

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 78 (FRASER-CASCADE)**

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
November 30, 2015**

**PRESENT:**

**Board - Committee Members:**

Tom Hendrickson	Chair
Cindy Ferguson	Trustee
Heather Stewin	Trustee

**Representatives:**

Darlene Smith	Payroll	CMAWBC
Lori Izawa	Parent	DPAC
Clair Gill	Parent	DPAC
Lynne Marvell	President	FCTA
Bruce Becker	Principal	FCPVPA

**Staff:**

Karen Nelson	Superintendent
Kevin Bird	Assistant Superintendent
Natalie Lowe-Zucchet	Secretary-Treasurer

**Recording Secretary:**

Ashley Limb	Accounting/Data/Human Resources
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**Regrets:**

Brad Bourel	Maintenance	CMAWBC
Cathy Speth	Representative	AEC

**1. Call to Order**

The Secretary-Treasurer called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. in the District Education Office in Hope, B.C.

**2. Election of Chair**

The Secretary-Treasurer called for nominations for Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee. Committee member Lori Izawa nominated Trustee Hendrickson. Trustee Hendrickson accepted the nomination. No other nominations presented. Trustee Hendrickson becomes Chair by acclamation.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**SMITH/FERGUSON**

THAT the Agenda be approved as presented.

**Carried**

**4. Approval of Minutes – May 11, 2015**

**SMITH/IZAWA**

THAT the Minutes of the Budget Advisory Committee meeting held on May 11, 2015 be approved.

**Carried**

**5. Mandate**

The Budget Advisory Committee mandate outlining the purpose of the committee, representation on the committee, voting rights and selection of committee Chair was provided for information. The purpose of the Budget Advisory Committee is to review the detailed budget of the School District and make recommendations to the Board. The committee reviews the draft budget information, funding information, and requests from stakeholder groups.

**6. Meeting Dates**

The meeting dates were presented, with the Secretary-Treasurer doing a brief overview on what each meeting will entail in regards to the budget processes.

A Committee Trustee asked when the budgets are distributed to the parent groups. The Secretary-Treasurer indicated that the Budget Advisory Committee meetings are public and anyone is welcome to attend, as well as the committee has two District Parent Advisory Council representatives on it that can pass on the information as necessary.

There was discussion about hosting some of the meetings in the Agassiz area, and although considered, meetings are generally tagged on to Board meetings depending on their location.

**7. Legal Services Delivery Projection information**

The Secretary-Treasurer presented information on the Service Delivery Project which is a K-12 sector-led effort to find additional savings and efficiencies through shared delivery of services across British Columbia school districts. The Ministry of Education and partners are working collaboratively, identifying opportunities to achieve further savings and efficiencies in employment and labour matters, procurement, attendance support, facilities, transportation, IT/communications and business systems.

We are in the second phase of initiatives which is the Employment Practices Liability Program which will provide a coverage agreement, policy, guidelines and a labour litigation pool for the purpose of improving efficiency and increasing cost effectiveness of employment and labour matters for union and exempt staff which has been mandatory from July 1, 2015.

The Assistant Superintendent has sat in on conference calls and has utilized this service already for the School District for a grievance issue but did not need to access the overall program. The Assistant Superintendent explained that the program is to achieve economies of scale on legal costs, improve coordination of employment and labour issues across the sector, ensure employment and labour issues are litigated in the most cost effective manner and minimize duplication of legal services.

The Secretary-Treasurer indicated that a premium must be paid for these services on an annual basis, although this year was covered by a surplus from the Schools Protection Program. The amount to be paid for next year is currently unknown.

## **8. Preliminary Budget Presentation 2015/2016**

The Secretary-Treasurer presented a PowerPoint on the preliminary budget for 2015/2016.

The presentation started off with an overview of key dates throughout the year for the budget process:

- February – the Ministry announces the provincial funding. It has gone up the last few years slightly due to labour settlements.
- February 13 – the School District sends in enrolment projections for the upcoming school year.
- Mid March – the Ministry of Education announces the funding for the upcoming year.
- March/April – the preliminary budget for the School District is developed. The School District asks principals to look at their upcoming needs for the school year with staffing.
- April 30 – the cutoff for laying off staff. Layoffs have not been as high in the past few years due to leaves and attrition.
- May 4 – the first reading of the budget. Three readings of the budget are required and must be completed by June 30.
- September 30 – the enrolment snapshot through 1701.
- February 28 – the amended budget is due.

The Secretary-Treasurer reviewed that the funding has been predictable and stable because the School District has been in funding protection. The School District's funding is reduced by 1.5% per year. We were given labour settlement funding outside of the funding protection which offset the overall decrease in funding.

The Secretary-Treasurer reviewed how much was given by the Ministry in specific categories this year compared to last. It is an overall reduction of \$208,706.

The Ministry tasked School Districts with reducing their administration budgets by \$29 million, which worked out to \$113,350 for School District No.78. This was done with the closure of C.E. Barry School reducing a 1.0 FTE Principal, a half time clerical reduction and half time custodial reduction, as well as saving utilities expenses.

The Secretary-Treasurer reviewed line items from the budget explaining which each entail including operating, pay equity, community link, literacy, French, strong start, learning improvement fund, ready set learn and labour settlement funding.

The Annual Facilities Grant amount didn't change from last year – this money is to support infrastructure and doing appropriate upgrades to keep the facilities in good shape.

The School District was successful in obtaining the most minor capital funding for 2015/2016 from the province which will be utilized for an overhaul of the heating and ventilation system at Kent Elementary. This in turn will have a large impact in savings on utility expenses in the future. Silver Creek Elementary also received a lighting upgrade project grant.

New cost pressures for this year have accumulated to around \$605,000 are as follows:

- Part time trades coordinator
- Funding for welding program/trades and technology
- MyEducation BC implementation – this includes the coordinator, professional development and staff time release
- Next Generation Network costs – high speed access to internet being put throughout the province. Completion date is mid January
- New block release for Mountain School – it was realized that this time was needed to provide the services to put on trips and ensure the equipment was in good working order
- Innovative Practices funding – the Superintendent provides money to each school to release teachers to collaborate. It has been found that teachers working together is the most effective professional development for staff and translates into better quality teaching for the students.
- Additional staffing for special education students
- New technology staff member – the Assistant Superintendent is looking into this
- 62 additional students and no new funding which required approximately two additional teachers in the district – the School District is in funding protection so even though there were additional students, there was no additional funding provided

The Learning Improvement Fund is money allocated to Districts to improve learning conditions for all students. It is contractual that 80% of these funds must be spent on teachers and 20% on support staff. These decisions surrounding staff is decided between the Superintendent, Union Presidents and administrators of the schools.

The School District decided to postpone the implementation of MyEducation BC until September 2015. By doing so, many problems were avoided but there are still issues with the program throughout the province. The District has one person dedicated to the

implementation of the program and appreciates everyone's patience as we work through it is very much appreciated.

The School District is maintaining the technology evergreen plan which is every second year a school receives funding for upgrades. A total of \$70,000 is set aside per year. This year in addition, the School District is purchasing two new servers to run the new NGN system and continue to purchase new routers and access points to improve wireless access.

The School District is conservative in their budget approach to try to ensure that the impacts of changes in funding and costs do not result in any programming.

The Superintendent indicated that the money received from the BC Ed Plan is being used for collaboration time at the schools focusing on reading strategies for students that are struggling.

The Secretary-Treasurer reviewed how the Learning Improvement Fund was allocated this year compared to last year for both teaching staff and support staff.

Discussion surrounded enrolment trends in the schools and the District over the last three years. The committee reviewed a graph of the last ten years of enrolment and how it has mostly declined, but has started to take a slight increase in students this year.

In the preliminary budget, the School District was approximately \$900,000 in funding protection this year. With additional students and the increase of designated and aboriginal students, it is projected that the School District may be out of funding protection in 1 to 2 years.

There is approximately \$4 million in unrestricted surplus and this is the first year we have had to tap into it to balance the budget. This was mostly to cover additional support staff, to cover staff cost increases and cost pressures. The School District did not have to make cuts to services but are able to judiciously add to service. With the increase to student numbers and no increase to funding this money will support the district without cuts to services.

## **9. Questions**

The Committee Chair asked that if the Ministry is to change the funding formula, how much notice is given. The Secretary-Treasurer indicated that usually a year's notice is provided.

Boston Bar receives a rural school allotment of approximately \$500,000 and it was asked if Harrison Hot Spring Elementary does also. The Secretary-Treasurer explained that no, Harrison Hot Spring is not considered a rural school and no allotment is given.

Discussion surrounded set up cost for the welding program in two years time. The Superintendent indicated that grant funding is expected to offset those costs.

A Committee member suggested a potential survey going out to families of grade 6 students in the Agassiz/Harrison areas regarding students and potentially why they're leaving to other areas or schools outside the district.

The Superintendent thanked the Secretary-Treasurer for a comprehensive presentation on the preliminary budget and also congratulate her on securing the mechanical upgrade for Kent Elementary School.

**Notice of Next Meeting:      January 18, 2016**  
**4:30 p.m.**  
**District Education Office**

**Adjournment**

**MARVELL/IZAWA**

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

**Carried**

The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.