

NOVEMBER 16, 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 Trustees T. John-Jandles and R. McDonald were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: J. Bryant (Director of Education and Secretary), M. Gerard, N. Landry, B. Lemon, S. Miller, L. Read, A. Russell, and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: B. Jaklic and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Herring called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by K. Smith:

That the agenda of the November 16, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustee C. Watson declared a conflict of interest in the previous in camera meeting.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY G200 - GOVERNANCE POLICY - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The recently revised WRDSB Board Bylaws encompass the information found in Board Policy G200 - Roles and Responsibilities. It was recommended to expire the policy as it is no longer needed.

2. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by K. Smith:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board expire and end use of Board Governance Policy G200 - Roles and Responsibilities.

-Carried-

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 3004 - HOLDING OF PUBLIC MEETING

The use of electronic meetings was discussed and it was decided to wait and see if further direction or changes would be made to the Education Act prior to making further changes to this policy.

3.

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 3004 - Holding of Public Meeting as presented at the November 16, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REPORTS

2019-2020 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The draft 2019-2020 Waterloo Region District School Board Consolidated Financial Statements were included in the agenda package. Jacqueline Peterson, Partner - Assurance Leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, presented and elaborated on the audited statements. She reviewed the audit opinion statement and its purpose.

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard reviewed a number of the reports included in the document and provided a summary of information. Trustees can expect a deficit plan for review on December 7 or 14, 2020.

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard asked that trustees be provided an opportunity to review the 2019-2020 Financial Report before voting on the Audited Financial Statements.

2019-2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

This report was provided for information.

N. Landry, Controller, Financial Services, provided an overview of the report. As indicated in previous updates throughout the year, the emergence of COVID-19 and subsequent system closure on March 13, 2020, has had a material impact on our finances. Furthermore, the impact of labour sanctions (strike days), which occurred during the second quarter of the 2019-20 school year, also had a material impact on the Board's operating budget. Together, these events account for the material variances noted in this report and the 2019-20 financial statements.

2019-2020 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

Trustees asked questions regarding the reduced enrollment and associated funding, special projects and the use of accumulated surplus funds and revenue sources.

4. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended August 31, 2020, as recommended by the Board Audit Committee.

-Carried-

2019-2020 TRUSTEE EXPENSES

This report was provided for information.

Board Policy 3001 Travel, Meals, Hospitality – Trustees directs staff to present, annually, a public report regarding Trustee expenses that were reimbursed during the previous fiscal year. Staff are required to present the report in November as part of our year-end financial reporting process.

BUSINESS AND LEARNING CONTINUITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

This report was provided for information.

Director J. Bryant indicated that this update would focus on the contingency plans in place for a weather impacted distance learning days. Associate Director L. Read reviewed the work of the Ad Hoc Contingency Planning Committee. Superintendent B. Lemon shared that if busses are cancelled due to inclement weather that the day will be designated a weather impacted distance learning day and all WRDSB schools and sites will be closed. Students will access learning materials through their respective virtual learning environments or virtual classrooms.

Trustees asked questions regarding the learning that would occur from home and staff expectations. Trustees also received an update on WRDSB preparations for possible school closures. An update on the possible extension of winter break for health and safety purposes, however staff advised they are awaiting direction on this matter.

Discussion ensued regarding writing a letter of support for the extended break, but there was not enough support for writing the letter without additional consultation at this time.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Millar asked if funds will be available should trustees decide to proceed with an WRDSB Maple Syrup Education Program. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard shared that WRDSB is already running well above the 2% allowable deficit, the remaining surplus may be insufficient and it would be unlikely the Ministry would allow us to further increase the deficit.

Trustee C. Watson asked about the status of schools if the region moves into the Red Zone of Public Health Restrictions. Director J. Bryant confirmed we continue to consult with Public

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Health. Associate Director L. Read shared that when we moved into the Orange Zone this week, no changes were required for in person learning. Other school districts in Red Zones continue to provide in person learning.

Trustee L. Tremble referred to a recent news article stating the WCDSB is allowing school photos to be taken and requested an update on this issue. Director J. Bryant shared that this matter has been discussed at length and a trustee memo would be forthcoming. Superintendent B. Lemon indicated that we would not be proceeding with student photos at this time. He noted the WCDSB requires the pictures for their Plans of Care and Student Information System. We are able to use last year's photos for these purposes. We will, however, continue to monitor the situation.

ADJOURNMENT

5. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by K. Smith:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 16, 2020, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.