

**PROVINCE OF QUEBEC**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE SIR WILFRID LAURIER SCHOOL BOARD HELD ON 2012-05-02**

A Special meeting of the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board was held in the boardroom of the Administration Centre, 235 Montée Lesage, Rosemere, QC on Wednesday, 2012-05-02.

Present: Commissioners Steve Bletas, Chairman; Carolyn Curiale, Vice-Chairman (via Skype); Georges Benoit, Mario Di Domenico, Robert Dixon, Nazario Facchino, Walter Fogel, Steve Kmec, Peter MacLaurin (via Skype), Nick Milas, Steve Mitchell, Tom Mouhteros, Grace Nesi, Merle Parkinson, Mike Pizzola, William Pollock, Nancy Rupnik and Edward Turchyniak; and Robert Vallerand, Director General.

Also present were: Clifford Buckland, Interim Assistant Director General; Marie-Claude Drouin, Secretary General; Gaëlle Absolonne, Director of School Organization; Line Desgroseilliers, Director of Information Technology; Linda Di Domenico, Director of Human Resources; Heather Halman, Director of Adult Education & Vocational Training; Stephanie Krenn, Director of Complementary Services; Livia Nassivera, Director of Financial Resources; Gerry Robillard, Director of Educational Services; Jocelyne Thompson-Ness, Administrative Assistant; and Members of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier Administrators Association (SWLAA). Several other persons were also in the audience.

Absent: Commissioner Albina Pace and Parent Commissioners Roberto Bomba and Angelo Grasso

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 19:30 hours.

The Chairman advised the Council that a public notice was duly posted to convene this special meeting of the Council as per the Education Act (R.S.Q., Chapter I-13.3) and inquired if all members had received the notice of special meeting. The members present indicated that they had each received this notice.

Commissioner Walter Fogel asked that the agenda items be reorganized as follows:

- 12.0 Chairman of the Council of Commissioners
- 24.0 Clarification of Mandate Given to Ethics Commissioner on 2012-04-25

**CC-120502-CA-0100**

Commissioner Walter Fogel MOVED THAT the agenda be approved as amended in document #SWLSB-2012/05/02-CA-001

**Carried unanimously**

**1.0 CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS:**

The Chairman made the following statement:

*After a few days of thinking I come to many conclusions; the primary one being that I recognize there is a problem to address on various levels as well as an important need to find a solution.*

*Over the years SWLSB has had a group of involved and dedicated commissioners. Commissioners very much involved in their respective communities myself being one of those. I guess it gets easy to get too involved in trying to resolve issues on our own seeing as we are so close to our people. We are easily accessible and have let the situation get out of hand. Parents in Lachute know they can contact Bobby, Arundel Nature Science Centre look to Peter & Bill, St-Vincent community rely on Mario, Rawdon and Joliette parents to Merle, Tom with the communities at Laval Liberty & Crestview, the Hillcrest community looks to Walter. And why shouldn't they. I take responsibility for*

*that as Chairman of the Board. All commissioners have at one point in time overstepped boundaries, we are all guilty of that. I am not excusing myself, but analyzing the whole situation.*

*We need to define clear guidelines and procedures as to everyone's role and as to how to handle difficult and sensitive situations. (rezoning, bus routes, transportation, enrolment, out of zone requests, specialty programs, etc.) This does mean all commissioners will have to respect these. No more privileged requests from parents, or administrators or anyone else. I'm being persecuted by the principals association for my involvement When an elementary principal needed help to use a high school auditorium for a X-Mas concert I was she called to see if I can help out. Or another principal in Laval asking for financial help from the School Board to start a football program .Or another principal upon a school visit asking if the Board can expedite repairing a school yard so that the safety of the children is not affected . Or another principal asking for my help in supporting a small school in keeping it open. Or another principal promoting a music program & asking the Board to support it financially. There are other cases as well. But what is disappointing is when another principal is heard referring to me as a " CRIPPLED ARROGANT INDIVIDUAL "in front of this person's colleagues. That is totally unacceptable & vicious. The individual has now crossed the line. I have let some relations evolve into a comfort zone where it was easy to be open with one another and it has obviously gotten out of hand.*

*Having read these complaints in a letter from SWLAA it is time for me to step back & allow the Director General, Assistant Director General, the Directors & Administrators to assume the role that they have with their schools & departments at the school board.*

*We need to establish trust. All cases of favoritism are wrong. How many times have some commissioners asked directors to look into situations brought forth to us by parents instead of referring them through the proper channels. We are all guilty in one shape or form.*

*The board has been through many changes over the past months With 2 interim senior positions. I did get too involved. I even met with the directorate team to hear their concerns. That's why we need to hire a permanent Director General & an Assistant Director General and move on for the benefit of all our students. We are in a difficult financial position. We need to get back on track.*

*Right now we need to improve the level of trust at our School Board. We need to continue to prove to our employees, parents. and students that the S WLSB is a board they can feel a sense of pride in being a part of. We will work together to find solutions to all these problems.*

*I would like to clear this situation and propose solutions that everyone will be comfortable in. I have my faults .I am the first to admit. I do get very vocal and emotional and although I am not excusing it.I am also the first to apologize.*

*As for the ADG posting, I never denied knowing one of the candidates. Others did as well. As well as other candidates too. There is no policy or procedure in place to have avoided this. Hindsight tells me that I should have withdrawn my name from the Selection Committee.*

*I acted in good faith in what I thought would be in the best interest of the School Board.*

*I believe that I have done nothing wrong and the findings of the Ethics Commissioner will prove that. I hope it will be reflected In the report of the Ethics Commissioner. This report takes on important proportions that will contribute to my final decision.*

*Monday night I received a disturbing email from a commissioner which was threatening & abusive with a foregone conclusion on what I should do. As a result I am deferring on any final decision until all the facts are produced.*

*Thank you.*

Commissioner William Pollock entered the meeting.

**TIME: 19:36 hours**

The Chairman **called for the Council to go** "in camera".

Commissioner Steve Kmec noted that he felt that given that this meeting is public this issue should be discussed openly.

On a "point of order" Commissioner Walter Fogel stated that a call for "in camera" cannot be debated.

**CC-120502-CA-0101**

Commissioner Walter Fogel MOVED THAT the Council go "in-camera"

Carried unanimously

TIME: 19:41 hours

The meeting resumed.

TIME: 20:34 hours

**2.0 CLARIFICATION OF MANDATE GIVEN TO ETHICS COMMISSIONER ON 2012-04-25:**

The Council entered into discussion on a potential resolution and the result of these discussions is the following resolution:

**CC-120502-CA-0102**

WHEREAS on April 25, 2012 by resolution #CC-120425-CA-0092, the Council of Commissioners decided to grant the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board Ethics Commissioner with a special mandate to report on allegations of irregularities during the conduct of the Assistant Director General posting process:

Commissioner Walter Fogel MOVED THAT the following precisions be added to the general allegations of irregularities as a complement to resolution #CC-120425-CA-0092 adopted on April 25, 2012:

**Allegation #1:** Did the telephone conversation between the Chairman of the Board and **an** applicant during the conduct of the Assistant Director General constitute a contravention to the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board Code of Ethics?

**Allegation #2:** Did the existing relationship between the Chairman of the Board and one of the applicants come to taint the fairness of the Assistant Director General selection process?

**Allegation #3:** Does the exchange of text messages between the Chairman of the Board and one applicant dealing with the conduct of the above mentioned process taint the fairness of the selection committee?

<b>THIS MOTION WAS CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING DIVISION:</b>	
<b>Commissioners voting YEA:</b>	<b>Georges Benoit, Steve Bletas, Carolyn Curiale, Mario Di Domenico, Robert Dixon, Nazario Facchino, Walter Fogel, Steve Kmec, Nick Milas, Tom Mouhteros, Grace Nesi, Merle Parkinson, Mike Pizzola, Nancy Rupnik, Edward Turchyniak</b>
<b>Commissioners voting NAY:</b>	<b>Peter MacLaurin, Steve Mitchell, William Pollock</b>

In response to a request from the audience, the Secretary General advised that at a special meeting only the matters on the agenda can be debated and dealt with by members of the Council but that a question period must be provided at every public meeting of the Council for persons to present questions orally to the Commissioners.

Scott Traylen, Executive Member of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier Administrators' Association (SWLAA) and Principal of Rosemere High School, read the following statement on behalf of the members of SWLAA:

*"Mr. Chairman,*

*We have great issue with the opening remarks where you stated that you are being persecuted by our association. This is without foundation and completely unacceptable to our membership.*

*Never did we think that coming here tonight, we would be publicly, personally and specifically discredited. The level of contempt that you have shown every group in this room is unacceptable.*

*We respected the process set forth by Council last week and met with the task force members to validate the contents of our letter to the Director General.*

*We are awaiting confirmation from the Council as to what measures will be taken in order to ensure that the allegations outlined in our letter and fully substantiated to the task force do not recur.*

*Mr. Chairman, you used the word "trust" in your opening statement. How can we rebuild that relationship after what you have stated tonight?*

*Given that your statement was read publicly, we request a copy of it from the secretary."*

The Chairman indicated that he would reflect on these recent events and let the Ethics Commissioner proceed with the assigned mandate.

### **3.0 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:**

Commissioner Edward Turchyniak MOVED adjournment of the meeting.

**Carried unanimously**

**TIME: 20:42 hours**

**NEXT MEETING ⇨ REGULAR ⇨ 2012-05-23**

---

**Marie-Claude Drouin, Secretary General**

---

**Steve Bletas, Chairman**