current Ward 7 plus the current Ward 9. Estimated population to be 7,520.

- Ward 7 would be the existing Ward 8 with an estimated population of 1,988.

This alternative recognizes that Wards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 fail to meet the population requirement but are proposed in recognition of the special circumstances faced by those areas. When low population wards such as 1, 2 and 8 are accepted; other wards are required to make up the difference and are driven higher. As noted earlier, the elimination of Ward 9 is justified on the basis of population, educational service area and communication networks. The combination of Ward 3 and a portion of Ward 4 is justified upon the same basis. The newly created Ward 3 also reinforces the current educational service area between the communities of Beaverlodge and Hythe. The removal of the La Glace areas from the current Ward 4 does not detract from the service unity.

#### **Alternative 4 (6 wards with 6 trustees)**

Alternative 4 would provide for a population band of between 4,750 and 7,916 and be organized in the following manner:

- Ward 1 would be the current Ward 2, plus all of the lands within the current Ward 1 that are part of the Spirit River High School attendance area; would include Rycroft and Woking and surrounding rural areas. Population estimated to be 5,260.
- Ward 2 would be the Eaglesham High School attendance area from the current Ward 1 and the current Ward 8. Population estimated to be 3,189.
- Ward 3 would be the current Wards 3 and 4. Population estimated to be 8,422.
- Ward 4 would be the current Ward 5. Population estimated to be 6,450.
- Ward 5 would be the current Ward 6. Population estimated to be 7,158.
  
- Ward 6 would be the current Ward 7 and Ward 9. Population estimated to be 7,520.

This alternative attempts to maintain the current educational service areas and lines of communication. Unfortunately, it falls short in combining portions of the current Ward 1 with the current Ward 8. This also provides a ward with a population that falls outside of the suggested band. It should also be noted that the newly proposed Ward 3 is outside of the suggested band as well.

### **Alternative 5 (Multiple trustees elected at large)**

It is possible to have one or more trustees elected to serve the residents of a single ward should circumstances favour it. This is usually done by means of electoral subdivisions or trustees being elected at large within the boundaries of the ward. In the case of Peace Wapiti, electoral subdivisions are not recommended. However it is possible to have multiple trustees elected at large within a high population ward. Peace Wapiti does present a special case in that the south central portion of the division represents the highest population areas and those with the highest growth patterns. It would be possible to create wards that reflect high school attendance areas, population size or any other factor that the board may wish utilize.

For example:

- Ward 1 – (Grande Prairie High School Attendance Area) Current Wards 9, 7, portion of 6 (Bezanson and lands surrounding that community) and portion of 5 (eastern edge). Estimated population would be:

- Ward 9 = 2,120
- Ward 7 = 5,400
- Ward 6 = 2,350
- Ward 5 = 4,450

**Total = 14,320**

The area could be allocated three trustees; each would have a population base of 4,773.

- Ward 2 – (Beaverlodge Regional High School Attendance Area) Current Wards 3, portion of 5 (Wembley and western edge), portion of 4 (remove Valhalla-LaGlance area). Estimated population would be:
  - Ward 3 = 4,774
  - Ward 5 = 2,000
  - Ward 4 = 2,448

**Total = 9,222**

The area could be allocated two trustees – each would have a population base of 4,611.

- Ward 3 – (Sexsmith High School Attendance Area) A portion of Current Ward 6 (portion allocated to Ward 1) and a portion of current Ward 4.
  - Ward 6 = 4,808
  - Ward 4 = 1,200

**Total = 6,008**

The area could be allocated one trustee for a population base of 6,008.

- Ward 4 – Current Ward 8 – population base of 1,988.
- Ward 5 – Current Ward 1 – population base of 3,233.
- Ward 6 – Current Ward 2 – population base of 3,228.

Six wards and nine trustees; this is just an idea of how this might work but is not being recommended.

### **III. Conduct of the review**

#### **A. General**

Should the board decide to proceed with an electoral ward boundary review and have it concluded in order to conduct the 2013 local elections then it is absolutely necessary to communicate with the residents, encourage feedback and provide opportunities for public input. Experience has shown that unless there are local issues that provide motivation for participation, public response is extremely low key (muted). However, every opportunity must, in fact, be provided. The consultation phase must be over by the end of November.

#### **B. Communication plan**

##### **1. Division website**

It is recommended that information regarding the review be placed on the division website advising of the review, timelines and the provision of opportunities for response.

A short questionnaire should be designed and placed on the website that would permit residents to provide information in a structured manner.

An opportunity should also be provided for residents to provide unstructured responses should they choose.

##### **2. Local news media**

News release should be placed in local media advising of the undertaking of a review and advising of opportunities to let “their views be known”.

3. Presentation to key communication groups  
Possible presentation to key communication group(s); i.e., Council of Councils
4. Advise other levels of local government  
As a courtesy, may wish to have the board chair write to the various municipal governments in the area advising of decision to move ahead with an electoral ward boundary review.
5. Provide for trustee input
6. Provide opportunity for public hearing  
If deemed desirable, an afternoon and evening could be organized to accommodate a public hearing – consultation phase – communication – possibly board office.

### **C. Board action**

1. Request to Minister to re-divide the division in accordance with the requirements of Section 210 of *The School Act*. Target date should be mid or end of December 2012.
2. Proceed with passage of necessary bylaw to replace existing bylaw – *School Act 262 (5) and (6)*.

## **IV. Working notes**

2011 Populations – Statistics Canada

- County of Grande Prairie – 20,347\*
- Sexsmith – 2,393
- Beaverlodge – 2,365
- Hythe – 820
- Wembley – 1,383

- Bezanson – 121
- Debolt – 133
- Spirit River – 713
- Rycroft – 628
- Eaglesham – 119
- Woking – 106
- Birch Hills County – 1,582
- Spirit River MD – 713
- Saddle Hills County – 2,288
- Greenview – 3,974

\* includes Clairmont at this point

**Total of all areas included = 37,997**

#### Population Considerations:

- Ward 1 – Birch Hills County – determined to be 100% of 1582 & 1470
  - MD Spirit River – determined to be 80% of 713 & 662
  - Saddle Hills County – determined to be 10% of 2288 & 2458
- Ward 2 – Saddle Hills County – determined to be 90% of 2288 & 2458
  - MD Spirit River – determined to be 20% of 713 & 662
- Wards 3, 4, 5 and 6 – County calculations from below
- Ward 7 – The Hamlet of Clairmont has been included in the population of the County of Grande Prairie. Although Statistics Canada has a value for Clairmont – it also includes it in the County population – the County does as well. Statistics Canada has the following: 2006 – 2,012 and 2011 – 1652. The County value for 2006 is 2174 and this value also includes the Lakeview Mobile Home Park. Statistics Canada has a 2011 population value of 1,652 for Clairmont.
- Ward 8 – MD Greenview – determined to be 35% of 5299 & 5464.
- Ward 9 – MD Greenview – determined to be 40% of 5299 & 5464.

## County of Grande Prairie

The most recent census undertaken by the County of Grande Prairie was in 2006. Work is underway to complete a 2011 census, but this will not be completed and available until the end of 2012. The population values for the county will be based upon the following:

- Statistics Canada data for 2011, which provides an overall population total for the county of 20,347;
- The 2011 population will be distributed across the nine wards of the county by the same percentage values identified in the 2006 municipal census:
  - Ward 1 – Bezanson/East G.P. 9.7% = 1,974
  - Ward 2 – Clairmont/North G.P. 17.2% = 3,500
  - Ward 3 – Grande Prairie G.P. 16.7% = 3,398
  - Ward 4 – Wembley/West G.P. 16.5% = 3,357
  - Ward 5 – Beaverlodge/Huallen 9.2% = 1,872
  - Ward 6 – Elmworth/Halcourt 5.4% = 1,099
  - Ward 7 – Hythe/Demmit 5.6% = 1,139
  - Ward 8 – Vahalla/LaGlace 8.3% = 1,689
  - Ward 9 – Sexsmith/Teepee Creek 11.4% = 2,320

This is probably defensible as major changes are likely not to have occurred over the five-year period in terms of a percentage distribution.

- As the county has nine wards and the school division has five in the same area, some estimations are therefore required in order to assign populations to the appropriate wards:
  - Peace Wapiti Ward 3 contains County Ward 6 and 70% of Ward 5 (2,409)
  - Peace Wapiti Ward 4 contains County Wards 7 and 8 (2,828)
  - Peace Wapiti Ward 5 contains County Wards 4 – except for a heavily populated slice along the east side, 30% of Ward 5 and a portion of Ward 2 – because of Clairmont – will get 20% of population (6,719)
  - Peace Wapiti Ward 6 contains County Wards 9, 1 and a 10% of 2 (4,644)

- Peace Wapiti Ward 7 contains County Wards 3, 10% of Ward 2 and a thin but heavily populated slice of 4 (3,748)
  
- Using 2006 county data (17,989):
  - Ward 1 – 1,750
  - Ward 2 – 3,103
  - Ward 3 – 2,997
  - Ward 4 – 2,962
  - Ward 5 – 1,648
  - Ward 6 – 969
  - Ward 7 – 1,007
  - Ward 8 – 1,494
  - Ward 9 – 2,059
  
- Attributing to Peace Wapiti Division Wards
  - Ward 3 – 2,123
  - Ward 4 – 2,501
  - Ward 5 – 3,926
  - Ward 6 – 4,119
  - Ward 7 – 5,319

**Notes on Alternative 3 (7 wards with 7 trustees)**

- Ward 1: current Ward 1 with an estimated population of 3,233
- Ward 2: current Ward 2 with an estimated population of 3,228
- Ward 3: with an estimated population of 7,622
  - current Ward 3 @ 4,774
  - current Ward 4 @ 2,848 (800 removed from current (La Glace area) and to be added to new Ward 5 @ 3648 - 800)
- Ward 4: with an estimated population of 6,450(current Ward 5 @ 6,450).

- Ward 5: with an estimated population of 7,958 (current Ward 6 plus those lands added from the current Ward 4 (800) added from the new Ward
- Ward 6: with an estimated population of 7,958 (current Ward 7 @ 5,400 plus current Ward 9 @ 2,120 plus
- Ward 7: current Ward 8 with an estimated population of 1,988

## V. Items to discuss with board on August 31

1. Are the demographic descriptions provided in B of the document generally acceptable? What changes need to be made if not accurate or require improvement?
2. Why undertake a ward boundary review and determination of trustee numbers at this time? What problem(s) are we trying to solve?
3. Are there certain “unacceptables” – something that we don’t even want to consider – or not be prepared to accept?
4. Are there issues within the division that might impact upon the acceptability of any proposed changes to the current governance structure? What and where are the “hot spots”?
5. What are the key communication channels within the division? There is a need to provide opportunities for public input. Remember, if there is any dissatisfaction there will be appeals to the Minister. Although **Bill 2 – Education Act** did **NOT** become law prior to the end of the previous sitting of the legislature, some of the provisions contained in it give an indication of the importance of a “public face”:

*76(5) A board shall establish, implement and make publicly available a policy respecting the considerations and process used by the board to determine ward structures.*

6. What is the role of the board? The division has a *Policy Handbook* and *Section B* deals specifically with *School Board Governance and Operations*. *Policy BBA* deals directly with powers and duties:

**POLICY BBA - School Board Powers and Duties**

*As outlined in Section 60 of the School Act, the Board is responsible for providing educational services to Peace Wapiti students by:*

- *Establishing long and short term plans relating to the operations of Peace Wapiti Public School Division No. 76*
- *Planning and adopting the budget*
- *Creating, enforcing and reviewing policies*

How will reducing the size of the board, or changing ward boundaries, assist in improving board functions – efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness?

Will altering boundaries improve relationships in some areas, resulting in increased harmony?

Is work done by “committee”? (*Board Policy BCE – Board Committees*)

7. Key staff to work with on project – who could work on keeping things together at central office?