

APRIL 15, 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 Trustee C. Dong was in attendance and Student Trustee A. Awan was not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), L. Agar, D. Ahluwalia, J. Albrecht, M. Armellini, E. Dougan-McKenzie, N. Landry, S. Miller, and G. Shantz.

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

That the agenda of the April 15, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson J. Weston congratulated Superintendent E. Giannopoulos on her appointment to Associate Director at Upper Grand District School Board. Chairperson J. Weston shared words of appreciation and well wishes.

Trustee M. Radlein visited Westmount Public School, Prueter Public School, Sunnyside Senior Public School, Wilson Avenue Public School and Chicopee Hills Public School.

As a follow up to her attendance at the Awards Night for the Youth Ed Poster and Literary Contest at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 530, Trustee K. Woodcock announced that Nancy Ge, from Laurel Heights Secondary School, was awarded National Second Place in the Senior Black & White Poster category.

Trustees M. Radlein and K. Woodcock attended the Sikh Heritage Day event.

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Trustees S. Estoesta, S. Piatkowski and K. Woodcock attended the Ontario Public School Boards' Association's Central West Regional Conference at Brantford Woodland Cultural Centre.

Trustees B. Cody, C. Johnson, S. Piatkowski, M. Radlein, C. Johnson and K. Woodcock attended the Working Centre's Mayors' Dinner.

Student Trustee C. Dong shared that a Student Roundtable was hosted on April 4, 2024, covering the topics of the Children and Youth Planning Table 2023 Youth Impact Survey data and School Board Finances and Budget.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations spoke at this evening's meeting:

- Lamees Jallad - Anti-Palestinian Racism Experience
- Quill Christie-Peters - Anti-Arab Racism and Censorship
- Akbar Arkani - Palestinian Issues within the WRDSB
- Cristina Fernandes - Book Review for Libraries and Classrooms
- Elaine Scharlach - Budget Deficit
- Julia Malott - Solar Eclipse Decision

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Elaine Scharlach to staff to respond to the delegate's questions.

-Carried-

Opposed:
C. Johnson
S. Piatkowski
M. Radlein
M. Waseem
J. Weston
*C. Dong

* 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))

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Julia Malott to staff to respond to the delegate's questions.

-Carried-

Opposed:
C. Johnson
M. Radlein
M. Waseem

STAFF FOLLOW UP

GRAND RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (GRCA) NATURE CENTRES

Associate Director S. Miller shared that the WRDSB has not received any information from GRCA regarding the closure of any of their nature centres. If information is received, it will be shared with Trustees.

SEAC LETTER - FUNDING AMOUNTS

Superintendent J. Albrecht provided trustees with confirmation that the dollar values in the SEAC letter to the Ministry of Education were correct as \$500 per student is provided for Special Education transportation, which is much lower than the projected cost.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 1016 - USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS BY STUDENTS

Trustees discussed the use of the term families and caregivers. Staff and members of the Policy Working Groups reiterated that the term has been used for a number of years and is inclusive of all types of family dynamics, including parents, as the reason for the change in language.

4. Moved by S. Estoesta:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board call the question.

-Carried-

Opposed:
B. Cody
C. Watson

5. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 1016 - Use of Service Animals by Students as presented at the April 15, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

Opposed:
B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 5003 - RECOGNITION OF RETIRING STAFF

6. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by S. Estoesta:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 5003 - Recognition of Retiring Staff as presented at the April 15, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REPORTS

NEW SOUTH KITCHENER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOUNDARY REVIEW

Construction of a new 591-pupil place WRDSB JK-8 elementary school in southwest Kitchener will begin this spring. The project also includes a 3-room child care centre. The projected opening date for the school is September 2025. An attendance area must be established prior to the opening of the new school and staff are seeking approval to start a boundary review in accordance with Administrative Procedure 4991- Boundary Reviews. Staff recommend that the review include the following school communities:

- Groh Public School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8)
- J.W. Gerth Public School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6)
- Pioneer Park Public School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6)
- Brigadoon Public School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6)
- Doon Public School (Grade 7 to Grade 8)

The review will take place through the spring and fall of 2024 with a final recommendation presented to the Board of Trustees before January 2025.

Trustees asked questions regarding the secondary boundaries, the targeted start date for the new school and the Ministry of Education's moratorium on accommodation reviews.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the initiation of a boundary review process involving Brigadoon, Doon, Groh, J W Gerth, and Pioneer Park Public Schools to establish an attendance area for the new JK-8 elementary school to be constructed at 670 Thomas Slee Drive in Kitchener.

-Carried-

Abstained: J. Weston

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CHARGES BY-LAW - ANNUAL UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

Cushman & Wakefield and Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. were jointly retained by the WRDSB and Waterloo Catholic District School Board to review 2024 land costs, projected Education Development Charges (EDC) cashflow, and to assess the adequacy of the EDC rates to support upcoming site preparation costs and acquisition. Despite the change in land values, the annual increase in EDC rates is capped under Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 20/98. The maximum eligible charge established as part of the 2022 by-law amendment (\$4,423 per residential unit; \$2.72 per non-residential square foot) is sufficient to allow the WRDSB to increase its EDC charges annually, in compliance with O. Reg. 20/98. As such, no further increase to the maximum EDC charge is being recommended at this time.

When asked about the increase in land value in Cambridge, Senior Manager L. Agar shared that while she has not received the final report from the appraiser yet, the increase is likely due to a recent school purchase in addition to the general cost of land. The next opportunity for changing the EDC Bylaw will be in the winter of 2026.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson asked about a perceived inconsistency in the treatment of holidays on social media. Executive Officer E. Dougan-Mckenzie indicated that different platforms are treated differently as they serve different purposes. There is direction for all holidays to be treated the same, there are minimal descriptions, and typically, messaging is just well-wishes for those who celebrate.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 15, 2024, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.