



## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, February 11, 2020**

**School Board Office - 8:30 a.m.**

**Present:** D. Stevenson (in the Chair); L. Block, Trustee; J. Leiterman, Secretary Treasurer; C. Kennedy, Superintendent; S. Nosek, Associate Superintendent; K. Johnson, Assistant Secretary Treasurer; D. Eliasov, Manager of Facilities; J. Carpino, Manager of Purchasing and Transportation; J. Brown, Manager of Finance

**Stakeholder Representation:** R. Willock (WVTA); B. Scott (WVMEA); C. Ratz, S. Rauh (WVAA); K. Richter (DPAC)

**Absent:** F. De Dios, Director of Facilities

### **1. West Vancouver Place for Sport**

The Secretary Treasurer said that although she has not spoken about the WVPFS recently, there has been lots of activity and the project is in a good place. A total of \$3.6 million has now been raised, with the largest portion of that coming from the District of West Vancouver, who donated \$2 million in addition to their original contribution of \$250 thousand. That created a buzz in the community and their matching donations resulted in additional \$500,000 raised. The project still needs to reach the \$5 million target, however, and this is the toughest part of the campaign, as all individuals and organizations have been approached. There is still optimism that they will reach their goal and the fundraising committee continues to meet at least once a month.

### **2. BICS artificial turf field**

The artificial turf field beside BICS is now 10 years old and in need of replacement. The Municipality of Bowen Island is responsible for the field and has hired R.F. Binnie as the general contractor to handle the project. It is scheduled to take place during the summer of 2020 at a cost of \$200 - \$300,000. At this time, the Municipality's plan is to use rubber crumb infill. Coconut fill was used the first time and while it was environmentally friendlier, it did not last and was not durable enough. This field has proven to be a great community asset over the last decade and its refurbishment should be well-received by the community.

### **3. 2019/20 WVS District Playground Grant**

Each year, the school district offers a \$10,000 playground grant to elementary schools, comprised of \$5000 in cash and \$5000 in kind, with labour provided by our facilities department. Applications are not necessarily received every year, as many of our playgrounds are in good shape. This year, an interesting application was received from Irwin Park Elementary, and the grant has been awarded to them.

*Committee members: Dave Stevenson, Lynne Block*

Their project is focused on outdoor learning and play, and is made up of three different areas: the north commons by the new parking lot will be designed for older students, with covered benches and added trees; an outdoor classroom will be created near the basketball court, with a covered seating area; and the rain gardens, which will be between the playground and 24<sup>th</sup> Street, will include natural play structures. They will work with DWV, as part of the land is owned by them, not the school district. Total budget is \$64,000 and the Secretary Treasurer said the district is pleased to contribute.

#### **4. 2019/20 Amended Budget**

The Secretary Treasurer reminded the committee that the preliminary budget is based on enrolment projections calculated in February of the previous school year, and the amended budget is based on actual enrolment on the 1701 report from September 30 at the beginning of the current school year. Ministry funding figures are not confirmed until December and then the in-depth work begins before the amended budget is finalized. The Secretary Treasurer ensures that each account is looked at, past and present spending patterns considered, and trends in utilities studied. Salaries account for 90% of the budget and the Assistant Secretary Treasurer spends time ensuring salary and benefit obligations are accurate, and that potential changes in benefits, leaves, and associated costs are as precise as possible.

Special Purpose Funds, Schedule 3A, were reviewed. These targeted funds are a flow-through, as we spend what we receive, according to their designation. There are three new special purpose funds this year: First Nation Transportation, Mental Health in Schools, and Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC). Under the First Nation Transportation fund, we will receive \$17,778 to assist Indigenous students who live on-reserve to get to school. At elementary, families will receive a gas allowance based on the average distance to school, and at secondary, students will receive a compass card. There is also \$3,368 available to support students with transportation associated with school-based extra-curricular activities. This new program has been well-received by the Squamish Nation. The three-year grant under Mental Health in Schools will bring in \$28,500 in funding this year. One third of that will be spent on physical literacy programs, and the other 2/3 will be managed by District Principal Maureen Lee to assist in the development and implementation of the new mental health framework. This money will mostly support professional development for staff this year. Changing Results for Young Children has \$37,877 allocated, and those funds will be spent mostly on Early Years – Kindergarten transitions. Family events, collaboration, communication, and professional development are all designed to create a sense of belonging and support in our schools.

The Operating Grant is where we have the most control and choice about how we spend our funding. The Secretary Treasurer briefly reviewed the increases in student FTE, noting that it was up in all areas: regular, special needs, summer learning, ELL, Indigenous, and academies. This resulted in a net increase in total Operating Funds of \$1.2 million. There was an associated increase in net Operating Costs of \$1.4 million, but this deficit was not a surprise. Operating expenses – Schedule 2C saw an increase of \$1.4 million over the preliminary budget, with most of that change attributed to instruction. Our total amended operating expenses are \$77.3 million, with overhead costs representing only 15% of our operating budget. This is well below the MOE guideline of 24%.

Salary and benefits expenses were broken down by category, with support staff and exempt staff seeing increases of \$211,000 and \$160,000 respectively. Two new support staff positions have been created at facilities and in IT, and there have been some leaves

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and retirements. The additional exempt staff costs are a result of the PSEC-approved salary lift, which continues to be unfunded. There were eight EA positions added in the fall and while there is an associated cost, these increases mean we are being responsive to our student demographic and providing necessary supports to students and staff. The largest increase was the \$450,000 associated with the Employer Health Tax. Happily, this cost is now funded, so the budget impact is negligible. It was noted that while the amended budget shows no change related to teacher salary costs, this could change if an agreement is reached between the government and the BCTF before the end of June. Any increase will be funded, however, so there is no concern for the bottom line.

Services and supplies costs have increased \$400,000 over the preliminary budget, with the largest increase related to medical fee coverage for international fee-paying students. The Secretary Treasurer reminded the committee that in August there was a late announcement from the government, not the MOE, that medical fees would no longer be covered for international fee-paying students, effective immediately. Our international program fees had already been collected, so this additional cost had to be covered by our operating budget this year. Medical costs will be incorporated into fees for 2020/21 and beyond. Other items of note included new cabling at Caulfeild for \$47,000; replacement of special education classroom hearing equipment and additional Milo units for \$60,000; the creation of five new divisions and related support for outfitting those classrooms; and an increase in municipal utility costs.

Our amended reserves at July 1, 2019 stood at \$2,279,453 – an improvement over the 2018/19 preliminary estimate. The structural deficit for 2019/20 has increased by \$179,000 from the preliminary budget, however, and the 2019/20 amended budget now has a structural deficit of \$489,263, which will leave reserves of \$1,790,190 at July 1, 2020. As a percentage of total operating expenses, that represents 2.3%, which is within the Ernst & Young guideline of 2-3%.

The Secretary Treasurer concluded by saying of course we would like a bigger buffer, but the good news is that we can maintain a status quo budget and still have some reserves for future years. She thanked her staff for their hard work on the thorough amended budget process and said we are in good shape.

Committee Chair Stevenson, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Secretary Treasurer and her staff for their hard work, saying it gives him confidence for the budget to be in such capable hands.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the 2019/20 Amended Budget and associated bylaw be forwarded to the Board for approval and filing with the Ministry.

## 5. Adjourn

9:02 a.m.

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Julia Leiterman, Secretary Treasurer

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