

Tate says public school board wasn't dysfunctional

• from TRUSTEES on page A1

by 169 votes.

A red-faced Amos also vented her disgust with being portrayed in a political cartoon on Jones's campaign Web site. It depicted Amos and four fellow trustees — Oakville's Mary Chapin, Burlington's Debbie Downs and Janie Hames and Halton Hills' Ethel Gardiner — as dinosaur caricatures with a meteorite labelled "change" about to hit them.

The outgoing slate of public board trustees have been viewed at times as a split group with six like-minded individuals on one side and five opponents on the other.

Amos didn't mention Jones by name at any time during her remarks.

Jones had won a trustee seat outside his ward in 2003 but ran in his hometown ward this time, in direct competition with Ward 5 resident Amos.

"I don't feel discredited at all. I was out-marketed," she said.

When it was his time to make a statement at the end of Wednesday's meeting Jones stated simply, "For those of you who are leaving us, good bye and good luck. For those who are coming to us, good luck."

Board Chair Paul Tate, the Milton trustee defeated by newcomer Donna Danielli last week, used some of his final words to slam critics who contend there was a 6-5 split that impacted voting at the board.

He said that in the first year of their three-year term there were many 6-5 votes but far fewer in the second year.

"This is not a dysfunctional board, we had just two 6-5 votes in the last 24 meetings (year). I don't think people understand how well this board functions."

Tate then appealed to everyone, including trustees, to support the work of Education Director Wayne Joudrie.

He noted the recent visit by new provincial Education Minister Kathleen Wynne should help the board.

"We have a renewed management team here. I am so happy. I can walk away from here and there will be no problems."

He vowed to stay abreast of board matters.

Tate also advocated on behalf of contract workers at the board. He said they should be able to take days off without

being penalized or feeling they can't ask for a Friday off to observe special personal occasions.

He said it's an issue of "humanity" at the board that shouldn't result in contract workers saying they are sick when they're not in order to get a day off.

"We're saying to them, 'Lie to us' and not have an honest relationship with them."

Downs 'bit her tongue' in her last remarks after six years as a trustee.

"I decided to focus on the good only — the bad and the ugly go without saying. I hope I have asked the challenging questions."

To those newly elected, Downs advised them, "Respect your fellow trustees, be fiscally responsible. You don't always have to be in agreement but always do the best for the children of Halton."

All trustees who made final comments were unanimous in their praise of the work done by the Halton board's administrative staff.

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