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Always growing
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**Qualicum School District
Finance & Operations Committee of the Whole Report
Monday, November 18, 2024
Via Video Conferencing
10:30 a.m.**

Facilitator: Trustee Carol Kellogg

We would like to give thanks and acknowledge that the lands on which we work and learn are on the shared traditional territory of the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose) First Nations People.

Mandate: *To discuss and make recommendations to the board on financial, facilities, maintenance, technology and transportation matters with a view to environmental sustainability.*

1. PRESENTATIONS (10 MINUTES)

None

2. PROJECT UPDATES

a. Ongoing Capital Project

Director of Operations Munro provided updates on the following capital projects that are in process:

- The Ballenas Secondary Track will be completed in the spring when weather is more conducive to the final application of the rubberized surface. Opening celebrations will be organized for that time.
- The False Bay replacement project definition report (PDR) is being reviewed by the Ministry with a hope that approval could be in the coming months.
- Director Munro also provided further information on the playground capital planning process. It was shared that staff review what is to be submitted on the basis of safety, age and imminent equipment failures. With these 3 considerations the district has created an internal list which include, in order of priority, Springwood, Errington, Arrowview and Nanoose Bay Elementary Schools. It was shared that the Ministry's playground program is relatively new and covers all 60 school districts in the province so it generally only allows districts to receive funding for 1 playground every 2 years.
- It was also reported that the Childcare capital costing reports have been submitted for review by the Ministry and includes projects for the Winchelsea Learning Centre and Qualicum Beach Elementary. These submissions against the 2024/25 capital planning cycle are in response to the Ministry's response letter supporting the projects in principle and selecting them to move forward to concept development. Director Munro shared that the reports have been prepared using consultants that are familiar with other school districts submissions. If these projects become approved then further information will be shared in order to provide feedback on the planning and scheduling of the projects.

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None

4. INFORMATION ITEM(S)**a. Statement of Financial Information**

Secretary Treasurer Amos provided an overview of the background to this report and highlighted some areas that needed further clarity including how employee expenses are being reported, as well as the reporting impact of retirement allowances on some employee groups. There was some discussion on how trustee expenses are reported with some but not all expenditures being attributed to the trustee.

b. 2025/26 Budget Development

Secretary Treasurer Amos reviewed the Budget process indicating that it will be similar to past years and will include the public survey as well as various opportunities for stakeholders to be involved in the budget discussions. It was suggested that the 2025/26 budget cycle will be particularly difficult in light of the September enrolments being lower than projected and it was hoped that broader participation would be encouraged. As in past years, the schedule will be presented at the Regular Board meeting in December and, if it were determined that in-person meetings be required, the schedule could be modified.

c. [Making Progress Towards Sustainable Schools](#)

Trustee Kellogg introduced the recently released BC School Trustees Association's (BCSTA) report, which identified issues and responses to School Districts' facilities planning. The report is a compilation of work done by the Capital Working Group and, in framing the work of the committee, it was felt that a more direct dialogue with government and detailed analysis was needed to support change.

The working group organized BCSTA capital resolutions and the committee's recommendations into five broad categories:

1. Life-cycle / Deferred Maintenance Funding (Annual Facility Grants, School Enhancement Program funding, Building Envelope Program funding)
2. Climate Change (Carbon Neutral Capital Program funding, greenhouse gas emission reductions, net zero construction, mitigation / adaptation, Bus Acquisition Program funding)
3. Student Population Growth (land acquisition, portables, new schools, pre-fabricated construction)
4. School Area Standards (related to growth as this applies to both the assessment of capacities in current school facilities and in the design of new facilities and additions)
5. General (addressing the process of reviewing capital programs and who should be involved)

Discussion took place on the information contained in the report and it was felt that the document could be referenced in Qualicum School District's capital and facilities planning decisions.

d. Transportation Revenues

Assistant Secretary Treasurer Hung shared information related to the revenues received from courtesy rider fees and the application/safety fees. It was reported that there about 1,914 students riding the Qualicum School District (QSD)buses, of which there are 1,423 eligible riders and 491 courtesy riders. All applications have generally been processed using the online platform and, therefore, the application fees have been paid on about 76% of applications received, with about 24% asking that the fee be waived for various reasons such as economic hardship or larger family discounting, etc.

Of the 491 courtesy riders using the QSD buses, 371 have paid the \$125 fees (\$46,375 received) and about 120 riders have not yet paid or are internal School District program

considerations, i.e. international students. This number is consistent with previous years where paid courtesy ridership has been between 350 and 450.

There was some discussion on the total transportation costs and it was reminded that although the School Act does not require the provision of transportation, most districts in BC run some level of transportation, either district run or as a contracted service. QSD spends about \$2.2 million on transportation and housing as per the 23/24 financial statements. It was also pointed out that there is no direct funding for busing within the current operating grants. The allocations that are generated within the Unique Geographic supplements considers the unique factors that make up the operating costs associated with running school districts including heating/cooling, small and large schools, remoteness, distance to urban centres, sparsity of populations, etc.

5. ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD

a. 2023-2024 Statement of Financial Information

6. FUTURE TOPICS

a. 2024-2025 Amended Budget

7. NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, January 20, 2025 at 10:30 via video conferencing

8. ADJOURNMENT