

JUNE 14, 2021
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. Weston (Chairperson), J. Herring, K. Meissner, C. Millar, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, K. Smith, L. Tremble, C. Watson, C. Whetham and K. Woodcock.

Student Trustee R. McDonald was in attendance and Student Trustee T. John-Jandles was not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: J. Bryant (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, R. DeBoer, M. Gerard, E. Giannopoulos, N. Landry, B. Lemon, S. Miller, C. Newton, L. Read, P. Rubenschuh, J. Veit and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: M. Delisle and S. Reidel.

CALL TO ORDER

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

Chairperson J. Weston made the following statement:

Just over a week ago, four members of a family were killed and one was injured in a horrific terrorist attack in London, because they were Muslim. I am heartbroken for the Afzaal family, their friends and the Muslim community.

So much has been said about the killing, the impact on the community and Islamophobia in Canada over the past week. I will simply say that no one should fear going for an evening stroll, praying in their place of worship, wearing their religious symbols or for the colour of their skin.

And, I would ask that when we rise to remember those killed, injured and impacted by this tragic event, that we also think about our role in combating all forms of hate, including Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, homophobia and antisemitism. People are not born with hate. They learn it. And if they can learn it, they can unlearn it. We, the education system, have to play a stronger, more active role combating hate, white supremacy and all forms of discrimination and oppression.

Change is up to us - each of us at this table and every member of our WRDSB community.

If you are able, please rise for a moment of silence for the Afzaal family.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the June 14, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

Trustee M. Ramsay joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustee C Watson had a declaration of pecuniary interest in the previous in camera meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson J. Weston shared regrets from Student Trustee T. John-Jandles.

Trustee S. Piatkowski shared that former trustee Ted Martin has been awarded the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)'s Dr. Harry Paikin Memorial Award. This award is given to an active or retired public school trustee for outstanding service as a public school trustee.

Trustee L. Tremble shared that the WRDSB advocacy letter regarding stop arm cameras was well received by other school boards at the OPSBA Board of Directors' meeting. The policy resolution submitted by WRDSB was passed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). She will provide a fulsome update from the OPSBA AGM at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Trustee C. Whetham announced that she was part of the Scholarship Committee for The Public Property Assessment Network Scholarship. Scholarship recipients are students of strong character, leadership skills and potential, who care deeply about their communities and furthering their own learning. There were eight applicants from the WRDSB.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations spoke at this evening's meeting:

- J. Clarke - Effects of COVID-19 Guidelines on Children
- C. Legiehn - COVID-19 Vaccine Transparency

STAFF FOLLOW UP

SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SITE CONSULTATION FOLLOW UP

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard shared that the City of Cambridge will be consulting with neighbours but that staff have yet to receive a response regarding the format or if schools

would be involved. Associate Director L. Read shared that local school administrators have not heard anything recently from the City of Cambridge but were involved as part of the initial consultations.

REPORTS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC - VERBAL UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

After an introduction by Director J. Bryant, Associate Director L. Read provided an update on student vaccinations. Superintendent B. Lemon reviewed the student Mask Accommodation Protocol including the development, framework, implementation, related complexities and outcomes. Superintendent R. DeBoer reviewed the plan for Secondary Year-End Connections and the graduation media campaign. Superintendent E. Giannopoulos shared the plans for Elementary Year-End Connections.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the secondary commencements in the fall, guidelines for in person year-end celebrations for secondary students and the secondary course schedule for the fall.

2020-21 INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT AND FORECAST

This report was provided for information.

The Board of Trustees approved the 2020-21 operating budget on August 10, 2020, and at that time the expected in-year deficit was \$7.17M, or 1.0% of operating revenues. On the whole, the underlying changes to board revenues and expenses presented in this report lead staff to forecast that the board will finish the year with an operating surplus of approximately \$4.48M, or 0.55% of budgeted operating revenues. The change in financial position can be attributed primarily to additional funding provided by the Ministry to address COVID-19 (\$18.90M), and reduced expenditures in a number of key areas as a result of multiple system shutdowns that have occurred throughout the 2020-21 school year, which total approximately 81 school days.

Trustees asked questions regarding Professional Development funds, supply costs, engaging kindergarten families and staffing positions funded from Priorities and Partnerships Funds.

Trustee M. Ramsay left the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

UPDATE TO APPROVALS AND FINANCING OF CAPITAL

Each year, staff undertake a review of capital projects to ensure that Board approvals align with Ministry funding. The following projects require approvals of additional expenditures:

- Saginaw Public School Addition
- Lackner Woods Public School Addition

- Manchester Public School Gymnasium Addition

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve an additional expenditure of \$1,382,797 for the construction of a childcare center at Saginaw Public School. The project budget is \$3,903,649 and aligns with Ministry of Education approvals.

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve an additional expenditure of \$985,195 for the construction of a childcare center at Lackner Woods Public School. The project budget is \$3,506,047 and aligns with Ministry of Education approvals.

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve an additional expenditure of \$850,000 of the board's Accumulated Surplus funds towards the Manchester Public School gymnasium project. The project budget is \$2,150,000 and aligns with Ministry of Education approvals.

-Carried-

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

Current capital projects with budgets greater than \$2.5M were outlined in Appendix A with dashboard symbols to indicate the status of the project relative to the schedule, budget and scope. Significant milestones, along with basic project statistics, were also presented. All projects are proceeding as planned through the design and construction stages.

The report included Annex A – COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS), which provides a complete summary and status of all CVRIS funding projects, and highlights the projects that will be deferred. As the Ministry has not yet confirmed an extension of the funding, there is a risk that the WRDSB will lose funding for any projects not substantially completed by December 31, 2021.

Trustee M. Ramsay rejoined the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding mechanical ventilation and deferred CVRIS projects.

Trustees discussed Trustee K. Woodcock's motion to write a letter regarding the CVRIS funding.

3. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by K. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board direct the Chairperson to write a letter to the Minister of Education to reiterate the need for an extension to the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) project completion deadlines and to stress the importance of the urgency of the decision on an extension; and

That the letter include language in support of the advocating done by The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO) on behalf of school boards; and

That copies of the letter be sent to the Federal Infrastructure Minister, local Members of Parliament (MPs) and local Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)

-Carried-

Opposed: M. Ramsay

2021-2022 BUDGET - GRANTS FOR STUDENT NEEDS (GSN) OVERVIEW

This report was provided for information.

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard reviewed the budget process, related Ministry of Education documents and internal guidance documents including the Strategic Plan and Operational Goals. N. Landry, Controller, Financial Services, reviewed the enrolment inputs for the GSNs and other components. He shared the key changes for the 2021-2022 year include funding that has been transferred to the GSNs, transportation funding, and capital funding. Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard reviewed where enhanced accountability is now required and changes to the balanced budget compliance. He shared the Priorities and Partnerships Funding and COVID-19 support for 2021-2022 and next steps for the budget process were reviewed.

Trustees asked questions regarding the Half-Year Rule and areas of enhanced accountability.

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 14, 2021, be extended an additional thirty minutes.

-Carried-

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee L. Tremble asked about the Board Improvement and Equity Planning Tool for the 2021-2022 school year. She is looking for information on what the tool looks like, how it would be used, and what the standardized commitments will look like. Director J. Bryant shared that

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staff are waiting on further information from the Ministry of Education and suggested that the Agenda Development Committee schedule an update in the fall.

Trustee S. Piatkowski asked about Waterloo Region COVID-19 cases and how the WRDSB and Public Health are reacting to the cases and accounting for the cases in our end of year plans. Director J. Bryant shared that we continue to work with Public Health and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. Associate Director L. Read shared that WRDSB is providing as much support as possible for the vaccination rollout for students and their families. Year-end activities will continue to follow health and safety measures.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 14, 2021, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.