

SEPTEMBER 16, 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, C. Watson and K. Woodcock*.

*Virtual Attendance

Trustee M. Waseem was unable to attend.

Student Trustees D. Lakhanpal and F. Luo were in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), L. Agar, D. Ahluwalia, E. Dougan-McKenzie, H. Hughes, N. Landry, B. Lemon and S. Miller.

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 M. Radlein, seconded by S. Estoesta:

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

-Carried-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson J. Weston shared regrets from Trustee M. Waseem

Trustee S. Piatkowski attended the July 2 - 5, 2024 Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Annual General Meeting and Canadian School Boards Association Congress in Toronto. He congratulated Trustee K. Woodcock on her election as OPSBA President.

Trustees C. Johnson, M. Radlein, S. Piatkowski and Chairperson J. Weston attended the August 27, 2024, WRDSB System Leaders Meeting.

Trustee S. Piatkowski attended the August 28, 2024, Education Townhall hosted by Kitchener Centre MPP Aislinn Clancy.

Trustees M. Radlein and S. Piatkowski attended the September 2, 2024, Annual Labour Day Picnic.

Chairperson J. Weston attended the Crestview Public School new playground opening.

Trustee M. Radlein attended New South Kitchener Elementary School Groundbreaking Ceremony.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

DELEGATIONS

No delegations were scheduled.

STAFF FOLLOW UP

There were no Staff Follow Up items.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 2002 - PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Trustees asked questions regarding the addition of section 1.1.

2. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by C. Johnson:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 2002 - Partnerships and Sponsorships as presented at the September 16, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

Opposed:
B. Cody
M. Ramsay
C. Watson

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY 4001 - OPENING OF NEW SCHOOLS & ADDITIONS

3. Moved by S. Estoesta, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy 4001 - Opening of New Schools & Additions as presented at the September 16, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY G201 - TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

On July 30, 2024, the Ministry of Education sent a memo regarding Strengthening School Board Governance and Accountability - Regulatory Reforms to Support the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023 . This memo outlined a mandatory code of conduct which will

provide a consistent standard for trustee conduct in all boards across the province. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) provided school boards with a revised template School Board Member (Trustee) Code of Conduct. The revised template includes changes required by Ontario Regulation 312/24 Member of School Boards – Code of Conduct and has been reviewed by legal counsel. The Policy Working Group made changes to Board Policy G201 - Trustee Code of Conduct based on the template provided by OPSBA.

Discussion occurred regarding the language used in Section 11, which some deemed to be too broad. It was noted that there are other board policies and procedures that provide a more detailed outline of how board property should or should not be used. It was determined that additional Related References would be added to the policy to assist in understanding on Section 11.

Trustees were asked if they have further concerns with sections, to please provide those to the Policy Working Group as further revisions will be required prior to January 2025.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve Board Policy G201 - Trustee Code of Conduct as presented at the September 16, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

-Carried-

Opposed:
C. Body
M. Ramsay
C. Watson
D. Lakhanpal*

* 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))

REPORTS

BANK BORROWING RESOLUTION

In the normal course of business, the WRDSB borrows money to meet its short-term cash flow needs. This is necessary because of timing differences between our collection of revenues from municipalities and the province, and our payment schedules for the expenditures of the WRDSB. The Education Act (subsection 243) allows borrowing up to the uncollected amount of revenues of the Board.

Trustees asked questions regarding the cash reserves and flow of funding.

5. Moved by M. Radlein, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board adopt the Resolution, as outlined in Appendix A, authorizing the borrowing of money to meet current expenditures of the Waterloo Region District School Board for fiscal year 2024.

-Carried-

CAPITAL PRIORITIES 2024-2025

This report was provided for information.

The 2020-2030 Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) identifies the WRDSB accommodation needs up to 2030. Recognizing the priorities and criteria of the Ministry of Education (Ministry)'s 2024-25 Capital Priorities Program, the WRDSB will submit business cases for three projects:

- An addition to Huron Heights Secondary School;
- New elementary school, North Cambridge (Equestrian Way at Dressage Trail); and
- New elementary school and child care, Rosenberg II (Rosenberg Way at Gehl Pl), Kitchener.

For each project, business cases describing the current situation, the project rationale, scope, funding, and estimated cost will be submitted to the Ministry.

Trustees asked questions regarding standard designs for buildings, ownership of building designs, the LTAP and Huron Heights Secondary School addition and capacity.

BOARD REPORTS

TRUSTEE SELF-EVALUATION

This report was provided for information.

Between May 28 and June 16, 2024, Trustees were invited to complete a self-evaluation survey as an opportunity to share their experiences and communicate their needs to each other. This survey was voluntary and respondents could skip any question they did not want to answer. Ten out of eleven WRDSB Trustees participated in the self-evaluation.

Trustee S. Estoesta thanked the Research and Organizational Transformation department for their work facilitating the survey and noted the changes to practice which ensured trustees could only answer the survey once.

MOTION: ENROLMENT

This Notice of Motion was withdrawn by Trustee C. Watson at the beginning of the meeting with agreement from the supporter, Trustee B. Cody as required in WRDSB Bylaw 25.1.5.

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee C. Watson asked about the technical issues surrounding the before and after school care registration. She shared that she was told that no apologies or explanations were provided. She asked for an update on the issue. Superintendent N. Landry shared that the WRDSB has acknowledged and apologised for the technical issue with the vendor. The registration launched on June 17th and was not working as required. A number of communications occurred during the summer informing and updating families. This is the first major issue with the vendor to have occurred in the 10 years using their software. Daily meetings have occurred with the vendor while the issue is being resolved. Approximately 150 families were initially impacted. The WRDSB's contract with the Region of Waterloo, which allows for eligible families to be subsidized, requires that we use this software.

Student Trustee F. Luo requested a status update on his past delegation regarding secondary bell times. Superintendent N. Landry shared that approximately 10 years ago a plan to implement later bell times for secondary schools was presented to trustees but not adopted. A bell time change of this scale would significantly impact the system and likely the bell times at all schools.

Trustee C. Watson asked about the recent article regarding a secondary class trip out of the country which was cancelled. Interim Associate Director B. Lemon shared that there is a procedure and process for the approval of out of country trips. This process requires that full approvals be granted prior to inviting students to attend and beginning to collect fees. In this particular case, this process did not appear to be followed but central staff are working with the school and Superintendent to determine the issue.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 16, 2024, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.