

Computers: School board votes to nix allowance

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Graham and James Janzen voted in favour of the plan to cut out the allowance. Trustees Brent Atkinson and Lori Watt voted against it, while trustee Michael Ewen abstained from the vote.

It would be the "height of hypocrisy" to vote against the technology allowance, Ewen said.

"I think it would be hypocritical of me to say 'Well, I used it, but you can't use it,'" he said.

Ewen, Janzen, Graham and Watt have all used the allowance to buy new computers.

Ewen bought a \$2,600 MacBook Pro in the 2008/09 fiscal year with his allowance, and Graham spent \$2,456 on technology in the same year, according to the district's statement of financial information, which was released in December.

Neither Janzen nor Watt's computer purchases turned up on the financial statement because their computers were bought this year.

Ewen said he would support a motion to examine trustees' spending overall.

"If we are looking at discretionary spending by trustees, I think we should look at that," Ewen said.

As for the technology allowance, Graham said she thought there should be a stipulation that the technology is returned or the district is reimbursed for the technology.

"I support the rationale of the motion but not the motion itself," she said.

Still, Graham voted in favour of Goring's motion.

Janzen said he bought a new computer, but that doesn't mean he shouldn't vote.

"I disagree with trustee Ewen," he said. "I don't think that makes me a hypocrite."

This issue of whether to give a technology allowance to trustees is something other boards of education struggle with, Janzen said.

Janzen said he agreed with Ewen that the board should look at overall discretionary spending.

Watt wondered what someone who couldn't afford a computer would do and how they would be able to engage in district business without e-mail.

A trustee's stipend is between \$21,000 and \$24,500 a year. The board chair and vice-chair receive more than trustees.

HOSPITAL WORKERS ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES



Larry Wright/THE RECORD

Filling a need: Dr. Doug Morrison, director of transfusion medicine for Fraser Health, gives blood at a special blood donor clinic held Thursday at Royal Columbian Hospital – the first time in two decades that Canadian Blood Services hosted a hospital-based donor clinic. Physicians, nurses and hospital support staff all stopped by to roll up their sleeves and give blood. Canadian Blood Services needs to collect 9,950 units of blood in January across the province to keep up with need. To book an appointment, call 1-888-2-DONATE, or see www.blood.ca/eligibility for details.

Firefighter gets suspension

Deputy chief will soon be back on the job after one month of unpaid suspension

BY THERESA MCMANUS REPORTER
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A senior New Westminster firefighter will soon be returning to the job after being suspended without pay for 30 days.

City officials declined to comment on the suspension, calling it a personnel matter.

"It's an internal human resources issue. It has been dealt with," said Chief Tim Armstrong. "We are moving forward."

Armstrong said the issue has been dealt with and the department is trying to respect everyone's privacy.

The Record has obtained an internal memo sent to all personnel on Dec. 17, 2009.

"All staff should be aware that the department and the city have been investigating a complaint brought forward by

the union. This is regards to harassment in the workplace and the city's policy on harassment," said the memo. "After careful investigation, management has taken this matter very seriously and is acting on this in the following manner. In response to the findings of this investigation ... Deputy Chief Fred Naylor will be under unpaid suspension for a period of one month."

The suspension took effect at 6 p.m. on Dec. 17.

"This unfortunate situation could have easily been avoided with proper communication and mutual respect," said the memo from the chief. "That being said, it is my position that I will have zero tolerance for any form of harassment, insubordination or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace."

Naylor, a longtime member of New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services, recently moved into the new position of deputy chief of administration and support services. He had been the manager of administration and training, until the man-

agement positions were restructured after Armstrong was hired as the department's new chief in September 2008.

Joan Burgess, the city's director of human resources, said the city prefers not to comment on discipline issues as they are private matters. She did say that Naylor will be welcomed back to work.

"I am feeling very optimistic and positive about that," she said.

According to lawyers-bc.com, workplace harassment is illegal whether it happens in after-hour meetings to discuss work issues, business trips, office parties or lunch meetings. It states that typical examples of harassment include racial or sexual slurs, name calling, racist or sexist jokes, negative stereotyping, physical assault, bullying, threats or demeaning pictures, posters and graffiti.

What happened in this particular case was not mentioned in the memo and is not being revealed. Calls to the city administrator, president of the firefighters' union and Naylor were not returned by press time.

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 Theresa McManus

The Record