

JANUARY 23, 2023
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. in the Education Centre Boardroom, with the following members in attendance: J. Weston (Chairperson), B. Cody, C. Johnson, F. Meissner, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay, M. Synder, M. Waseem, C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

Student Trustees V. Raina was in attendance and K. Soror was in attendance virtually.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, R. Dallan, R. DeBoer, E. Dougan-McKenzie, J. Fedosoff, E. Giannopoulos, C. Hill, P. Kaur, N. Landry, B. Lemon, D. Liebermann, I. McIsaac, S. Miller, G. Shantz and J. Veit.

Other staff in attendance: L. Agar, R. Howey, M. Mayer and S. Reidel.

Guests: L. Maxwell, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR).

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by M. Ramsay:

That the agenda of the January 23, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved with the additional delegation from Christine Small and the Open Letter Released on January 20, 2023, under Reports.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee M. Radlein shared that she and Trustees M. Ramsay and K. Woodcock attended the Lackner Woods Public School Winter in the Woods concert.

DELEGATIONS

Student Trustee K. Soror joined the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

JANUARY 23, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The following delegations spoke at this evening's meeting:

- Sierra Pham - Virtual Learning
- Christine Small - Chicopee Hills Public School Traffic (delegation occurred after the Major Capital Projects Quarterly Update)

Trustees were provided an opportunity to ask questions of clarification to each delegation.

2. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Sierra Pham to staff for a response.

-Carried-

Delegation Christine Small had technological issues. The Board decided to change the order of the agenda to accommodate.

3. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by M. Snyder:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board reorder the agenda to complete the following Reports prior to the second delegation:

- **Major Capital Projects Quarterly Update**
- **Interim Financial Report and Forecast at November 30th**
- **External Member Appointment on Board Audit Committee**

-Carried-

REPORTS

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY UPDATE

This report is for information.

Current capital projects with budgets greater than \$2.5M were presented indicating the status of the project relative to the schedule, budget and scope. Significant milestones, along with basic project statistics, were also presented. Staff are seeing construction cost escalations in the estimates of projects that are in the design phase with our architects. These cost estimates are exceeding benchmark funding provided by the Ministry.

Trustees asked questions regarding the benchmark funding concerns and the South-East Cambridge joint-use project. J. Veit, Controller, Facility Services, offered to provide trustees further information regarding why Breslau-Hopewell Crossing appeared to have a higher budget than the other new elementary schools.

Delegation, C. Small was able to successfully join the virtual meeting at this time.

4. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Waseem:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board reorder the agenda to hear the delegation from Christine Small at this time.

-Carried-

After the second delegation, staff resumed the Reports, as indicated earlier in the meeting.

REPORTS continued

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT AND FORECAST AT NOVEMBER 30TH

This report is for information.

The information contained in this report is based on financial results up to November 30, 2022 (Q1). The ability of staff to convey a high degree of confidence in our forecast for the year-end financial position based on three months of operations is limited, as is the ability to fundamentally alter the assumptions used in the development of the budget. Consistent with the approved budget for 2022-23, staff expect the WRDSB to finish the year in a deficit position; this was confirmed through submission of our Revised Estimates to the Ministry of Education (Ministry) on December 23, 2022, which showed an in-year deficit forecast of \$5.31M, or 0.71% of operating revenues. The 2022-23 Q1 Interim Financial Report compared the budget to the forecasted year-end position. Key budget risks were identified.

Trustees asked questions regarding the Professionals and Paraprofessionals expenditures and the timing of the Grants for Student Needs release for the 2023-24 school year.

Congratulations were expressed to N. Landry for his new role as Superintendent, Business Services & Treasurer of the Board.

EXTERNAL MEMBER APPOINTMENT ON BOARD AUDIT COMMITTEE

The external member appointments to the Board Audit Committee are effective as of the dates outlined in this report. Ontario Regulation 361/10 requires all school boards to establish an Audit Committee with two persons who are not board members. The selection committee recommended that Graham Rumble and Tracy Williams be appointed to serve on the Board Audit Committee as external members,

5. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by M. Radlein:

That the Board appoint Mr. Graham Rumble as an external member to the Board Audit Committee for an initial term ending August 31, 2026; and

That the Board appoint Ms. Tracy Williams as an external member to the Board Audit Committee for an initial term ending August 31, 2025.

-Carried-

STAFF FOLLOW UP

CHICOPEE HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL TRAFFIC UPDATE

This report is for information.

The report outlined actions that have been taken recently by the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) and Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) to address road safety concerns at Chicopee Hills Public School.

The three specific short-term measures the Region is considering, alongside the City of Kitchener (the City), are:

- Installation of boulevard signage warning pedestrians of the risk of walking/cycling on the road in the wrong direction (Region);
- Implementation of an adult liaison on the bridge to help with pedestrian congestion on the bridge and to advise children to stay off the road (City); and
- Re-striping the westbound driving lanes on Fairway Road between Pebble Creek Drive and Lackner Boulevard to move the driving lanes further away from the north boulevard (Region).

L. Agar, Manager of Planning, expressed appreciation for the community partners assisting in this process.

Trustees asked questions regarding Trailblazer safety patrols, the City trail that was once considered, the Drive to Five program and future solutions.

A motion moved by Trustee C. Watson, and seconded by Trustee B. Cody, was moved to write a letter advocating to the Ministry of Transportation for a change in the speed limit on the Regional Road. Trustees discussed the motion and concerns were raised that it might interfere with ongoing discussions.

JANUARY 23, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

6. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by B. Cody:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board postpone writing a letter to the Minister of Transportation until such time as staff contact the Region of Waterloo and determine it would be helpful to the process.

-Postponement Carried-

7. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by B. Cody:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Minister of Transportation asking that Fairway Road be redesignated a school zone.

-Postponed-

REPORTS continued

OPEN LETTER RELEASED ON JANUARY 20, 2023

The discussion started with an inquiry as to why staff decided to issue the open letter and who the letter was from. Director j. chanicka shared that the delegation's questions were referred to staff and as such staff were addressing the questions. Due to the concern by the delegation regarding transparency with the community, it was decided that staff would issue the letter openly and publicly to the entire community. All members of senior staff present at the meeting confirmed that the letter was from all of them.

Trustees discussed the open letter and asked questions regarding the novel, The Bluest Eye, the process undertaken writing the letter and the function of books in the library.

Trustee M. Ramsay was deemed Out of Order for interrupting another trustee.

Discussion continued with trustees expressing their opinion on the open letter. At the request of a trustee, Director j. chanicka reminded Trustees that the delegation accused staff of child abuse, which is problematic, and that comments implying that the WRDSB is hiding things from parents is a sentiment that continue to be used to target 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying students using the guise of "age appropriateness". Director j. chanicka provided a number of statistics and further explained the importance of providing 2SLGBTQIA+ students and staff a safe environment. Staff further reminded Trustees that there is a transparent process in place for the selection and deselection of library books and noted staff are investigating whether the student was the one who signed out the book in question.

Trustee discussion continued and Trustee K. Woodcock called a Point of Order on Trustee M. Ramsay for accusations of staff weaponizing empathy. Chairperson J. Weston asked Trustee M. Ramsay to withdraw the language used. He refused to do so and continued his comments. Trustee S. Piatkowski called a Point of Order on Trustee M. Ramsay indicating that Trustee

JANUARY 23, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

M. Ramsay was continuing to cast disparaging comments on staff. Chairperson J. Weston moved to the next speaker.

Discussion continued.

8. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by M. Radlein:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board take a five minute recess.

-Carried-

Opposed: K. Woodcock

9. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by F. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the meeting an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

STAFF AND BOARD REPORTS

MOTION: STAFF WELL-BEING REPORT

Chairperson J. Weston asked Vice-Chair K. Woodcock to chair the meeting for this agenda item.

This Notice of Motion was served at the September 19, 2022, Committee of the Whole meeting by Trustee J. Weston with support from former Trustee J. Herring, whose term has since ended. Chairperson J. Weston spoke to the motion.

Trustees discussed the motion and it was noted that it is intended to be for all staff not certain groups.

10. Moved by J. Weston, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board request a report that explores the structures that currently exist to support staff well-being; and

That the report explores further support that may be needed to create and action a staff wellness and well-being strategy; and

That the report consider how staff can be supported when impacted by circumstances outside the workplace, including harassment on social media and personal situations; and

JANUARY 23, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

That the report and all costs associated with the supports, be provided to the Board of Trustees as soon as possible and as scheduled by the Agenda Development Committee.

-Carried-

Chairperson J. Weston chaired the remainder of the meeting.

DISCUSSION: RETIREMENT CELEBRATION CHAIRPERSON

With the return to in person gatherings, the Board of Trustees have an opportunity to reflect on and reimagine the board retirement celebration. Staff provided trustees with recommendations to consider. Staff were thanked for their research.

Trustees discussed the recommendations and asked questions regarding former trustees and surveying staff. A motion to postpone the decision was moved and discussed including the delay a survey would result in.

11. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by B. Cody:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board postpone the decision regarding the 2023 retirement celebration until a survey is sent to all staff.

-Postponement Defeated-

Opposed:
C. Johnson
F. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
M. Ramsay
M. Snyder
M. Waseem
K. Woodcock
*V. Raina
*K. Soror

* Student Trustees votes are recorded for the purpose of public record and for accountability to the student body; however, it is recognized that “a student trustee is not a member of the Board” (Education Act, Section 55 (2))

12. Moved by F. Meissner, seconded by M. Waseem:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve celebrating 2023 WRDSB retirees through a reception with appetizers; and

JANUARY 23, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

That the 2023 retirees are provided a small catalogue of gifts to choose from, including the option to donate the value of the gift to either Nutrition for Learning, Food4Kids or WEFI, to acknowledge their service to the board.

-Carried-

Opposed:
B. Cody
C. Watson

13. Moved by F. Meissner, seconded by M. Snyder:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board extend the meeting an additional thirty minutes to 10:30 p.m.

-Carried-

Opposed: K. Woodcock

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson received complaints regarding the Get Real presentation and parents not receiving permission slips or being provided information. Director j. chanicka noted that he received her email regarding this at the end of the day on Wednesday, and Associate Director S. Miller informed her that staff would follow up and get back to her when the information was received. He cautioned against making statements that staff are doing things without telling parents without first hearing back from staff on the facts of the situation, and he asked that questions be presented without accusations. Associate Director S. Miller will provide the information as soon as he has it. Trustee C. Watson indicated that she was relaying the information from parents. Chairperson J. Weston reminded trustees of the meeting norms regarding tone and positive intentions.

Student Trustee K. Soror left the meeting.

Trustee F. Meissner shared that a number of township families raised concerns regarding the buses running on a day with freezing rain last week when rural unpaved roads might be hazardous for students. He asked if the decision to cancel buses takes into consideration both urban and rural road conditions and how the decision is made. Superintendent P. Kaur noted that the Board has a procedure that outlines the different situations for inclement weather and reviewed the situations. Superintendent N. Landry shared a video from STSWR which outlines the decision making process. Trustee F. Meissner asked if staff differentiate between students who travel on gravel versus paved roads. Superintendent N. Landry shared that there are spotters throughout the region who look at roads and there may be situations where specific roads are not driveable and the bus operators would share this information with STSWR and families would be informed accordingly.

JANUARY 23, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

ADJOURNMENT

14. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 23 , 2023, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.