



MINUTES OF THE COMPLIANCE AUDIT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

Minutes of the Meeting of the Niagara Compliance Audit Review Committee Meeting, held on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, in the Father Kenneth Burns c.s.c. Board Room, at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, Ontario.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgement statement was delivered by Jennifer Pellegrini.

2. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chair Margo Pinder.

Compliance Audit Review Committee Members	Present	Absent
Murray Christie	✓	
Margo Pinder	✓	
Heather Salter	✓	

Also in attendance were the following:

Jennifer Pellegrini, Communications Officer of the Niagara Catholic District School Board

Josh Epstein, Senior Manager at MNP LLC Accounting, Business Consulting (Virtual)

Daniel Freiheit, Legal Counsel to the Candidate, Natalia Benoit (Virtual)

John Pappas, Legal Counsel to the Committee (Virtual)

Ann-Marie Zammit, Representative to Applicant Christine Campbell

Bill Sawchuk, reporter of the St. Catharines Standard

Shari Bush, Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Business and Financial Services of the Niagara Catholic District School Board

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in relation to this meeting.

4. Opening Statement by Chair

Chair Pinder made the opening statement that this Compliance Audit Committee Meeting is to review and consider the results from the MNP LLC Auditor's Report of each candidate as to whether to proceed with legal action.

5. Auditor's Report

5.1 Compliance Audit of Candidate Expenditures – School Board Trustee (St. Catharines) Natalia Benoit

5.1.1 Overview of Auditor's Report

Josh Epstein, Senior Auditor with MNP, gave an overview and a summary of key findings of the Auditor's Report of Candidate Natalia Benoit.

5.1.2 Opportunity for Comments from the Applicant – Christine Campbell

Ann-Marie Zammit read a prepared statement on behalf of Christine Campbell in her absence.

5.1.3 Opportunity for Comments from the Candidate or Agent – Natalia Benoit

Daniel Freiheit, legal representation for Natalia Benoit, responded to the findings in the Auditor's Report in favour of his client.

5.1.4 Committee Consideration for Auditor's Report

Chair Pinder moved to have the meeting go to in camera for committee members to deliberate at 10:41 a.m. The Committee reconvened at 11:34 a.m.

Chair Pinder requested a motion to read the Committee's decision on candidate Natalia Benoit; Salter made the motion -

The motion read as follows: *“Be it resolved that the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee for the Niagara Catholic District School Board hereby decides not to commence a legal proceeding against the candidate Natalia Benoit for the apparent contraventions of the campaign finance rules, pursuant to subsection 88.33(17) of the Municipality Elections Act.”*

Committee members Christie and Salter voted in favour of the motion. Chair Pinder voted against. The motion passed by a 2-1 majority.

Chair Pinder commented that brief written reasons for the Committee's decision will be provided in the coming days.

5.2 Compliance Audit of Candidate Expenditures – School Board Trustee (St. Catharines) Jolanta Pawlak

5.2.1 Overview of Auditor's Report

Josh Epstein, Senior Auditor with MNP, gave an overview and a summary of key findings of the Auditor's Report of Candidate Jolanta Pawlak.

5.2.2 Opportunity for Comments from the Applicant – Christine Campbell

Ann-Marie Zammit read a prepared statement on behalf of Christine Campbell in her absence.

5.2.3 Opportunity for Comments from the Candidate or Agent – Jolanta Pawlak

Jolanta Pawlak was not present, nor was there a representative there for her.

5.2.4 Committee Consideration for Auditor’s Report

Chair Pinder moved to have the meeting go to in camera for committee to deliberate at 11:55 a.m. and reconvened at 12:09 p.m.

Chair Pinder requested a motion to read the Committee’s decision on candidate Jolanta Pawlak and Christie made the motion -

The motion read as follows: *“Be it resolved that the Niagara Compliance Audit Committee for the Niagara Catholic District School Board hereby decides not to commence a legal proceeding against the candidate Jolanta Pawlak for the apparent contraventions of the campaign finance rules, pursuant to subsection 88.33(17) of the Municipality Elections Act.”*

Committee members Christie and Salter voted in favour of the motion. Chair Pinder voted against. The motion passed by a 2-1 majority.

Chair Pinder commented that brief written reasons for the Committees decision will be provided in the coming days.

B. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Pinder adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m.

Minutes of the Compliance Audit Review Committee Meetings held on January 31, 2024, approved by:

Date: Feb 5/24 Margo Pinder
Chair Compliance Audit Review Committee



Date: Feb. 5/24 Jennifer Pellegrini
Communications Officer of the Niagara Catholic
District School Board


