

School board interviewing candidates for 'vacant post'

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

An acclaimed school trustee whose residency is being challenged in court is outraged the public board is already interviewing people for his position.

Bob Burrows, trustee for Whitchurch-Stouffville and East Gwillimbury, will fight for his \$5,000-a-year job Feb. 26 in Superior Court after the board claimed he was not a York Region resident and ousted him.

Meanwhile, the board has been interviewing potential candidates for his job, director of education Bill Hogarth confirmed.

"There will be no final selection until after the court case," Hogarth said. "We want to make sure somebody is in that position as soon as possible, but nothing will take place until that court decision has been made."

But Burrows said that may be in violation of a ruling by Justice Jack Jenkins, who in January ordered the board to stop soliciting applications for the trustee position until the residency question had been heard.

"It seems to me inappropriate and disrespectful to the instructions of the court," Burrows said. "I also feel that it's inconsiderate to the people they are interviewing — it's a position that may not exist."

According to an affidavit, board chair Bill Crothers became suspicious after Burrows submitted a driver's licence with a Durham Region address when registering his intention to run as trustee at the Stouffville town offices. When told he must be a resident, Burrows then handed over a licence bearing a York Region address. Crothers also claims a letter sent to Burrows' Jackson's Point address was returned.

He hired private investigators in early November to determine whether Burrows lived in the Jackson's Point home with his parents or on a Durham Region farm.

Burrows plans to argue those investigators may not have been properly licenced at the time they were tailing him and has maintained he lives in York.

As for the potential candidates vying for the job, Burrows wonders where they were at election time.

"Where were these people last October, when they had to take a public risk and a financial risk of running in an election? I would like to remind everyone in York Region that I was the only person who expressed interest in doing this job," he said.

He said he's also concerned that it's been three months and Whitchurch-Stouffville and East Gwillimbury residents have not had representation. The case goes ahead in Newmarket in two weeks.

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