

THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 12, 2019
Board Room, Education Centre

Members: Trustees C. Antone, J. Bennett, P. Cuddy, S. Hunt, B. McKinnon, A. Morell, L. Pizzolato, S. Polhill, C. Rahman, M. Ruddock, J. Skinner (Chair), B. Smith, B. Yeoman, Student Trustees E. Butler, S. Chun, and C. Kennedy

Regrets: Trustee B. Yeoman

Administration: M. Fisher (Director), R. Culhane (Associate Director), J. Pratt (Associate Director), C. Lynd (Superintendent), L. Nicholls (Superintendent), D. Macpherson (Superintendent), S. Powell (Superintendent), K. Wilkinson (Superintendent), C. Kent (Planner), C. Henriquez (Manager, Facilities), T. Testa (Manager, Communications), A. Chahbar (Board Counsel), B. Williams (Supervisor, Corporate Services)

1. **Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda**

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair, J. Skinner at 6:00 p.m. The agenda was approved on motion.

2. **Conflicts of Interest**

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the 2019 September 10 meeting were provided for information.

a. **Business Arising from the Previous Meeting**

In response to a question arising from the previous minutes in relation to item #5: Overview of 2019-2020 Capital Priorities Program and Capital Planning, J. Pratt confirmed in a meeting with the Ministry it was clarified there is no ranking of submissions. All are reviewed on their own merits.

4. **Overview of Capital Priorities Program Submissions Related to EPAR-01 - J. Pratt/ S. Mark/ C. Henriquez/ C. Kent**

Associate Director J. Pratt presented for information, as previously requested by Trustee motion, a report regarding the 2019-20 Capital Priorities Program funding as it relates to the Elementary Public Accommodation Review 01 (EPAR-01); and information on the business cases submitted in 2017 and again in 2019 for the proposed new Belmont and new Southeast St. Thomas schools.

J. Pratt outlined the information provided in the report on the Capital Priorities submissions. The impact, of reversing the Board of Trustees' decision on the closure of New Sarum and Springfield schools, on future school renewal needs/annual operating costs were outlined. Should the decisions be reversed J. Pratt advised Administration would need to get direction from the

Ministry on next steps as it relates to revising the current business cases for the two new proposed schools currently before the Ministry.

Much discussion centred on the use of the term 'ranking' in the Ministry template for the business case submissions. Concerns were raised that the use of the term reflected the intent of the Board to have ranked the submissions. Administration advised Ministry staff made it very clear that each case presented is evaluated on its own merits and that "ranking" has no influence on the decisions made regarding approval of funding. Trustees reflected on their conversations with politicians who have suggested ranking is considered in the decision-making. In response to a suggestion that the term 'ranking' be removed from the submission, Administration advised the form is a Ministry template that cannot be changed. Director Fisher advised he will reach out to the Ministry to get a definitive answer recognizing the mixed messages received in this regard.

In response to a question regarding the Capital Priorities submissions, J. Pratt responded all 6 business cases are considered to be important noting Eagle Heights does need attention sooner than later and that Northwest London has had tremendous population growth. The business cases for the new SE St. Thomas and Belmont schools are important as they honour the previous decisions of the Board of Trustees.

Questions regarding FCI and renewal needs at the schools slated for closure in the EPAR-01 were addressed by Administration. C. Henriquez clarified FCI is a number calculated by a third party contracted by the Ministry. The number is used at a point in time when determining renewal needs. He further advised the factors that are used in the calculation have changed over time.

Questions regarding the projected school size for the proposed Belmont school in the 2017 and 2019 business cases were addressed by C. Kent. Factors considered when making projections were described.

Questions of clarification regarding the Ministry comments received in 2017 when the business cases for the proposed two new schools were not funded were addressed by J. Pratt.

In response to a question, Administration advised the OTG at the FI school was not included given the French Immersion Review underway. It was noted the Ministry was made aware and the exclusion was notated in the submission. J. Pratt clarified the FI review was not about accommodation, but rather about programming.

Questions of clarification regarding the use of utilization numbers, the projected utilization at Kettle Creek if the new SE St. Thomas school is not approved, empty pupil place calculations, transportation, and information redacted in the information provided were addressed by Administration.

In response to a question regarding land acquisition in Belmont, J. Pratt advised that should the school be approved, the Ministry will approve and cover the full cost of the land acquisition.

Discussion considered the impact on Westminster should the new SE London school be built and opened before a new Belmont school is built noting the attendance area for each draws upon students currently attending Westminster.

In response to a question regarding the impact a decision to keep the two schools open on the business cases before the Ministry, J. Pratt advised that it is difficult to predict. He acknowledge there may be political influence on the decision given the recent remarks of MPP Yurek. Trustees also noted recent remarks by the MPP.

Discussion considered a recent decision of the Ministry to fund the build of a new school for 250 pupils and whether that signalled a change in the Ministry's thinking from funding schools of 500 or more. Administration reflected on their conversation with Ministry staff noting it was believed to be a unique situation. It was recognized, however, that many factors contribute to the decisions made at the Ministry level.

In response to a question regarding the use of the Northern and Rural Education Fund, Administration advised the fund is used to support rural schools impacted by low enrollment by providing additional staffing to improve program choices for students and library services.

Administration advised on the provision of all documents on a new website to be available to the public. A link will be provided on all EPAR-01 school websites and the TVDSB website.

At the call of the Committee Chair, the committee recessed at 8:07 p.m.; reconvening in session at 8:18 p.m.

Questions of clarification regarding Springfield school were addressed by J. Pratt.

In response to a question regarding impacts on staffing, J. Pratt advised staffing is based on enrollment. Consolidation of schools, however, do create efficiencies in the way staffing is allocated.

Questions of clarification regarding the Child Care Centres planned for the new SE St. Thomas School and River Heights were addressed by Administration.

5. Other Business

Trustee Morell advised Trustees to direct community members to the Board website/school websites where individuals could post any questions they may have and/or read responses to questions that have been posed.

6. Questions and Comments by Members

None.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 2020 January 14.

8. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

J. SKINNER
Committee Chair