

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

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEETING
December 1, 2014**

PRESENT:

Board - Committee Members:

Rose Tustian	Chair
Linda McMullan	Trustee
Tom Hendrickson	Trustee

Representatives:

Darlene Smith	Payroll	CMAWBC
Lori Izawa	Parent	DPAC
Lynne Marvell	President	FCTA
Cathy Speth	Representative	AEC

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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Observers:

John Koopman	Elected Trustee
Heather Stewin	Elected Trustee
Cindy Ferguson	Elected Trustee

Regrets:

Brad Bourel	Maintenance	CMAWBC
Bruce Becker	Principal	FCVPA

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the District Education Office in Hope, B.C.

2. Approval of Agenda

SMITH/HENDRICKSON

THAT the Agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

3. Approval of Minutes – May 5, 2014

MCMULLAN/SMITH

THAT the Minutes of the Budget Advisory Committee meeting held on May 5, 2014 be approved.

Carried

4. 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.

5. Meeting Dates

The meeting dates were presented, with members indicating that these dates can be flexible if notice is given.

6. Capital Cost Sharing

The Secretary-Treasurer presented a letter from the Ministry of Education surrounding capital cost sharing. The government amended the sharing policy for school districts with seismic projects no longer subject to the cost sharing requirement. Other capital projects will still be reviewed to see what districts can bring to the table in terms of funding.

The future addition at Coquihalla Elementary School is a fully funded capital project as it has been determined by the Ministry of Education to be a seismic project.

7. Service Delivery Project Phase 2

The Service Delivery Project is now entering into Phase 2. The initiative in Phase 1 focused on implementation of the recommendations of the working groups on procurement, legal services,

attendance support and wellness. The School District has looked at cash management, purchasing cards and fleet purchasing. School District No.78 uses School District No.23 to share services for WorkSafe to help with managing appeals, return to work programs and much more. The shared services project is a priority of the Ministry of Education and is now considered to be compulsory for participation by all School Districts.

Shared services is a top priority for the Ministry of Education along with the BEd plan. The ultimate goal is to funnel money more into classrooms and not needless overhead.

A trustee indicated that the School District needs to exercise caution as saving money is key, however, be aware of potential regionalization/amalgamation of authority down the road with sharing services with larger districts.

Discussion surrounded the implementations and recommendations of phase 2, with committee members asking questions surrounding employee health and wellness and legal services.

8. Powerpoint - Budget

The Secretary-Treasurer presented a PowerPoint on the 2014/2015 Budget. Key dates for the budget were reviewed which includes the following:

- February – Ministry announces Provincial Funding
- February 13 – Enrolment projections are due from Districts to the Ministry
- Middle of March – Funding announcement from the Ministry of Education
- March to April – Preliminary budgets are developed
- April 30 – Layoff deadline for staff
- May 4 – First reading of budget at Board meeting
- June 30 – Approved budget due to the Ministry of Education
- September 30 – Enrolment snapshot
- February 28 – Amended budget due

It was discussed that the School District tends to be conservative in developing preliminary budgets and laying off staff. It's difficult to know where the students will appear so staffing is always done conservatively and rehired where the students are. September 30 is when the enrolment figures are properly identified in all categories. That is the number that we use on a go forward basis for supplying staff and funding to individual schools.

Funding has been stable and predictable by using a formula from the last 2 years. The Ministry of Education funding is reduced 1.5% for the third year in a row as School District No.78 is in funding protection. Currently, the budget was reduced \$283,000 for the 2014/2015 school year from the previous year. Other forms of revenue comprise less than 1% of overall revenue so the School District is heavily reliant on Ministry funding and funding through the Local

Education Agreements with the bands. Enrolment continues to decline so the Ministry provides a supplement until it levels out or increases.

Line items of the budget were touched on, including grants from the Ministry of Education including: Operating, Pay Equity, Community Link, Literacy, French, Strong Start, Learning Improvement Fund and Ready Set Learn. As well, other income reported includes funding from the Local Education Agreements, International Student fees, and some rental income from renting spaces to UFV and two daycares within the district.

Cost pressures that the School District faced are a non funded wage increase to support staff, and increases to BC Hydro rates. The School District has an energy program to help reduce the carbon footprint and provides an annual report in spring each year. If the School District isn't carbon neutral, we pay into a program. The money that is paid to the Pacific Carbon Trust is reinvested into projects for the Districts for carbon neutrality. A couple years ago, funds were used to provide a lighting upgrade at AESS.

Employee benefit costs continue to increase and represent around 20% of the School District's budget.

A new student information system is currently being implemented across the province. BCeSIS is being phased out and MyEducation BC will replace the system. School District No.78 planned on implementing the new system this past September, but with job action, it was decided to be placed on hold. There are still glitches with MyEducation BC that are being addressed as the system is rolled out. It's hoped that it will be implemented in late spring for the School District and that training is intuitive and minimal.

Technology is a demanding area in the budget and the School District has built in another position in the technology department to support current staff. This allocation is currently being used for outside consulting. The School District has also maintained the technology evergreening plan with a school receiving funding for upgrades every second year. A total of \$70,000 is put aside per year. The District has set aside \$100,000 this year planning to purchase two new servers to run the new Microsoft Exchange system, as well as new routers and access points for better wireless access. The Provincial Learning Network upgrade is in the works, however, no timeline has been provided for the upgrade. This will yield faster and more consistent internet service and greater bandwidths. It is estimated that it may take a few years.

The Coquihalla roof was just replaced. There were ongoing problems with leaks and the School District had to upgrade without any support from contractors as the initial roofing company who did the roof went out of business.

In past years the Superintendent has asked administrators to present ideas for innovative grants for the schools and it has been very successful. The Superintendent has set aside some funding for this for the current year.

Funding was set aside for election expenses and costs are coming in as expected.

An additional speech language assistant, special education and teacher staffing were added from reserves due to class composition issues.

The School District has taken a conservative approach to the budget to ensure that the impacts of the changes in funding and costs do not mean major cuts. The approach has proved successful previously.

Discussion surrounded oil price reductions and that fuel surcharges from suppliers should be reduced. The Secretary-Treasurer assured the committee that the School District does not simply pay invoices, but questions costs and ask for adjustments where deemed necessary.

It was explained that money budgeted to the individual schools is carried forward as a surplus to their location if a school does not use their allocation in the year. Some schools do this in order to save up for certain expenditures.

Learning Improvement Funding money was spent mostly on teaching staffing this year, with some amounts allocated to support staff as well, in accordance with the new guidelines.

The Secretary-Treasurer presented an enrolment summary by school and grade to the committee and a comparison to last year. The numbers continue to decline, however, is starting to level out.

A committee member asked some questions surrounding Yale Elementary regarding if the School District still owns it, and if there is revenue from it. The Secretary-Treasurer indicated that there is an agreement for \$1 a year that the community of Yale maintains the building for zero cost to the School District. Everything is covered by them, including maintenance and utilities. The School District mows the lawn in the summer months. Yale Elementary School houses their library, among other community activities and events.

Shared services will be continued to be worked on, ensuring that the most dollars possible are targeted to the classroom.

A committee member asked what the credit card purchases benefit is to the School District. It was explained that it is part of the government and School Districts coming together with volume purchases. For every dollar spent, the School District receives a number of cents returned. It also is a benefit to staff as they are no longer out of pocket for large expenses and reduces the taxable benefits for points on person credit cards.

Notice of Next Meeting: **January 19, 2015**
 4:30 p.m.
 District Education Office

Adjournment

MCMULLAN/IZAWA

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.