

# Reynolds School resold for \$357,500

Unclear if \$50,000 from recent flip will go to Sunrise School Division or province

By Mark T. Buss

The former Reynolds School recently sold for \$357,500, but it is unclear if a portion of the resale proceeds will go to the Sunrise School Division or the province.

In October, the former Sunrise school property sold for considerably more than the \$1,000 it was privately sold for in 2016.

Built in 1978 with a capacity for 100 students, the 11,330-square-foot former school and property boasts a 3,000-square-foot gymnasium, four classrooms, bathrooms, offices, three-phase power, well water, septic tank and field. There is also a six-acre property with play grounds, a basketball court, soccer and base-

ball fields, loads of parking and a loop driveway.

Reynolds School had its student population slowly decline over time. At its peak in the 1990s, it housed 84 students. From 2009 to 2011, enrollment dropped from 30 to 17.

In August 2014, the province approved the closure of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 school when those numbers dropped to zero for the 2014-2015 school year.

Announcing the closure, Sunrise held a series of public consultations to decide what to do with the building and property. Offered to and passed over by the RM of Reynolds as renovation costs were deemed high, many in the area favoured maintaining the space as a

classroom environment and potentially busing students in for programming delivered by Sunrise staff. The board of the day advised the division would not continue to fund it unless it was specific for students who attended the school.

With no groups willing to take it over, Sunrise sought and received permission from the Public Schools Financing Board to sell the property to Taylor Plett (nee Gulenchyn), who took ownership in July 2016 for \$1,000.

President and CEO of the Reynolds Business Centre Inc., Plett hoped to provide local entrepreneurs with rental space. Over time, the former school housed the Reynolds Chamber of Commerce, the Reynolds Food Bank and other businesses including a hair dresser, a children's play group and a doctor working one day a week. When Covid hit, the play group disbanded and never came back. The food bank is now over at the Reynolds municipal office.

The overall project did not work as planned, resulting in the desire to resell the



File photo

Sunrise secretary-treasurer Jody Thiessen said she is in talks with the province to get clarification on who will receive the proceeds, but noted it is hard to get an answer.

property. Originally listed for \$479,900 last year, the price came down over time.

Sources said several parties were interested in the property. With a possession

date of Dec. 1, information on what the site will be used for was not made public.

The language from the Reynolds School purchase agreement from 2016 indicated there was a 10-year window where if the land and premisses were sold again, the division was to receive 25 per cent of the net proceeds of the sale after payment of all legal fees and realty commissions or \$50,000 – whichever was less.

Sunrise secretary-treasurer Jody Thiessen confirmed the approximate amount will be \$50,000

less legal fees, but there appears to be some grey area regarding who will actually get the money. The province made changes in 2019 to fold the Public Schools Finance Board into Labour Consumer Protection Government Services (LCPGS). As a result, the funds in their entirety may be required to be forwarded to the province.

Thiessen said she is in talks with the provincial government to get clarification if Sunrise can keep these funds or not, noting it is hard to get an answer.

"There will be a report to forward in January or a comment in the secretary treasurer report in January when or if we are to receive the funds," Thiessen advised.


When the school was listed in 2022, Reynolds Coun. Curtis Buley said he was disappointed the proceeds from the resale were not guaranteed to be going to Sunrise.

"The ratepayers put a lot of money into the property through their taxes and the funds should go to the school division," Buley stated at the time.

Lac du Bonnet MLA Wayne Ewasko believes there is a 95 per cent chance all the money will go to Sunrise as that is who the original deal was made with.

"I can't speak for the government right now, but I'm assuming the province is not going to battle over \$50,000," Ewasko said.

The Clipper reached out to the province on the matter. A spokesperson said they are reviewing the situation and will be discussing the proceeds of the sale with Sunrise.



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