



**SPECIAL BUDGET BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**APRIL 20, 2021  
6:00 P.M.  
VIA ZOOM**

ATTENDEES

**Trustees**

Eve Flynn	Chairperson
Julie Austin	Vice Chairperson
Laura Godfrey	Trustee
Elaine Young	Trustee

**Administration**

Keven Elder	Superintendent of Schools
Ron Amos	Secretary Treasurer
Gillian Wilson	Associate Superintendent
Vivian Collyer	Director of Instruction
Chris Dempster	General Manager of Operations
Karin Hergt	Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)

**Education Partners**

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Flynn called the Special Budget Board Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY**

Chair Flynn acknowledged that the Board was meeting on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples and the home of the Qualicum and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations and the Board appreciates living, working and playing on their shared territories.

**3. 2021-2022 BUDGET OVERVIEW**

Secretary Treasurer Amos stated that the meeting is to review feedback received to date and to share the grant announcement, other revenue streams budget considerations prior to Trustees debating and approving the budget.

He then spoke to his budget presentation beginning with a review of work done to date to create the 2021-2022 Annual Budget, which included an on-line survey for the school community, budget working sessions with staff and stakeholder representatives, and feedback from the public.

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- **Budget Themes**

Secretary Treasurer Amos then reviewed the budget themes identified from the budget survey and the working sessions which were as follows:

Climate Action

- green initiatives/stewardship learning/lead teacher
- outdoor education/learning spaces/structures

Communication

- continue to share information to parents/staff/community
- more awareness of First Nations programs and embedding of Truth and Reconciliation

Supports

- custodial and enhanced cleaning
- social/emotional and mental health
- technology
- additional supplies e.g. manipulatives

- **Ministry Revenue Sources**

Secretary Treasurer Amos shared the figures from the 2021/22 Operating Grant Announcement noting that, while the province would be providing funds for the teacher labour settlement, the grant did not equal the cost. Given the requirement for Boards to cover the difference, the actual change in funding from 2020/21 to 2021/22 only amounted to approximately \$16,000. The Special Purpose Funds remain largely unchanged for the upcoming year while the Classroom Enhancement Fund is 90% of the previous year's grant. The Annual Facilities Grant amount will also not be changed. The district will also not be receiving the Mental Health and Safe Return funds which were provided this year due to the pandemic.

Secretary Treasurer Amos also noted that the International Student Program saw a loss in projected revenue this year; however, it is anticipated that enrolment in the program will rebound somewhat next year, the funds from which will support student enrolment growth, however, it will not fund additional needs. Should the board decide to do so, a portion of this year's surplus could provide those additional needs for next year.

- **Budget Considerations**

Secretary Treasurer Amos then reviewed the proposed budget considerations and spoke to the rationale for increased in custodial positions, the district supply accounts and the Zero Waste initiative.

Associate Superintendent Wilson spoke to the rationale for the proposed increases to teaching and education assistant positions, noting that the increase for education assistants was in hours across the system and not 3 new positions.

It was understood that not all of the proposals could be implemented; however, some would be possible by using a portion of the district's surplus.

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#### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/FEEDBACK

- Annual Facilities Grant remaining unchanged – districts are supported the BCSTA in a recommendation to the government to fully fund projects to upgrade facilities.
- Request to reallocate the proposed increase to a social emotional teacher to workshops for education assistants as that could benefit a larger range of students as they would have the tools and could identify students who get missed.
- Request to establishment of a 30 hour work week for education assistants at elementary schools and 32 hour work week for education assistants at the secondary schools.
- Request to increase custodial staff to address challenges already experienced pre-covid with heavy workloads which have increased due to the pandemic. This would ensure a safe, germ-free environment for both staff and students.
- Additional details were requested regarding how the international student program (ISP) supplements regular school funding. The funds go first to the ISP program costs (travel, agent fees and staffing as well as homestays. Once the cost of running the program is dealt with, then any supplemental funds support other areas within the district. i.e. supply accounts, additional teaching staff or indirect supplement to help balance the budget.
- The 2020-2021 budget was built around a \$2m revenue stream and in September 2020 that was adjusted to \$1m. There is very little to supplement the district beyond the ISP program based on revenue projections. It was noted that the district has not had to, nor would it, consider supplementing the ISP program with regular funding.
- Ray we budgeted 1.4m and it was \$1m was revenue last year.
- If the Board wants to direct supports for students, particular in social emotional learning and supports, the best way is smaller class sizes. As for the district positions, while access to the individuals is appreciated by teachers, it is not direct. It can be isolated and it does not have the tendency to be as organized or responsive as teachers who are in the building. If specialist are to be hired, they need to be on site.
- Is the proposed social emotional teacher to help teachers teach social emotional learning or to support teachers directly? Is it to support higher vulnerable students? This would depend on what trustees decide. Once the budget is passed, then staff discuss areas that fit with the priorities and planning. It has been acknowledged that secondary teachers require support with shifting practices in terms of the pedagogy. The Board has always committed to counselling staff and the district has enough based on current student data. What has been recognized is that more staffing is needed and trustees are being asked to asked that in.
- The District needs more teachers, more professionals working with children, and less children in the room which would make one-to-one time more efficient. Training education assistants is not going to solve the needs the district has and staff are seeing in our learners. A behaviour specialist trained to deal with that is what we need more of, which will help students and to be efficient for learning.
- It was requested that the board ensure smaller class sizes, smaller Kindergarten classes as students may not have had any preschool experience, the grade 8's transitioning to high school need extras supports and smaller classes and students who have remained at home for all or most of last 2 years, will need a lot of supports.
- More student learning support teachers and integrated teacher time, need to have more counselling time for emotional behavioural needs and have it be in the schools and, as recommended at CIAC, that support for secondary teachers who are working with the redesigned curriculum as they did not get as much training as elementary teachers so that is important.

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- Also recognition of the Indigenous Education and the Truth and Reconciliation and what it means in our district and how staff, as settlers, can navigate the waters to bring a true reconciliation for the Indigenous peoples whose lands we all live on.
  - Adopt some of the successes district such as Victoria and Vancouver have had in their education assistant ratios. It was noted that the district has a higher ratio than many other districts.
  - What data do we have in our district to support the premise that kids will need the extra social emotional support? It is what district staff are hearing from the community and they have been reaching out to determine why some students have not been engaged – whether it is due to the impact of COVID-19 i.e. fear of transmissions. Also, some students were not as engaged prior to covid and the pandemic gave them another reason not to be so staff are trying to determine what it is about. One unknown that staff are very curious about is the district's Kindergarten students whom have not been in a play type environments due to the pandemic and the resulting reduced number of preschool spaces.
  - Additional hours for education assistants and to have them be more involved in the sharing of information about the students they are working with as well as to be more involved in the community building in the school.
  - Kitchen funding for Ballenas Secondary School – that is currently being worked on in partnership with the City of Parksville.
  - Costs of modulars used to be \$65,000 to \$85,000 and are now \$150,000 to \$200,000
  - Is there any consideration to reopening closed school sites? Any space pressures will be a school outgrowing its current capacity so the Board's plan is to have a long range facilities plan. If the district needs to accommodate growth, whether that is to add to current sites or to reopening, those are substantial costs which would be submitted to government by way of capacity and it is a tough competition as the envelope of funds go to other growing districts.

Secretary Treasurer then requested that the Board provide some direction on how to potentially balance the budget. It may choose to put some reserves aside and may choose to move money into local capital.

Trustees discussed the budget considerations and requested that they be provided with a number of scenarios for the Board to consider at the next board meeting. This would provide the board some time to identify its budget priorities and how much of the surplus to apply to those priorities. It would also provide the costing of what using different amounts of the surplus could provide.

## 5. **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Flynn adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

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CHAIRPERSON

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SECRETARY TREASURER