



SPECIAL BUDGET BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024

6:00 PM

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

**ATTENDEES**

**Trustees**

Eve Flynn	Chairperson
Julie Austin	Vice Chairperson
Elaine Young	Trustee
Carol Kellogg	Trustee
Barry Kurland	Trustee

**Administration**

Peter Jory	Superintendent of Schools
Ron Amos	Secretary Treasurer
Gillian Wilson	Associate Superintendent
Rudy Terpstra	Director of Instruction
Phil Munro	Director of Operations
	Qualicum District Principal and Vice Principals Association
Karin Hergt	Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)

**Education Partners**

District Parents Advisory council (DPAC)  
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3570  
Mount Arrowsmith Teachers Association (MATA)

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Flynn called the Special Budget Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY**

Chair Flynn acknowledged that the Board lives works and plays on the territory of the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations and thanked them for allowing us to live work and play on this great part of Vancouver Island and for stewardship of these lands over time.

**3. BUDGET PROCESS TO DATE**

Secretary Treasurer Amos began by outlining the annual budget cycle and the considerations and tasks undertaken to ensure a thorough budget process.

**- Themes from Budget Conversations and Survey**

Secretary Treasurer Amos then presented the results from 120 responses received from the 2024/25 Budget Survey as follows:

Quality Teachers	Appreciation for dedicated teachers and support staff.
Leadership Appreciation	Recognition of effective school leadership.
Indigenous Resources	Calls for more resources and support for Indigenous education.
Student Engagement	More emphasis on engaging students and adapting teaching methods to diverse learning styles.
Food Programs and Support	Recognition of programs addressing food insecurity and mental health support.
Technology Integration	Acknowledgment of sufficient technological resources.
Literacy Focus	Suggestions for a greater focus on literacy.
Individualized Support	Recognition of efforts to meet individual student needs.
Challenges	Concerns about behavioral issues and academic performance.
Social-Emotional Learning	Emphasis on emotional well-being and learning through play.
Parent and Community Support	Gratitude for community support and inclusive policies, particularly for LGBTQ2+ students.
Safe Environment	Importance of creating a safe and positive learning environment.
Facilities and Maintenance	Efforts to consolidate old non-school sites and respond to work orders

Staff have taken the survey information and aligned it as best as possible with the Ministry requirements as well as budget asks from the District's schools and departments in order to determine how best to address the themes identified.

#### 4. **2024/2025 OPERATING GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT**

Secretary Treasurer Amos provided an overview of the Ministry's operating grant announcement, noting that there would be no new funding for enrolment growth as enrolment is expected to remain the same as 2023/2024. However, provincial education funding increased by \$344 million.

Of note were the following announcements:

- The Ministry has committed to funding wage increases for all staff based on provincial bargaining.
- There are some additions to the Classroom Enhancement Fund and the CommunityLink funds based on staff allocations.
- There are limited increases for replacement cost pressures or other inflationary factors.
- Early Child Care and Learning as well as the Food Initiatives continue to be a priority; however, commitments for learning supports and additional food funding are still to be confirmed.

The difference between the district's operating grant from 2023/24 and 2024/25 will be an increase of \$1.37 million, of which \$450,000 is coming from Unique Geographic supplemental funding for student location factor/small school supplements (such as False Bay School). The estimated 2024/2025 operating grant is \$53.2 million.

Secretary Treasurer then reviewed cost escalations which would result in a shortfall of \$236,000 as well as additional requests for staffing for another \$262,500 for a total anticipated shortfall of \$498,136.

## 5. BUDGET PRESSURES

Secretary Treasurer Amos then provided details of the budget pressures to the District due to increasing benefit costs, replacement costs and additional staffing requests. These will result in a shortfall of \$498,136, for which the district is needing to identify funding or reductions.

	Total		Notes
Increase in Operating grant	1,369,364		before escalations and requests
Estimated wage costs for 2% plus statutory benefits	950,000		remaining 1% distributed as Special grant
Estimated additional benefits	470,000	*	escalating costs for WCB/ EHB/ Dental
Estimated replacement cost increase	100,000	*	escalating costs for Subs/TTOC
Insurance increases	35,000		
Recruitment/Legal fees	50,000		
Increase in committed costs	1,605,000		
Funding surplus (shortfall)	(235,636)		
<u>Additional requests</u>	<u>FTE</u>		
NRT/Teacher staffing	2.50	262,500	requested to support NRT work and classroom pressures
Shortfall after all escalations and requests	(498,136)	**	

## 6. BUDGET PLANNING - RESPONSE

Secretary Treasurer Amos presented the Board with proposed budget responses to address the shortfall to balance the budget as follows:

		Total		Notes
<b>Shortfall after all escalations and requests</b>		<b>(498,136)</b>	<b>**</b>	
<b><u>Response/Reductions</u></b>	<b><u>FTE</u></b>			
Summer works crew (O&M)	2.00	150,000	(-)	
Learning services (EA/CYCW Hours)	1.60	107,000	(-)	(56.00) hrs per week
School administrative asst	0.37	35,000	(-)	(13.00) hrs per week
District Supply account		100,000	(-)	used for classroom/LR equipment
International program		50,000	(-)	supplies/services
Revenue - miscellaneous		60,000	(+)	rentals
<b>Total of reductions (or additions)</b>		<b>502,000</b>		
		<b>3,864</b>		

He also provided the history of how staffing has been added or reduced over time and explained how the budget is balanced based on the district's best estimate of enrolment at this time of year. Any increase (or decrease) would be captured in the amended budget in February.

Trustees then discussed the proposed reductions to address the budgetary pressures and the requests for additional teaching and Needs Response Team (NRT) time. Senior staff provided additional information on how the additional NRT time requested was separate from the staffing request. The NRT time is to enhance the support time for collaboration with colleagues and improve their practice to assist some of the needs students are presenting.

It was noted that the announcement from the province regarding funding for early literacy years would likely be targeted funding with specific criteria as established by the province. It was not yet known when that funding would be released or how much would be provided to the district.

Secretary Treasurer Amos then provided clarity on the reduction of the summer works crew, noting that the reductions would equate to 24 working months for 2 full time employees, which would be the entire summer works crew that works 2 months in the summer and 2 weeks over the spring break period. While the works crew was well utilized in the past year, it was not as well utilized in previous years and there could be different ways of addressing those needs. There may also be a way to find the funding elsewhere but it may not come from Operating if the Board supports using this proposal as one of the balancing items. The CUPE Local 3570 Vice President noted that additional support for the grounds crew arises often and with the recent agreement to take more care of Jack Bagley Field along with the new track at Ballenas, additional support is still needed.

## **7. BUDGET PLANNING – CAPITAL NEEDS**

Secretary Treasurer Amos then provided information on the Capital aspect of the budget, recognizing that there are capital needs as well as operational needs of the district.

During the planning for the operating budget, most of the conversations have been in regard to the operating fund and special purpose funds which come with caveats. Capital Planning has a somewhat different cycle. There are funding sources which come from the Ministry and there are funding sources for capital projects which come from internal local money – Local Capital. What the District has done in the past is put aside some value within its operating funds to fund the IT equipment and the White Fleet replacement. Therefore, Board's have the ability to take funds that are normally operating in nature and spend it on capital improvements, i.e. equipment. Other sources of capital funding come through Ministry grants in the form of minor projects (\$5m or less) and major projects (\$5m or over) and through community supported projects which are project specific, such as the current Ballenas Track Upgrade.

Other capital needs that come up are the needs on the district's rented facilities, which resulted from school closures in 2014. French Creek was closed for tenancy in June of 2023, negating the capital needs on that site. However, there is a need for the Board to consider the other two sites, Qualicum Commons and Craig Street Commons. While they are not a budgetary discussion, they are part of the budgetary conversations as there is \$4m to \$5m in unfunded costs that has been considered at meetings of the Finance & Operations Committee of the Whole for those two sites. This is an ongoing conversation

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that is required through the District's planning and does infuse the budget conversation somewhat as the capital needs have an impact on operating costs.

Chair Flynn inquired whether there is a comfort level amongst trustees to have senior staff proceed to present the preliminary budget with the proposed responses to the projected deficit in order to balance the budget at its Regular Board Meeting of April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Trustees responded that while they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposed budget at the April meeting, it may not result in all three readings being passed at that time as other options to address the shortfall might be identified in the interim.

Secretary Treasurer Amos will prepare the preliminary budget based on the night's presentation after which the proposed budget will present it to the Board for deliberation at the Regular Board Meeting schedule for Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, noting that the annual budget must be approved and submitted to the Ministry by June 30, 2024.

**8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Trustees and Senior Staff then received comments and provided clarification on the following:

- Are the transportation costs/revenues covered in this proposed budget? *Yes. The budget presented next week will be in the form that is presented to the ministry so will outline how expenditures break down by program including Transportation.*

**9. DATE OF NEXT REGULAR PUBLIC BOARD MEETING**

Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Kellogg moved to adjourn the Special Budget Board Meeting at 7:42 p.m.

*Original Signed Copy on File*

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CHAIRPERSON

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SECRETARY TREASURER