

APRIL 19, 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, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay, C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

Virtual Attendees: S. Piatkowski, M. Snyder, M. Waseem.

Student Trustee K. Soror was in attendance and Student Trustee V. Raina was not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, V. Collis, E. Dougan-McKenzie, E. Giannopoulos, S. Hickey, C. Hill, D. Liebermann, S. Miller and G. Shantz.

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

Chairperson J. Weston shared remarks indicating that this meeting was moved from Monday in order to recognize secular, religious and creed-based observances and holidays. She also noted that a 15-minute recess would be held this evening to allow individuals observing Ramadan to break the fast. As the Director is also fasting, Associate Director Scott Miller will assume the responsibilities of the Director until the Director returns.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the April 19, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson J. Weston shared regrets from Student Trustee V. Raina.

Chairperson J. Weston, with Trustees B. Cody, M. Radlein, S. Piatkowski, K. Woodcock and Student Trustees V. Raina and K. Soror, attended the Mayor's Dinner, which raises money for The Working Centre in Kitchener.

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Chairperson J. Weston congratulated Student Trustee K. Soror for winning the Zonta International Young Women in Public Affairs Award.

Chairperson J. Weston congratulated Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute (CHCI) student Ellen Brisley who has been recognized for her work in the community with Canada's Loran Award.

Chairperson J. Weston also congratulated all other students winning awards and scholarships.

Chairperson J. Weston attended a Grade 9 Science detreamed classroom at CHCI.

Trustee B. Cody and C. Johnson visited Galt Collegiate Institute and Preston High School

Trustee C. Johnson visited six additional schools: William G Davis, St Andrew's Senior Public School, Southwood Secondary School, Jacob Hespeler Secondary School, Central Public School, and Glenview Park Secondary School. She shared a short slide presentation from Glenview Park Secondary School's Trades Fair and Expo. She will be visiting Elgin Street Public School tomorrow.

Trustee K. Woodcock, with Trustees B. Cody, F. Meissner, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay and Chairperson J. Weston, attended the Professional Student Services Personnel (PSSP) social event.

Trustee S. Piatkowski, with Trustees C. Johnson, M. Radlein and K. Woodcock, attended the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Central West Regional Meeting. The WRDSB will be hosting the fall meeting.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations spoke at this evening's meeting:

- Richard Haighway- Elementary French Immersion Changes
- Susan Morley - French as a Second Language Program Changes
- Sierra Pham - Remote Learning Program
- Cait Glasson - Motion: Request for Report on eBooks, Surveys & Curriculum
- Justin Buhr - Confronting and Preventing Anti-2SLGBTQ+ Hate in Schools
- Craig Sloss - Defending Freedom of Expression in the WRDSB

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

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

That the delegation from Richard Haighway be referred to staff to answer his questions.

-Defeated-

Opposed:

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C. Johnson
F. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
K. Woodcock

Trustees discussed a motion to include the French as a Second Language Program Changes as a future agenda item.

Student Trustee K. Soror joined the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

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

That French as a Second Language Program Changes be included as a future agenda item.

-Defeated-

Opposed:
C. Johnson
F. Meissner
S. Piatkowski
M. Snyder
K. Woodcock
*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))

Trustees discussed a motion to refer the delegation from Sierra Pham to staff for a response. Associate Director G. Shantz clarified that a survey was sent to remote learning parents to gauge interest in the program. In the small number of situations where a family wishes to move to remote learning, they are typically accommodated, but most families are moving to in-person learning.

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

That the delegation from Sierra Pham be referred to staff to answer the delegation’s questions.

-Carried-

Opposed:
C. Johnson
M. Radlein
K. Woodcock

Chairperson J. Weston called a 15 minute recess.

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting back to order at 8:20 p.m.

STAFF FOLLOW UP

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY G201 - TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

In 2019, changes were made to this regulation to require all school boards adopt a code of conduct and make it publicly available. The regulation also required school boards to review its Trustee code of conduct by May 15 every fourth year thereafter – May 15, 2023. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) is recommending school boards review their current Code of Conduct policy as required, and move a motion to confirm their existing policy. OPSBA suggests boards not make any major amendments at this time, as we await potential changes from the Ministry following the 2021 consultation.

Trustees discussed whether this approval was necessary based on the proposed legislative changes that were tabled as part of Bill 98, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023. It was confirmed, however, that Ontario Regulation 246/18 currently governs Trustee Code of Conduct policies, so this approval is required.

5. Moved by F. Meissner, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy G201 - Trustee Code of Conduct as presented at the April 19, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting.

-Carried-

Opposed:
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

REPORTS

RENAMING OF A.R. KAUFMAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Superintendent E. Giannopolous shared that the School Renaming Committee identified Hillside Public School as its preferred choice. The name Hillside connects to the community neighbourhood. The school is located on a modest hill and incorporates a surrounding street name. When the shortlist of names was presented to the community, Hillside was the most popular suggestion, especially among the student population.

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Superintendent C. Hill shared that the procedure for naming schools has now been used for one new school and three school renaming processes. The procedure will be refined based on these experiences.

Trustee M. Waseem left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Trustees asked questions regarding the short list of names and the background on why the school was being renamed.

6. Moved by C. Watson, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

Trustee questions continued regarding additional school name changes. It was noted that there is a process in the policy which allows for community concerns with names to be assessed.

7. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the name Hillside Public School from the following shortlisted names for the renaming of the elementary school at 11 Chopin Drive, Kitchener, Ontario.

- Hillside Public School
- Elm Public School
- Avens Public School

-Carried-

Opposed: B. Cody

RENAMING OF RYERSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Superintendent E. Giannopolous shared that the Naming Committee identified Blue Heron Public School as its preferred choice. The connections to both the community neighbourhood and the natural world, though the connection to the Grand River and Cambridge, will offer students an opportunity to learn about, connect with, and develop deep respect for the both natural world and the natural habitat in their neighbourhood. Students will have opportunities to learn about the importance of each one of us as individuals and as community members to work to be good stewards of the environment and of their neighbourhood.

Trustees asked questions regarding student involvement in the process.

8. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the name Blue Heron Public School from the following shortlisted names for the renaming of the elementary school at 749 Grand Valley Drive, Cambridge, Ontario.

- Blue Heron Public School
- Mapleview Public School
- Marshland Public School
- Willow River Public School

-Carried-

Opposed: B. Cody

BOARD REPORTS

MOTION: REQUEST FOR REPORT ON EBOOKS, SURVEYS & CURRICULUM

This Notice of Motion was served at the January 30, 2023, Board meeting by Trustee C. Watson with support from Trustee M. Ramsay. Trustee C. Watson spoke in favour of her motion indicating that it is requesting a report to address the concerns of parents.

Trustees debated the motion and asked questions of clarification regarding the motion. Trustees asked questions regarding procedures available on the website, the connection between eBook access and sexual health curriculum.

9. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by C. Watson:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:30 p.m.

-Carried-

Debate and discussion continued. Staff were asked about filtering of virtual libraries and it was confirmed that, like physical school libraries, they are a curated collection of books and that parents always have the option to return a book they do not want their child to read.

Trustee K. Woodcock called a Point of Order during Trustee C. Watson's closing remarks when Trustee C. Watson implied motivation behind voting against the motion. Chairperson J. Weston ruled in favour of the Point of Order and Trustee C. Watson reworded her statement.

At the April 24, 2023 Board Meeting a recorded vote was requested for this motion, replacing the vote which occurred on April 19, 2023.

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

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That the Waterloo Region District School Board provide a written report to the Board of Trustees explaining why elementary students are able to access eBooks that are not age appropriate from the WRDSB online library, as well as details about what filtering process is being used to ensure that elementary children are not able to access eBooks that are not age appropriate; and

That the report also include the process by which parents are provided information and opt out notice before surveys and sexual health teaching in its various forms to help ensure parents are informed and included in their child’s sexual health education; and

That the written report be presented at a Committee of the Whole in May 2023.

-Defeated-

In Favour
B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

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

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ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 19, 2023, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 p.m.