

NOVEMBER 11, 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 F. Luo was in attendance and Student Trustee D. Lakhanpal was not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: j. chanicka (Director of Education and Secretary), M. Armellini, E. Dougan-McKenzie, J. Fedosoff, A. Gaymes-San Vicente, N. Landry, S. Miller and C. Sagar.

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

Guests: Benoit Bourgault and Leslie Maxwell from Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region.

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 K. Woodcock:

That the agenda of the November 11, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee M. Radlein attended a microforest tree planting at Groh Public School.

Trustee M. Radlein attended the WRDSB Ed Centre Remembrance Day ceremony.

Trustee S. Piatkowski attended the City of Waterloo Neighbourhood Summit at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex Community Pavilion.

Trustee S. Piatkowski represented the Board and laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony in Elmira.

Trustee B. Cody represented the Board and laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony in Cambridge.

Trustee M. Ramsay attended a book launch for Irvin Studin's *Never Close the Schools Again. Ever.*

Trustee K. Woodcock represented the Board and laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Waterloo Cenotaph.

Trustee C. Johnson represented the Board and laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Preston Cenotaph.

Chairperson J. Weston brought greetings from the Board at the Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate & Vocational School commencement ceremony.

Chairperson J. Weston represented the Board and laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Kitchener Cenotaph.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

DELEGATIONS

The following delegations spoke at this evening's meeting:

- Nicole Davis - Extended Day Registration and Waitlists
- Maddi Kolberg - Canine Assisted Intervention Program
- Danielle Forbes, National Service Dogs - Canine Assisted Intervention Program
- Lauren Logan - Canine Assisted Intervention Program
- Cedric Daley - Transportation to Hillcrest Public School
- Biljana Todorovic - Transportation to Hillcrest Public School

Trustees were provided an opportunity to ask questions of clarification following each delegation. Staff were also provided an opportunity to clarify information from delegations.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer question 2 of the delegation from Nicole Davis to staff to provide a response to the delegation.

-Carried-

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Maddie Kolberg to staff to provide a response to the delegation.

-Carried-

Abstained: K. Woodcock

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Danielle Forbes to staff for information.

-Carried-

Abstained:
M. Radlein
S. Piatkowski
J. Weston
K. Woodcock

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Lauren Logan to the Policy Working Group for information.

-Carried-

Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order when staff provided clarification on the situation and the delegation was unable to respond to the information provided by staff. Chairperson J. Weston shared that the bylaws did not allow for it.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Cedric Daley to staff for review.

-Carried-

Opposed:
B. Cody
M. Radlein
J. Weston
K. Woodcock

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the delegation from Biljana Todorovic to staff for review.

-Carried-

Opposed:
M. Radlein
J. Weston
K. Woodcock

REPORTS

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES OF WATERLOO REGION (STSWR) ANNUAL REPORT AND SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANNING UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

The General Manager of Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR), Benoit Bourgault, has prepared the 2023-2024 Annual Report. He provided trustees with the highlights from the 2023-2024 school year, including safety initiatives, contract compliance and performance management, bus driver recruitment and productivity initiatives. He reviewed the key performance indicators related to safety, quality, service and cost. He also reviewed the steps taken to improve safety such as extended stop arms, seatbelts, and school safety zones. He reviewed the performance measurements related to student ride times, vehicle utilization, school travel planning, traffic issues and travel modes. B. Bourgault also provided a summary of appeals to transportation decisions followed by the overview summary for 2023-2024 and objectives for the 2024-2025 school year. He concluded his presentation with the financials from 2023-2024.

Leslie Maxwell, Supervisor of School Travel Planning at STSWR shared some of the highlights and work completed during the 2023-24 school year to support active school travel. She reviewed the mandate, values and framework. She reviewed the school and student participation in active travel programs, services provided to schools, and achievements. She provided trustees with the funding partners and financial expenditures.

Trustees asked questions regarding the CAA Standing Foot Patrol, walking distances, electric school buses, funding for special education transportation, School Streets, walking program trends, local partnerships, driver retention and Bike Buses.

2023-2024 ANNUAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

This report was provided for information.

The report included the members of the Audit Committee, committee tasks, meetings, governance and external auditors. The report also reviewed the 2022-2023 Regional Internal Audit Team (RIAT) audits and engagements.

2023-2024 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The draft 2023-2024 Audited Financial Statements were presented at the Board Audit Committee meeting on November 6, 2024. After reviewing the statements, the Board Audit Committee passed a motion recommending that the Board approve the Audited Financial Statements. The draft 2023-2024 WRDSB Consolidated Financial Statements were included in the agenda package.

Trustees noted that there was no funding provided from the Ministry of Education for the implementation costs of the Bill 124 remedy payments.

8. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by S. Piatkowski:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board approve the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended August 31, 2024, as recommended by the Board's Audit Committee.

-Carried-

2023-2024 FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

This report was provided for information.

The 2023-24 year-end financial position is an in-year deficit of \$2.05M; this represents approximately 0.2% of the WRDSB's operating revenues for the year and decreases our Accumulated Surplus (Unappropriated) to \$49.14M as of August 31, 2024. On a quarterly basis throughout the year, staff have been providing updates to the Board regarding our key assumptions, risks and planned mitigation strategies.

In previous updates provided to the Board, material variances were identified and discussed for the following areas: GSN Revenues (Student Enrolment), Extended Day Program Revenues and Other Revenues (Priorities & Partnerships Funding (PPF)). The areas below were detailed regarding additional changes to revenue that impacted year end financial position:

- Bill 124 Enhancements
- Collective Agreement Enhancements
- Student Enrolment
- Interest Income
- Extended Day Program
- Other Grants

In previous updates to the Board, staff provided information to explain expenditure changes for Classroom Teachers, School Operations and Other Non-operating expenses. Each area was further detailed and the variances noted throughout the expenditure information are largely driven by retroactive adjustments for Bill 124 and collective agreement enhancements.

Overall, staff continue to identify ongoing risks and develop mitigation strategies that help ensure the fiscal well-being of the organization. No additional appropriations from accumulated surplus will be brought forward for consideration in 2024-25.

Trustees asked questions regarding the Attendance Support Program and enrolment trends.

2023-2024 TRUSTEE EXPENSE REPORTS

This report was provided for information.

Board Policy 3001 Travel, Meals, Hospitality – Trustees directs staff to present, annually, a public report regarding Trustee expenses that were reimbursed during the previous fiscal year. Trustee expenses have been reviewed by our external auditors, Doane Grant Thornton.

BOARD REPORTS

9. Moved by S. Piatkowski, seconded by J. Meissner:

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 11, 2024, be extended an additional thirty minutes to 10:00 p.m.

-Carried-

MOTION: 2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – TRUSTEE DETERMINATION AND DISTRIBUTION

This Notice of Motion was served at the September 23, 2024, Board Meeting by Trustee S. Piatkowski with support from Trustee S. Estoesta. Trustee S. Piatkowski introduced the motion referencing that the process for Trustee Determination and Distribution is completed in a short time frame, not allowing for fulsome discussion. He also noted that the distribution of trustees has remained unchanged since 1997.

Trustees discussed the motion, a number expressing concern for the related costs during the current budget constraints. Trustees discussed a possible amendment to the motion to allow for trustees to approve the costs prior to engaging a consultant. This idea was dismissed for a motion to postpone until staff can provide a cost estimate for the services of a consultant with expertise in electoral maps and distribution.

Trustee M. Ramsay called a Point of Order when an amendment to the postponement was moved and information on the amendment was clarified. Trustee C. Watson called a Point of Order referencing a Robert's Rules resource which indicated that amendments could only be time related. The amendment was withdrawn. Trustees continued to discuss the motion to postpone.

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

That the Waterloo Region District School Board postpone decision on the Trustee Determination and Distribution motion until staff can provide a cost estimate for the services of a consultant with expertise in electoral maps and distribution.

-Defeated-

Opposed:
B. Cody
C. Johnson
M. Radlein
M. Ramsay
J. Weston
K. Woodcock

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

(a) That the Waterloo Region District School Board engage the services of a consultant with expertise in electoral maps and distribution to explore different options for Trustee Determination and Distribution;

(b) That the consultant chosen be asked to seek input and information from Trustees, co-terminus boards, other similar boards (similar size, and covering both urban and rural areas), Clerks in area municipalities, MPAC, and other subject-matter experts; and

(c) That the consultant chosen prepare a report for presentation to Trustees no later than May 31, 2025; and

(d) That Trustees decide on a preferred option for Trustee Determination and Distribution for the 2026 Municipal Election no later than June 30, 2025; and

(e) That Trustees reserve the right to change their final decision regarding Trustee Determination and Distribution in March 2026 if the information contained in the February 2026 PEG Reports changes any of the assumptions on which they initially based their preferred option.

-Defeated-

Opposed:
B. Cody
C. Johnson
J. Meissner
M. Radlein
M. Ramsay
C. Watson
J. Weston
K. Woodcock

QUESTION PERIOD

Trustee M. Ramsay asked that the Chairperson reach out to the Region of Waterloo to see their plans for regional councillor distribution. Receiving no objections, Chairperson J. Weston agreed to reach out.

Trustee K. Woodcock provided a suggestion, based on this evening's delegations, that staff review the process for communications to ensure we are avoiding causing disruptions to families. Trustee C. Watson asked for information on how we communicate with families and school councils. Director j. chanicka shared that staff are constantly working to improve communications and the channels of communication. He referenced the previous staff responses indicating the communication that occurred following appropriate processes, noting that there can be other contributing factors. He shared that staff review situations and look for ways to improve communications for the future.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 11, 2024, be adjourned.

-Carried-

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.