

JUNE 12, 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, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay, C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

Trustee M. Waseem was unable to attend.

Student Trustees V. Raina and K. Soror were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), D. Ahluwalia, E. Dougan-McKenzie, 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.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the June 12, 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 Trustee M. Waseem.

Trustee B. Cody rode with Bikers Against Bullying - Ontario.

Trustees C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Waseem, J. Weston, K. Woodcock attended the WRDSB Transforming Education event at Groh Public School. Trustee M. Radlein thanked the staff who presented at the event.

Trustee S. Piatkowski visited Waterloo Collegiate Institute, completing his goal of visiting every school in the Waterloo/Wilmot riding.

JUNE 12, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Trustees S. Piatkowski and J. Weston attended the Bluevale Collegiate Institute's 50th Anniversary celebration.

Trustee C. Johnson visited Clemens Mill Public School, Blue Heron Public School, Coronation Public School and the Remote Learning Program school. She also attended the Grand River Pride flag raising in Cambridge.

Trustees C. Johnson, K. Woodcock and Student Trustee K. Soror attended the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Annual General Meeting.

Student Trustee V. Raina acted as MC with Student Trustee-Elects A. Awan and C. Dong at the first-ever Student Wellness Conference.

Student Trustee V. Raina spoke at the inaugural Asian Heritage Day under the theme, One Asia, Many Cultures.

Student Trustee V. Raina and Trustees J. Weston and K. Woodcock attended a Kodaly choir performance.

Trustee K. Woodcock was one of many who attended the celebration of life for Fred Meissner.

Trustees C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Waseem, J. Weston and K. Woodcock attended the Waterloo Region Elementary Administrators (WREA) retirement celebration.

Trustee K. Woodcock attended the 2023 Children's Groundwater Festival.

Trustee J. Weston attended the WRDSB June 8 Pride event with the GSA students.

On June 6, 2023, the Board of Trustees hosted the WRDSB Retirement Celebration. Trustees C. Johnson, M. Radlein, M. Waseem, J. Weston and K. Woodcock were in attendance. Chairperson J. Weston thanked staff for organizing the event.

Trustees C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, J. Weston and K. Woodcock attended the Pride Flag raising ceremony at the WRDSB Education Centre. Chairperson J. Weston spoke to the importance of the Pride flag and shared comments from the recent statement made by the Minister of Education.

Chairperson J. Weston and Vice-Chair K. Woodcock attended the Oak Creek Public School Opening Celebration and made special mention of the talented choir performances.

Trustee K. Woodcock attended the Pride flag raising at Country Hills Public School also noting the talented choir performances.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations spoke at this evening’s meeting:

- Amanda Abdo - Air Purifiers
- Julia Malott - Safe and Healthy Educational Environments

Trustees were provided an opportunity to ask questions of clarification of delegates and requested a copy of the delegation on Safe and Healthy Educational Environments from Julia Malott. Trustees voted in favour of referring the delegation on Air Purifiers from Amanda Abdo to staff.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Amanda Abdo to staff to respond to the delegate.

-Carried-

In Favour:

- B. Cody
- C. Johnson
- S. Piatkowski
- M. Radlein
- M. Ramsay
- C. Watson
- J. Weston
- 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))

STAFF FOLLOW UP

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 3007 - MEMBERSHIP IN ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS’ ASSOCIATION

Board Policy 3007 pertains to membership in the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (OPSBA). Information regarding the services provided by OPSBA can be found at www.opsba.org. These services include labour relations, advocacy initiatives, media relations, and professional development. The fee is based on a formula connected to a school board’s

student enrolment. OPSBA has indicated that there will be a fee increase for the 2023-2024 school year.

Trustees discussed the motion including the work OPSBA does for the WRDSB and other public school boards. It was also noted that some trustees believe OPSBA may require reform.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy approve Board Policy 3007 as presented at the June 12, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting; and

That the Waterloo Region District School Board continue with membership in the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) for 2023-2024.

-Carried-

REPORTS

BOARD REPORTS

MOTION: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Trustee M. Ramsay withdrew this motion with support from Trustee C. Watson. The rationale for withdrawal is that the recent passage of *Bill 98, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023* (Bill 98) may address many of the pieces of the proposed motion. It was noted that a future report on the implementation of Bill 98 may be requested.

MOTION: CONTRACTS

This Notice of Motion was served at the March 20, 2023, Board meeting by Trustee M. Ramsay with support from Trustee C. Watson. Trustee M. Ramsay spoke to his motion, mentioning that in a very tight fiscal climate, the purpose is increased transparency.

A recorded vote was requested.

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

(1) That any contract entered into the Board for the receipt of services, where the rate of compensation for the services of any individual equals or exceeds \$300/hour, shall require the personal written approval of the Director of Education; and

(2) That the Director of Education shall inform the Chair of the Board of any such contract prior to approving such contract; and

JUNE 12, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

(3) That the Director of Education shall inform the Board of all such contracts at the Board meeting immediately following the entry of such contracts, and shall cause a copy of all such contracts to be included in the agenda package for such meeting; and

(4) That notwithstanding paragraphs (1) through (3) above, any contract entered into by the Board for the receipt of services, where the rate of compensation for the services of any individual equals or exceeds \$500/hour, shall also require a recorded ratification vote of a majority of the members of the Board at a special meeting called for that purpose, or at a general meeting of the Board, in order for such contract to be valid and binding on the Board and all contracts calling for such compensation shall contain a proviso describing the ratification requirement; and

(5) That paragraphs 3 and 4 shall not apply to contracts for the provision of legal services or legal advice to the Board by a lawyer.

-Defeated-

In Favour:

B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

Opposed:

C. Johnson
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
J. Weston
K. Woodcock
*V. Raina

Abstained:

*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))

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson asked about concerns she has heard from parents about the SHORE Centre and other presentations at schools occurring without parent permission. She also asked about how many student absences occurred as a result of protesting Pride celebrations. Associate Director S. Miller said it would be difficult to determine how many absences were related to Pride celebrations as June has many other factors that contribute to absences including the Friday PD day and proms. He noted that we continue to follow the direction from the Ministry of Education, uphold the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), and ensure that all WRDSB students feel a sense of belonging in school through programming and curriculum. Trustee C. Watson referred to the policy for religious accommodations regarding competing rights where parents feel that an activity is not age appropriate. Associate Director S. Miller referred to Administrative Procedure 1238 Exemption From Instruction Related To The Human Development And Sexual Health Expectations noting that the WRDSB does not provide

accommodations for curriculum and lessons that build a climate of inclusion or safety including discussions regarding protected human rights grounds under OHRC. This applies to discussions and activities brought into the schools.

Trustee M. Ramsay asked if staff were suggesting that a parent does not have the right to withdraw their student from a classroom because the material is incorporated into the curriculum and about the WRDSB's authority to incorporate these activities into the curriculum. He references the memo from the Minister of Education regarding Pride month and asked if staff have paused to determine if the activities are positive if parts of the community are withdrawing their kids from certain activities. Associate Director S. Miller shared that we continue to celebrate our students and recognize various religious festivals and months of celebration and provide access to faith based accommodations while highlighting inclusive practices. Opportunities are provided to students to celebrate their identities, upholding the OHRC while doing so. Trustee M. Ramsay asked how the WRDSB interpretation of the OHRC is in line with the Ministry of Education. Human Rights and Equity Advisor D. Ahluwalia shared that there is settled law on competing rights on religious accommodations indicating that there is not to be accommodation if that accommodation creates exclusion. She can share this information with trustees. She also advised that WRDSB policies and procedures continue to be in line with the law and the OHRC.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Watson with support from Trustee M. Ramsay:

Whereas the mandated WRDSB Religious and Creed Accommodations Policy 1012 states that parents have the right to request a religious accommodation concerning school curriculum,

Whereas the WRDSB Policy 1012, 3.4 states "In dealing with competing rights claims, the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that there is no hierarchy of Charter rights. All have equal status and no right is more important than the others. Related to this is the principle that no right is absolute. Every right is inherently limited by the rights and freedom of others."

Whereas some parents have requested a religious accommodation for their child and have not been informed about sexual health teaching, class discussions and presentations outside of the curriculum-based health class,

Whereas parents outside of the Religious Accommodation process have complained that sexual health teaching, class discussions and presentations outside of curriculum-based health class are not age appropriate for their child/children and don't align with sexual health curriculum guidelines.

Whereas Bill 98 "will strengthen parent involvement" by "authorizing the minister to require school boards to provide parent-friendly information about their child's education".

Therefore, be it resolved:

That Board Policy 1012 under 1.7 be revised to more accurately reflect 3.4 concerning the exception of “competing rights;” and

That Board Policy 1012, 1.6.6. be added to ensure that parents be provided with detailed information concerning dates, times, sexual health teaching, class discussions and presentations outside of curriculum-based health class which would allow parents to make informed decisions about their child’s accommodation.

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee C. Watson with support from Trustee M. Ramsay:

Whereas air quality within the classroom and the school environment has a significant impact on student achievement and well-being,

Whereas the WRDSB does not have an indoor air quality policy,

Therefore be it resolved

That the Waterloo Region District School Board strike an ad hoc committee that would develop an indoor air quality policy that would consider the following items but not limited to, air purifiers and the ratio of air purifiers for every learning space per school , placement and replacement of air purifiers, the advantages and cost effectiveness of CR boxes, appropriate window use, portable C02 monitors with real time readings that are easily read within the classroom environment, consideration for ongoing evaluation of emerging technology as well as a reporting procedure that would inform parents, and parent councils and staff about the quality of air in classrooms and working environments; and

That the air quality of buses also be discussed with possible solutions that would help monitor air quality of buses during the school year; and

That the committee include appropriate staff, two trustees, two parents, a relevant licensed professional engineer, two frontline teachers from the elementary and secondary panel as well as student trustees; and

That the indoor air quality policy upon completion be presented to the board of trustees at a Committee of the Whole in December 2023 for approval.

Notices of Motion will be scheduled by the Agenda Development Committee for a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

5. Moved by C. Johnson, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 12, 2023, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.