

## Board of Trustees' Annual General Meeting

A public meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Monday, December 7, 2009 at the Waterloo Region Catholic Education Centre.

### **Trustees Present:**

Denise Blum; Wayne Buchholtz; Manuel da Silva; Louise Ervin; Joseph Gowing; Fr. Robert Héту; Judy Nairn; Greg Reitzel; Marion Thomson Howell (Chair)

### **Student Trustees Present:**

Nicole Bigelow; Thomas Slabon

### **Administrative Officials Present:**

Roger Lawler; Rick Boisvert; Gerry Clifford; Manny Figueiredo; Shesh Maharaj; Bruce Rodrigues; Paul Tratnyek

### **Special Resources For The Meeting:**

### **Regrets:**

Heather Cullen

### **Recorder:**

Barb Pilsner, Executive Administrative Assistant

NOTE ON VOTING: Under Board by-law 5.7 all Board decisions made by consensus are deemed the equivalent of a unanimous vote. A consensus decision is therefore deemed to be a vote of 9-0. Under Board by-law 5.11 every Trustee "shall vote on all questions on which the Trustee is entitled to vote" and abstentions are not permitted.

## *1. Call to Order:*

The Secretary of the Board called the meeting to order at 7:52 p.m.

### **1.1 – Role Call**

All trustees were present.

## *2. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair*

### **2.1 Election of the Chair**

The Secretary asked for nominations for Chair of the Board.

**2009-01** -- It was *moved* by **M. da Silva** and *seconded* by **J. Nairn**:  
*THAT* Marion Thomson Howell is nominated to be Chair of the Board of Trustees.

*The Secretary asked if there were further nominations for Chair of the Board. No further nominations were received.*

**2009-02** -- It was *moved* by **G. Reitzel** and *seconded* by **J. Gowing**:  
*THAT* the nominations be declared closed. --**Carried by consensus**

M. Thomson Howell was re-elected as Chair of the Board.

## **2.2 Election of the Vice-Chair**

The Chair asked for nominations for Vice-chair of the Board.

**2009-03** -- It was *moved* by **Fr. R. Hétu** and *seconded* by **G. Reitzel**:  
*THAT Manuel da Silva is nominated to be Vice-chair of the Board of Trustees.*

*The Chair asked if there were further nominations for Vice-chair of the Board. No further nominations were received.*

**2009-04** -- It was *moved* by **J. Gowing** and *seconded* by **J. Nairn**:  
*THAT the nominations be declared closed. --Carried by consensus*

M. da Silva was re-elected as Vice-chair of the Board.

## **3. Appreciations**

The Chair gave her inaugural remarks and appreciation for Fr. F. Scinto, Spiritual Animator for the Board.

## **4. Motion to Adjourn**

**2009-05** -- It was *moved* by **M. da Silva** and *seconded* by **J. Gowing**:  
*THAT the meeting be now adjourned.*

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:10 p.m.

---

Chair of the Board

---

Secretary

Chair's Inaugural Remarks:

I like trivia, particularly trivia that draws us back to remember our history. Today we are part of this board's history and I like to think that some day in the future one of the questions that will be asked is:

*Who were the members of the first Board of Trustees to serve a four-year term for the WCDSB?*

The answer, of course, will be Manuel da Silva, Denise Blum, Wayne Buchholtz, Louise Ervin, Joseph Gowing, Fr. Robert Héту, Judy Nairn, Greg Reitzel, Marion Thomson Howell, and student trustees Thomas Slabon and Nicole Bigelow.

We are a part of this Board's history because we are entering our fourth, and final year, of the term that began in 2006. The success of whether or not this fourth year was worthwhile, or in fact, whether our first three years were worthwhile will be determined by the answer to one question:

*Will we be missed?*

I find the question somewhat daunting. It doesn't ask if we will be remembered. It asks if we will be missed.

We could be remembered for anything – for being difficult to get along with; for being easy to get along with; for united as a board; for being divided as a board.

Being remembered simply means that we showed up in a way that gave people something to talk about.

Being missed is something different.

1. People miss you because you modelled what they needed to become.
2. People miss you because you did what was right when it was the difficult choice.
3. People miss you because you strove to be respected knowing that you may not be liked.
4. People miss you because they were better off as a result of the leadership you provided.
5. People miss you because you had vision and you took them to places they never even dreamed of.

Again I ask the question as we enter our final year,

*Will we be missed?*

We have done a lot over the past three years that we thought was important.

1. We have transformed the approach to governance this board uses to do its work.
2. We have made decisions that resulted in some schools closing and another opening.
3. We made decisions that shifted financial resources from one area to another in the attempt to balance the budget.

*Will we be remembered for that work?*

Maybe.

The bigger and more important question though is,

*Will we be missed for that work?*

During the survey that was conducted this past winter on the Treatment of Staff many of us heard from people who were nervous about what we were doing and why we were doing it. After it was over we received message after message of thanks from staff who realized we meant it when we said that staff are our most valuable resource and we wanted to know how they felt about being a part of our Board – and that we would address those areas that needed addressing.

*Will we be missed?*

We will if we don't forget that the work that was started isn't finished. We won't if we think of it as last year's project.

In 2008 we were asked by SEAC to revisit our commitment to inclusion and we began to study the issue by looking at the past, the present and forward into the future. It is 2009 and we have decided our work isn't finished and so we are carrying it into 2010. We have a year left to finish what we started.

*Will we be missed?*

We will if we are willing to be visionary. We won't if we are intimidated because the challenge is too big.

We have asked big questions in the past few years about the future of Catholic education. We want to know why people choose our schools and why they don't. We know that the commitment to Catholic schools is different today than it was when we were children. We want to know why and what we can do about it and so we have started to talk about it.

*Will we be missed?*

We will if we look at and respond to the issue in new ways. We won't if we re-hash old arguments and rely on old justifications.

We know that it is our job to represent our stakeholders and when we have had contentious issues like accommodation reviews some people say we listen and represent them well, and others say we don't. This year we decided we need to be sure our processes for listening provide people with a voice and that we hear that voice.

*Will we be missed?*

We will if we insist that when recommendations are brought forward they answer the questions who, what, why, when and where. We won't if we think that just because we were elected three years ago, and just because we are parents, and just because we are good Catholics we automatically represent the views of our stakeholders.

After this year, this Board will not exist again. Some of us will run again and be back but others of us will decide our talents can be used elsewhere and will not return.

This Board has one more year.

So, in being elected tonight as Chair, I want to issue us with a challenge.

*It is that we do our work in ways that will cause people to miss us.*

I don't know exactly what that will mean but I do know that it means each person around this table has to step up and play a role.

It means that if you have an issue you want to discuss, you need to put it on the agenda.

It means that if you think that we aren't listening you need to say so.

It means that each person around this table needs to pay attention to detail when we monitor and dream about possibilities when we meet in committee.

*Will we be missed?*

I have been told that I am sometimes seen as impatient. I think that is a pretty accurate description of my approach to my work.

We have one year left and for this Board and what we could accomplish I am impatient.

I said that the question I would raise is daunting and it is but I also think it is the most exciting question we could ask ourselves.

*Will we be missed?*

I look forward to the journey we have in front of us and want to thank you for agreeing to let me stay along for the ride.

Thank you.

Marion Thomson Howell  
Chair