



**HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES - AMENDED
February 17, 2016
6:00 p.m.**

An Audit Committee meeting was held this date in
Meeting Room 202 (2nd Floor)
33 Spectacle Lake Dr., Dartmouth, NS

PRESENT: Nancy Jakeman, Chair
Bridget Ann Boutilier, Vice Chair
Christy Linders
Dave Wright
Melinda Daye
Bruce Densmore

BOARD MEMBERS: Cindy Littlefair
Denise Bell, Regional Education Officer

REGRETS: Cathie O'Toole

STAFF: Elwin LeRoux, Superintendent
Lance Bullock, Senior Staff Advisor
Natascha Joncas, Acting Corporate Secretary
Alison King, Director, Program
Tracy O'Kroneg, Director, Human Resources
Ron Heiman, Director, Operations Services
Susan Tomie, Director School Administration
Terri Thompson, Director, Financial Services
Kate Wall, Coordinator, Financial Services
Wendy Mackey, Senior Diversity Advisor

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Superintendent called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

Nancy Jakeman was the sole nomination for Audit Committee Chair. Ms. Jakeman accepted the nomination.

It was moved and seconded (Wright/Densmore) that Nancy Jakeman be appointed Chair of the Audit Committee.

(CARRIED)

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

Christy Linders was nominated for the Vice Chair for the Audit Committee. Bridget Ann Boutilier was also nominated for the Vice Chair of the Audit committee. Ms. Linders and Ms. Boutilier accepted the nomination. Christy Linders subsequently withdrew from consideration.

It was moved and seconded (Wright/Densmore) that Bridget Ann Boutilier be appointed Vice Chair of the Audit Committee.

(CARRIED)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded (Linders/Boutilier) that the agenda be approved.

(CARRIED)

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

November 18, 2015

It was moved and seconded (Wright/Densmore) that the minutes of November 18, 2015 Audit Committee be approved.

(CARRIED)

6. REPORT 2016-02-07 – DECEMBER 31, 2015– QUARTERLY BUSINESS PLAN AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

Terri Thompson, Director, Financial Services

Ms. Thompson opened the floor for any questions or comments on the Business Plan Priorities and their progress.

Mr. Densmore questioned what data supports the success as noted in the early intervention math program. The math support teacher assesses at the beginning and end of each block of support. At the start, most students were a full grade level or more behind in the outcomes assessed. The final assessments showed significant gains had been made at the end of the support block. Due to the success, the program has been expanded this year after the pilot project last year.

Mr. Densmore noted that strengthening partnerships with outside agencies was a very positive initiative, particularly with respect to the engineering and females in science fields, as well as the garden club, local sustainability, and nourishing your roots initiatives.

Mr. Densmore also noted the recognition by the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) with regards to the initiative to improve safety in the workplace. He noted that this was a major initiative and was glad to see external recognition.

Ms. Littlefair asked for clarification on the phrase "Try Do" within the strengthening partnerships with outside agencies initiative. Ms. King responded that it referred to "Try Something, and Do it". Mr. Wright noted that this was part of the partnership with DND where they provide access to facilities as part of their role in the program.

Ms. Daye questioned how many math support teachers there are as part of the early intervention initiative. HRSB received funding from EECED and provided additional funding from HRSB so that all 20 priority schools have support. This equates to 9.5 FTEs or 11 individuals.

There was an ongoing discussion around goals and priorities, including the distinction between provincial and Board initiatives. Mr. Densmore commented that we need to identify the problems and deal with them using data based strategies and noted that how you implement is as important as where the priorities come from.

Ms. Linders questioned if we have publically identified the priority schools and asked if we are getting pressure from non-priority schools. Mr. LeRoux advised that we have not. We meet all our contractual obligations to all schools and are working with the challenges of all schools every day and are setting the conditions for everyone to thrive in a learning environment. The goal is to be strategic using what we have. We also have a plan for sustainability as schools move from high levels of support to a less dependent model.

Ms. Daye asked about the status of the video being created to promote the importance of self-identification. Ms. Tomie advised that it is in progress but that self-identification is closer to 100% than the data reflects.

Ms. Linders questioned the phrase "only as special as necessary". Mr. Bullock advised that this is an established mantra in the education field indicating that we should only support what is necessary in order to avoid the potential problems of creating unnecessary dependencies.

Ms. Linders noted approximately 230 new substitutes and casuals and asked if there were any new permanent hires. Ms. O'Kroneg advised that generally permanent employees are hired pre-September.

Ms. Linders also commented that with the Long Range Outlook Action Plan we are trying to target areas which have significant changes or expect to have significant changes. As part of this, we need to educate communities regarding facilities and needs. We need to educate to the overarching context.

This concluded the discussion regarding the business plan. A brief discussion regarding the financial review followed.

Mr. Densmore asked why the maintenance services costs are high. Mr. Heiman explained that it was due to a number of factors, particularly the mould remediation work at two schools in September, as well as the number of inspections by HRM Fire and Safety are increasing and we

are seeing a lot of orders and requirements from these inspections which is causing the requirement for repairs to accumulate more quickly than usual.

Ms. Littlefair asked about the impact to the exchange rate on the cost of PowerSchool and if there are other expenses that we pay in US dollars. Ms. Thompson advised that it is primarily PowerSchool and the IB Program that are impacted by the US exchange and that this is expected to be a pressure in the next fiscal year as well.

The Audit Committee will forward Report 2016-02-07 – December 21, 2015 – Quarterly Business Plan and Financial Update to the Board for information.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 13, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.
Meeting with Jamie O’Neill, CPA, CA - Partner, Audit - KPMG

9. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded (Linders/Wright) that the meeting be adjourned.

(CARRIED)

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Nancy Jakeman
Chair, Audit Committee

Karen Tucker
Administrative Assistant, Financial Services