

NOVEMBER 9, 2020
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Committee of the Whole Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. via video conference, with the following members in attendance: J. Herring (Chairperson), K. Meissner, C. Millar, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, K. Smith, L. Tremble, C. Watson, J. Weston, C. Whetham and K. Woodcock.

Student Trustee T. John-Jandles was in attendance and Student Trustee R. McDonald was unable to attend.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: J. Bryant (Director of Education and Secretary), M. Gerard, L. Read, P. Rubenschuh, A. Russell and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: L. Agar, B. Jaklic and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Herring called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

There was a moment of silence in recognition of Remembrance Day.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by L. Tremble:

That the agenda of the November 9, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson J. Herring shared that in lieu of laying wreaths that the Board of Trustees will be making donations to the Poppy Fund at each Legion.

Chairperson J. Herring shared regrets from Student Trustee R. McDonald.

Chairperson J. Herring advised that tonight's scheduled delegation was not able to attend but noted that he was in favour of the policy on Political Visits.

Student Trustee provided trustees with an update on followers for the Student Trustee Instagram account.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations was scheduled to speak at this evening's meeting ut did not attend:

- P. Woolstencroft - Political Visits

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF NEW BOARD POLICY - SCHOOL SIZE AND CONFIGURATION

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard reviewed the new policy, the role of trustees and continued approval process. He also noted the addition of intent for active and safe routes to school and the use of natural boundaries. This new policy allows staff to operate with more flexibility.

Trustees asked a number of clarifying questions regarding utilization, upcoming accommodation reviews, attendance areas and communication.

2. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by C. Millar:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve New Board Policy - School Size and Configuration replacing Board Policies 3002 Elementary School Size and Configuration and 4013 Secondary Schools as presented at the November 9, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

Abstained: C. Watson

REVIEW OF NEW BOARD POLICY - POLITICAL VISITS

Chief Communications Officer A. Russell provided trustees with the policy including the requested updates.

It was noted that Board Policy 3008 Use of Board Resources During the Election Campaign will need to be updated.

Trustees asked clarifying questions regarding the effects on provincial announcements. It was noted that Chairperson J. Herring would come to trustees if there were extenuating circumstances to be considered.

3. Moved by C. Millar, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve New Board Policy - Political Visits as presented at the November 9, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

Opposed:
M. Ramsay
C. Whetham

REPORTS

BUSINESS AND LEARNING CONTINUITY DURING A PANDEMIC: REGION OF WATERLOO PUBLIC HEALTH PRESENTATION

Director J. Bryant thanked Public Health for their support and strong partnership since the pandemic-related closure in March. Associate Director L. Read introduced Sharlene Sedgwick Walsh, Director of Healthy Living and Foundations Standards and Dr. Ryan Van Meer, Public Health Physician with the Region of Waterloo Public Health.

Sharlene Sedgwick Walsh and Dr. Van Meer shared a presentation with Trustees which included information on Public Health School Resources, Cohort Dismissal, and Returning to School and Household Contacts. They reviewed the Provincial Outbreak Definition, School Closures and the Outbreak Process.

Trustee asked questions regarding nurses in schools, high-risk contacts and the actions taken when a student tests positive for COVID-19.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND FACILITY PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

This report was provided for information.

To satisfy the requirements of Board Policy 1011 – Community Planning and Facility Partnerships, the report presented the annual identification of school buildings and sites suitable and available for community partnership and future capital projects with potential co-building partnership opportunities. Given the current context of COVID-19 and its impact on school utilization, we are unable to generate a list of schools with available space for 2020-2021. Available space is required for Distance Learning staff and other pandemic response uses. Long-term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) identifies a number of Review Areas where the criteria may be met over time and additional information will be provided on this in coming years.

Senior Planner L. Agar ended her presentation with comments of gratitude and well-wishes for Ian Gaudet, Controller of Facilities Services, as he is leaving WRDSB for an opportunity at Halton District School Board.

ACCOMMODATION PLANNING 2020-2021

This report was provided for information.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the main areas of focus for accommodation planning include:

- Education Development Charges Background Study

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- Huron South Elementary Schools Boundary Study (HSESBS)
- Cambridge Joint Use Campus - Feasibility Study
- Development Areas
- Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) Update

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson shared a complaint from a parent that parents were not consulted regarding the reorganization of classes. Director J. Bryant confirmed that in these extenuating circumstances, parents could not be consulted as there was very little flexibility available in the decision making and staff were working to make the changes as quickly as possible. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns regarding the new class assignments with their school principal.

Trustee C. Whetham shared reports of coyotes at Hillcrest Public School. Director J. Bryant indicated that Principals have measures to deal with such situations and that parents should report the sightings to the school.

Trustee J. Weston referred to previous comments made about hiring occasional teachers from teachers' colleges to backfill where needed. She asked about professional development and mentoring support. Coordinating Superintendent M. Weinert shared that new occasional teachers are offered professional development related to COVID-19 and other mandatory training. When assigned to a classroom, they would receive direction from the administrator and through Easy Connect with the expectations for the day.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

4. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by C. Whetham:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 9, 2020, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.