

JANUARY 22, 2024
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, S. Estoesta*, C. Johnson, J. Meissner, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, M. Ramsay*, M. Waseem, C. Watson and K. Woodcock.

*Virtual Attendance

Student Trustees A. Awan was in attendance and Student Trustee C. Dong was not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: L. Agar, R. Dallan, E. Dougan-McKenzie, N. Landry, S. Miller (Interim Director of Education and Secretary) and G. Shantz.

Other staff in attendance: K. Fischer, P. Glauser, L. Lima, M. Mayer and S. Reidel.

Guest: Leon Demaiter, President, DEI Consulting Engineers.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Chairperson J. Weston shared that Associate Director S. Miller will be the Director of Education's designate for this meeting.

Chairperson J. Weston noted the passing of former WRDSB Trustee, Jim Wideman.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the January 22, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee C. Johnson shared information on last week's Student Roundtable.

Trustee C. Watson attended a school options and information night.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Trustees C. Watson and M. Ramsay each declared a pecuniary interest in the previous in camera meeting.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations were scheduled to speak at this evening's meeting:

- Elaine Scharlach - Regulations for Attendees and Responses to Delegates
- David Todor - Transparency, Responsibility and Accountability at WRDSB
- Amanda Abdo - Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Monitoring
- Ryan Tennant - Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Monitoring Pilot
- Carolyn Bowman - Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Monitoring Pilot

Elaine Scharlach was asked to remain on the topic of Regulations for Attendees and Responses to Delegates. Trustee S. Piatkowski called a Point of Order asking that the gallery come to order so that the delegation could be heard. Chairperson J. Weston called the gallery to order.

Elaine Scharlach was asked a second time to remain on the topic of Regulations for Attendees and Responses to Delegates. Trustee C. Watson called a point of order requesting that the delegation be given some flexibility in their examples. Chairperson J. Weston indicated she is giving flexibility, but that commentary on previous decisions are not related to the topic she requested to delegate on.

The public gallery was called to order two more times during the delegation and again after the delegation was complete.

Chairperson J. Weston paused the delegation from David Todor and asked that he indicate the book from which he was going to read from, before continuing the delegation. He refused to provide the information. Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order indicating that she hasn't recalled a time when a book name was requested. Chairperson J. Weston acknowledged her input. The delegate was asked numerous times before providing the information to the Chairperson. He was permitted to complete his delegation.

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

That the delegation from Amanda Abdo be shared for information with the Ad Hoc Air Quality Committee.

-Carried-

3. Moved by M. Waseem, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the delegation from Ryan Tennant be shared for information with the Ad Hoc Air Quality Committee.

-Carried-

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

That the delegation from Ryan Tennant be shared for information with Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR).

-Carried-

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

That the delegation from Carolyn Bowman be shared for information with the Ad Hoc Air Quality Committee.

-Carried-

REPORTS

DEVELOPMENT AREA ANNUAL REPORT

This report was provided for information.

There are no changes to Development Area assignments for the 2024-2025 school year.

Trustees asked questions regarding the communication plan and alternative ways to inform families of the development areas.

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS QUARTERLY UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

Current capital projects with budgets greater than \$2.5M were presented indicating the project status relative to the schedule, budget, and scope. Significant milestones, along with basic project statistics, were also presented. All projects are proceeding through their stages. As mentioned in previous reports, staff continue to see construction cost estimates exceeding benchmark funding provided by the Ministry of Education. Staff will tender the projects once the Ministry approves the additional funding allocations. The cost escalations are attributable to global commodity price increases for fuel and the construction materials used to build our schools. For the new school in South Kitchener, staff are currently awaiting Site Plan Approval and Building Permit from the City of Kitchener.

Trustees asked questions regarding the project timelines and including safe and active routes to school in the design phase of new schools.

2023-2024 INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT AND FORECAST

This report was provided for information.

Consistent with the approved budget for 2023-24, staff expect the WRDSB to finish the year in a deficit position; this was confirmed through the submission of our revised estimates to the Ministry of Education on December 15, 2023, which showed an in-year deficit forecast of \$6.2M, or 0.72% of operating revenues. The 2023-2024 Q1 Interim Financial Report, comparing the budget to the forecasted year-end position, was provided. Revenue budget risks, which may impact the year end results, include enrolment and the extended day program. Expense budget risks which may impact the year end results include classroom teachers, supply staff, school operations and other non-operating expenses.

Trustees asked questions about enrolment being lower than forecasted and the provincial supply cost issues.

COVID VENTILATION MEASURES AT THE WRDSB

This report was provided for information.

L. Lima, Manager of Mechanical, Electrical and Environmental Services, reviewed the background of this report including a survey of site ventilation from 2020 and the deployment of HEPA units. He also reviewed the Ministry of Education guidance for schools and WRDSB ventilation practices. He reviewed ventilation related costs in 2021 through 2024 (projected). Manager L. Lima also reviewed capital upgrades to non-ventilated spaces.

Trustees asked questions regarding the number of HEPA filters deployed in schools and the number of classrooms without mechanical ventilation. They also asked about next steps, which will be included in the next report, and the status of ventilation at other school boards. Associate Director G. Shantz shared information on the communication regarding HEPA filters from the beginning of the school year to all families and asked that any families with concerns to reach out to their school administrator and check the Ventilation Report on the WRDSB website for updates.

CO₂ SENSOR FEASIBILITY STUDY UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

Associate Director G. Shantz introduced the report and reviewed the motions from which this report and the CO₂ sensor feasibility study stemmed from. Associate Director G. Shantz introduced Leon Demaiter, President, DEI Consulting Engineers. Lou Lima, Manager of Mechanical, Electrical and Environmental Services, reviewed how CO₂ Sensors were used for energy conservation at WRDSB prior to COVID. Manager L. Lima also reviewed the criteria used to select the three elementary schools for the pilot in an attempt to obtain across- the- Board representation typical of our ventilation infrastructure. R. Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects, reviewed the testing methodology for the September to November 2023 pilot project. He shared

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diagrams explaining the makeup of inhaled and exhaled air. Manager R. Dallan also provided background information regarding common CO₂ levels, impacts of CO₂ on a person and Health Canada's recommendations. A graphic depicting the typical school day was provided as was a graphic explaining a typical packaged heat and air conditioning rooftop unit. Required ventilation section 6.2.2.1 of the Ontario Building Code referring to ASHRAE 62.1 Standard was provided for information.

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 22, 2024, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

L. Demaiter from DEI Consulting Engineers provided background information on ASHRAE, mechanical ventilation and CO₂ detectors.

Associate Director G. Shantz reviewed the communication process undertaken during the pilot project and thanked the school administrators and facilities staff for this work. Manager R. Dallan reviewed the data results of the pilot project at all three schools and how they relate to the negative impacts of CO₂ on a person. No schools' daily average went over the 1500 ppm which would indicate improper mechanical ventilation nor did they reach 2000 ppm where a person would feel fatigue, headaches or loss of focus. Manager L. Lima reviewed the six service work orders for repairs during the pilot project. The pilot project financials were reviewed as was the projected cost to implement across the WRDSB. Trustees were provided with some possible future considerations including:

- enhance/modify the annual preventive maintenance currently undertaken on heating, ventilation and cooling systems of approx. 2000 units to include more frequent verification of infrastructure associated with fresh air / exhaust dampers.
- adding mechanical ventilation this summer to ~30 more classrooms.
- continue upgrading/modernizing HVAC controls on older pneumatic unit to modern controls.

Trustees asked questions regarding communication with bus operators regarding air quality, the different impact of CO₂ on children compared to adults, why elementary schools were chosen for the pilot, air quality consideration in building design, and costs associated with installing the current CO₂ sensors in different schools.

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 22, 2024, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:30 p.m.

-Carried-

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee M. Radlein asked for an update on the discussions with Grand River Transit (GRT) and community partners regarding free bus fares for students. Senior Manager L. Agar provided some background information and shared that the Region is leading a preliminary modeling project looking at the impact of a free rider pass to all secondary students. The findings of the modeling project will inform the GRT program recommendations for 2025.

Trustee C. Watson asked why the overflow room was not open for tonight's meeting. Associate Director S. Miller indicated that meetings are live streamed and that the overflow room had not yet been needed this school year. He will take the question back and follow up.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee J. Meissner with support from Trustee S. Estoesta:

Whereas The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) provides advice to the Minister of Education about the development and delivery of programs and services for students with special education needs and identifying and providing early intervention programs;

Whereas MACSE members represent various exceptionalities to address the wide range of circumstances that may affect a student's ability to learn, and are meant to be inclusive of all medical conditions, whether diagnosed or not, that can lead to particular types of learning difficulties;

Whereas MACSE has had multiple and long-standing vacancies;

Whereas members of MACSE are appointed by the Minister of Education;

Whereas the WRDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) has concerns about the multiple and long-standing vacancies and that this may be limiting the work of MACSE

Therefore it be resolved:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board write a letter to the Ministry of Education to inquire about multiple and long-standing vacancies in The Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE) and what is planned to fill these vacancies; and

That copies of the letter be sent to Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), other Ontario public school boards, and local Members of Provincial Parliament; and

That any response be forwarded to WRDSB SEAC.

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The following Notice of Motion was served by Trustee K. Woodcock with support from Trustee S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board send a letter to The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Finance & Deputy Prime Minister, advocating for a National School Food Program using the template provided by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA); and

That copies will be provided to all local Members of Provincial Parliament, local Members of Parliament, Regional Council Chair, all local Mayors, OPSBA and OPSBA member Chairs.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 22, 2024, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.