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RC board must cut deeply to stay alive

JULIE CASPERSEN
Staff Reporter

The York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board has escaped bankruptcy but students, teachers and staff will pay a price.

Trustees were under the gun to slash and burn throughout the system; the CIBC had threatened to cut off the board's line of credit unless the government intervened.

"We were on the verge of going bankrupt next week," board chair Terry Ryan said Thursday. He added fears of

bouncing paychecks were true, so to keep the system running under the current structure trustees eliminated programs, cut busing to the bare minimum and erased jobs during a marathon meeting lasting until nearly 5 a.m. Wednesday.

An estimated 120 people will lose their jobs according to Director of Education Frank Bobesich. Some staff have already been handed pink slips.

Two trustee positions will be phased out in the fall 1994 election, but so far the board doesn't know which municipali-

ties will lose a representative.

An independent review team brought in at the request of the board suggested \$16 million worth of cuts. The board is short \$18.7 million this year. It climbs to \$34.7 million when the deficits from the past five years are rolled in. Trustees mulled over the options and slashed \$9 million



BOBESICH

from the operation of the school system. The team suggests it will take up to eight years for the board to climb out of debt by finding \$24.7 million each year either through cutbacks or tax increases.

The 1994 budget has been "90 per cent completed" with a minimum seven per cent tax increase for Catholic ratepayers, said Ryan.

The board lost 63 children this fall after hiking the walking distance for students. But Bobesich maintains parents and ratepayers won't jump ship

and transfer students and tax dollars to the public board after hearing about the hefty tax hike (compared to the public board's promise to not raise taxes more than three per cent) and the bare bones system.

"We had a rich model. We're just modifying a bit," Bobesich said. Many optional programs have been shelved and the board will run transportation at the lowest possible level, even cutting noon-hour busing of Kindergarten students which is not covered by government grants.

The board must satisfy the bank that plans to erase its deficit are guaranteed. A Ministry of Education agent will monitor the board's progress and if the board fails to uphold the new rules, the system could be taken over by the Ontario Municipal Board.

New home builders

Lisa Gammage and Karen Webb (left) were winners of the first annual gingerbread house competition at the library this week. The duo's entry, entitled Santa's Workshop, sported a tiny Christmas tree inside, presents and even an edible shag carpet.



Accident injures woman

An 82-year-old Stouffville woman was charged Thursday afternoon for running a red light after her vehicle collided with a school bus at the Main Street and Ninth Line North intersection.

York Regional Police said the woman was heading westbound on Main Street when she proceeded through the intersection at 4 p.m. on a red light, slamming into the front left side of a school bus heading east as it attempted to make a left hand turn onto the Ninth Line. The woman was taken to Markham Stouffville Hospital with minor injuries. The school bus driver and a six-year-old passenger were not injured in the crash, police said.

Whitchurch-Stouffville fire crews re-routed traffic for about 45 minutes while the intersection was cleaned up. Police charged the woman with disobeying a red light.

Sidewalk opponents blast job on Ninth Line

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

The town's roads expert did a lousy job answering and analyzing residents' concerns regarding safety measures on the Ninth Line South, charged one homeowner this week.

Jennie Bangay, a strong critic of the town's recently installed sidewalk along the Ninth Line and representing homeowners affected by the

change, tore a strip off public works director Paul Whitehouse Tuesday night after reading his report answering their safety concerns along the busy stretch of road.

The residents had circulated a petition last September asking the Ninth Line be dead-ended at Parkview Village to force traffic off the residential road, as well as the installation of a crosswalk for school children and a stop sign at

Sunset Boulevard for seniors' safety.

Bangay accused Whitehouse of ignoring pedestrian rights and "environmental realities" in what she called a politician-like "Post-decision" report.

"I have never seen such an amateurish, close-minded, one-sided, cherry-picking, biased report as this piece of garbage that has been put forward by (Whitehouse) as the town's position on the petition for

changes on the Ninth Line.

"The director has focused his report on the rights of motorists and completely ignored the rights of the tax-paying residents," Bangay stated in a prepared statement.

Whitehouse's three-page report stated that the requested four-way stop sign at Sunset Blvd. would hinder traffic.

"Stop signs installed indis-

(Please see page 3)

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