



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

7:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Trustees Present:	Justine Bell, Donna Blackburn, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Lynn Scott, Charles Chen (Student Trustee), Joy Liu (Student Trustee)
Staff Present:	Camille Williams-Taylor (Director of Education), Brett Reynolds (Associate Director), Mike Carson (Chief Financial Officer), Janice McCoy (Superintendent of Human Resources), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Eric Hardie (Superintendent of Instruction), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Prince Duah (Superintendent of Instruction), Nadia Towaij (Superintendent of Program and Learning K-12), Carolyn Tanner (Human Rights and Equity Advisor), Kevin Gardner (Manager, Finance), Sandy Owens (Manager, Business & Learning Technologies), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager, Communications & Information Services), Julie Cyr (Manager, Early Learning), Stacey Kay (Manager of Learning Support Services), Nicole Guthrie (Manager, Board Services), Charles D'Aoust (Coordinator of Budget Services), Teri Adamthwaite (Coordinator of Financial Reporting), Michael Guilbault (AV Technician), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator)
Non-Voting Representatives Present:	Malaka Hendela (OCASC-Alt), Jennifer Capitani (OCEOC), Wulf Heidecker (ETFO-Alt), Stephanie Kirkey (OSSTF-Teachers), Melanie Barclay-Wood (OSSTF-OT), Pat Dixon (OCEOTA), Troy Cluff (OSSTF-PSSU), Melodie Gondek (OSSTF-ESP), Jean Trant (OSSTF-SSP) Cathy Miedema (SEAC), Bronwyn Funciello (ACE).

1. Call to Order - Chair of Committee of the Whole, Budget

Chair Penny (Acting) called the public session to order at 7:05 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on unceded Algonquin Territories and thanked the Algonquin Nations for hosting the meeting on their land.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Trustee Boothby,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Delegations

There were no delegations.

4. Discussion Items

4.1 Report 21-045, 2020-2021 Updated Financial Forecast (March) (M. Carson)

Your Committee had before it Report 21-045, 2020-2021 Update Financial Forecast, explaining the changes reflected in the District's 2020-2021 Updated Financial Forecast as compared to the District's 2020-2021 Budget.

Director Williams-Taylor advised that this meeting would lay the foundation for future budget discussions. She noted the information provided in several announcements from the Ministry, the financial reconciliation from last year, and the many complexities to be considered in the staff-recommended budget for the 2021-2022 year.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson advised that he had hoped that it would be possible to present the staff-recommended budget at this meeting, but additional time was required to conduct analysis of the funding received from the province. He saw this meeting as an opportunity to present the District finances as at the end of August of 2020.

Manager Gardner presented Report 21-045 and provided the following highlights:

- The projected deficit is \$18.7 million, \$1.0 million more than the approved budget;
- The net accumulated surplus is \$21.0 million, of which over \$9.0 million is committed to support capital projects (used largely for portable classroom funding);
- Lower enrolment resulted in a decrease in the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) amounts allocated to the District;
- The Indigenous Education allocation increased by \$1.0 million;

- Minor tangible capital assets (MTCA) funding allowed for \$3.9 million to be redirected to the operations budget;
- The Ministry provided stabilization funding of \$14.4 million to compensate for the decrease in enrolment;
- New funding of \$16.7 million was received for COVID-related needs (ventilation, staffing, remote learning, safety supplies, etc.);
- COVID-related funding grants for a total of over \$36.0 million were received for operating purposes;
- Approximately \$3.8 million will be directed to support capital expenditures such as the purchase of Chromebooks;
- Increased spending of \$11.0 million on instructional supports (teachers and office staff) to respond to COVID-19 and an increased provision of \$4.7 million for occasional teachers is projected;
- A decrease in the cost of supplies and services of \$5.0 million is expected;
- Savings are expected in transportation costs as a result of lower contract costs and fewer transit passes of \$7.1 million;
- Additional expenditures included, increased custodial spending (\$2.4 million), increased spending on safety supplies, equipment and ventilation (\$5.2 million), and increased spending on portable relocations (\$2.3 million) and reduced costs for various supplies and services (\$463,000);
- Loss of revenue was noted in Community Use of Schools (CUS) permits (\$1.0 million), a reduced share of the former benefit plan due to central agreements (\$825,000), reduced international student fees (\$925,000) and administrative fees (\$457,000), an increase in legal costs for provision of legal claims (\$2.2 million); and
- Loss of revenue was reported in the Extended Day and Childcare Programs of \$5.8 million.

CFO Carson advised that additional meetings outside of what was noted in the presentation may be required to see the submission of a balanced budget by 30 June 2021.

CFO Carson advised that the deficit as a result of lower participation in the extended day program should not be seen as lack of support for the program. Staff have identified with the Ministry that the program is a key part of the District's strategy and the resulting losses in revenue are a casualty of the pandemic. He stated it will be essential that the District receive relief funding for the program for this year and next, until the

program can return to full enrolment. Staff are not contemplating a reduction or elimination of the program to reduce the deficit.

CFO Carson advised that staff have continued to work with the grants the province has provided, working to ensure the time-limited grants are the first to be used to preserve District funds. As a result, the deficit at year end may be lower than currently predicted. He noted that staff are comfortable with the deficit as reported at the end of March 2021, but they have not been overly optimistic in the formation of the budget recommendation.

During discussion and in response to questions, the following information is provided:

- CFO Carson advised that the District has received several streams of funding from the province to enhance ventilation in schools. Funding early in the year allowed for the purchase of 800 portable high efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filters, which were deployed to schools. Provincial funding was received in January 2021 that allowed for an additional 450 HEPA units to be obtained through a provincial procurement plan and will be deployed to schools when received. These funds must be expended by 31 August 2021;
- CFO Carson added that additional federal funding of \$28 million was received from the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) to be allocated for additional ventilation measures, eliminating touch points (e.g., automatic doors) and water bottle filling stations. These funds are to be expended by the end of December 2021. The limited availability of trades could impact the completion of the work by the due date;
- Regarding Dr. Etches' comments about Ottawa schools reopening on the condition of improved ventilation, CFO Carson advised that staff work closely with Ottawa Public Health and follow their guidelines. Staff also follow the guidelines of the American Society of Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standards on ventilation, and he noted he is confident the District can meet the requirements of OPH, should the province indicate a return to school, in person, in fall 2021;
- Manager Gardner noted that Appendix D, found on page 19 of the presentation, identifies the different grants received to respond to COVID-19 for operating purposes. There are multiple grants that are classified under various areas (e.g., facilities or instruction). Two ventilation grants close to \$1.7 million each were received. Additional grants were received for personal protective equipment (PPE), enhanced cleaning supplies, enhanced cleaning, hand sanitizers and desk partitions;

- To address summer heat in the classrooms and portables, should there be a requirement to return to schools, CFO Carson noted that the temperature set points for air conditioning will be lowered as far as possible. He advised that staff will be looking for ways to maintain lower temperatures while exchanging air as required. CFO Carson acknowledged that managing temperatures was a concern for all school boards and the issue has been raised with the Ministry and public health;
- CFO Carson advised that staff have been looking at the community use of schools (CUS) on a month-by-month basis, based on local and provincial public health guidance. He advised that CUS was being limited because of the impact on custodial staff and because of the limits on gathering. Staff are reviewing new rules and awaiting guidance as the Premier announced that camps will be opening this summer. Permits for CUS will be issued as soon as it is practical;
- Manager Gardner advised there were two grants received for enhanced ventilation, of approximately \$1.7 million each. The first amount was received in the fall of 2020 and incorporated into the revised estimates in January 2021. A subsequent grant \$1.7 million was received in January 2021;
- CFO Carson advised that the initial grants received were to address inadequate ventilation in classrooms and HEPA filters were deployed to those rooms. District funds were used to install unit ventilators in classrooms. He noted there is additional work being undertaken this summer under the Facilities Renewal/School Condition Index (FRP/SCI) and CVRIS funding to improve ventilation. As well, improved filtration and increased air changes were also implemented using District funds, based on ASHRAE standards of air being changed six (6) times during the occupation of a building;
- In response to a question from Trustee Bell, CFO Carson agreed to provide a summary of funding spent, and the amount that is still planned to be spent on ventilation for the 2020-2021 year;
- CFO Carson reported that school boards in the province received different amounts of funding; and the portfolios of buildings differ from board to board. These differences make it challenging to compare District spending on ventilation to that of other school boards;
- The Ministry looked at the effectiveness of their response to ventilation issues and also the effectiveness of school boards' approaches and this information will inform learning for the future;
- CFO Carson advised that 70% of buildings have central HVAC systems;

- From the \$150,000 green climate fund, funding has been directed to schools with a shopping list of environmental initiatives, to be spent by year end. CFO Carson advised that unspent funds would be carried over to the next budget year;
- From the \$28 million in CVRIS funding received, 2/3 of that was allocated to ventilation work. Staff are hopeful the December 2021 deadline for completion of the work will be extended;
- CFO Carson advised that staff are confident that a large number of projects will be completed by December 2021, but he noted it was a challenge to determine what would be completed by the end of August 2021;
- CFO Carson acknowledged that he is aware there are going to be daily issues with temperature control in portables. Staff have taken advantage of the closure to review the fleet of portables and there is an ongoing portable renewal program. CFO Carson advised that the ventilators in portables should be fully functioning for September 2021;
- In classrooms where adequate ventilation was a problem, staff looked to portables as temporary accommodations; and
- CFO Carson advised that the District is in regular contact with OPH and the Ministry regarding the issue of safety in the classroom and the challenges staff will face with heat and the PPE that is required to be worn, in the current portfolio of buildings. To address concerns, there will be ongoing monitoring by Facilities and Occupational Health and Safety staff. The health and safety of students and staff is a priority.

4.2 Memo 21-060, 2021-2022 Grant Announcements (M. Carson)

Your Committee had before it memo 21-060, presenting information on the 2021-2022 Grant Announcements.

Director Williams-Taylor introduced memo 21-060, noting that the early portion of the meeting was a look back at the 2020-2021 funding. She noted that going into the 2021-2022 school year the focus turns to grants and the expected funding. Director Williams-Taylor advised that much of the funding is COVID-19 related and many are grants for student needs (GSN). She advised that staff have provided an overview of the Ministry funding rollout and the governing rules that apply.

CFO Carson presented Memo 21-060 which outlined the instruction and guidance that has been received from the Ministry to date. Memo 21-060 provided a summary of information on the following memoranda:

- Memo 2021: B07, Planning for the 2021-22 School year;

- Memo 2021: B08, 2021-22 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) Funding; and
- Memo 2021: B09, Capital Funding for the 2021-22 School Year.

CFO Carson drew attention to technical information on the use of reserves. The Board has discussed advocating that boards should not have to use reserves to address COVID-19 costs. The specific regulation has not yet been published, but the Ministry has identified the negative impact on school boards that used more than 2% of reserves for the safe return to school, and for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school year, and upon review, will be reimbursing school boards for a portion of those reserves. Staff plan to include the reimbursement funding in the 2021-2022 staff-recommended budget. CFO Carson noted that the Ministry has been informed of the plan and did not react unfavourably.

During discussions and in response to questions, the following information was provided:

- To be eligible to receive the reimbursement of reserves from the Ministry school boards had to use 2% of reserves for each school year;
- The amount of \$268,000 in funding for mental health supports in the PPF funding is in addition to funding contained in the GSN. Staff will be reviewing what staff can be allocated against that grant;
- The funding of \$90,000 allocated for health and well-being is a continuation of funding from the 2020-2021 school year and is not part of the funding for use over the summer;
- The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) and the After School Skills Development (ASSD) funding is not additional funding. It is annual funding now embedded in the GSN. CFO Carson advised he was not aware of changes to the guidelines for the funding but noted that there is still a requirement to apply to add new SHSM programs; and
- The Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) Education Worker Apprenticeship funding is used by the OCDSB and the Plant Support Staff Unit (PSSU) to support an apprenticeship program for the trades.

5. Information Items

5.1 Memo 21-061, Update on 2021-2022 OCDSB Budget Item: Priority School Resource Officers (SROs)

Your Committee had before it Memo 21-061, Update on 2021-2022 OCDSB Budget Item: Priority School Resource Officers (SROs).

Director Williams Taylor reminded trustees that in a previous budget cycle a question was raised regarding the allocation of District funds to support school resource officers (SROs) in two priority schools. She noted that staff have undertaken a review that will inform how these funds will be allocated in the 2021-2022 staff recommended budget.

Superintendent Farrish outlined Memo 21-062, noting that the impacted schools and the school councils have been informed of the decision to discontinue the expenditure to Ottawa Police Service (OPS) as outlined within the memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the 2021-2022 staff recommended budget. The funds are allocated to provide dedicated school resource officers (SROs) to the two Urban Priority secondary schools and their feeder schools.

During the discussion and in response to questions, the following information was provided:

- CFO Carson confirmed there is no additional funding provided to the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) in any other line items other than the line item outlined in the Memo 21-061;
- Superintendent Farrish advised that she cannot speak to decisions that OPS may make regarding staff allocation and what will happen to the individuals fulfilling the dedicated SRO roles as the program belongs to OPS.
- The SRO program not only serves the OCDSB, but also the coterminous school boards in the City of Ottawa and supports a range of schools;
- Cancelling the dedicated SRO program at the Urban Priority schools is a budget decision. There is a report coming forward, based on consultation, that will address the full relationship of the SRO program in schools;
- In response to a concern from Trustee Blackburn, regarding a Board motion pertaining to the review of Policy P.043, Police Involvement in schools, and school and police relations, Director Williams-Taylor reiterated that staff are carrying out the work from the Board motion and are bringing this matter forward as a budget item that was raised in budget discussions about the allocation of funds for a particular program. Staff wanted to ensure the concerns trustees raised about funding for police were addressed and that this budget line item will not be included in the 2021-2022 staff recommended budget. Trustees expected an investigation of this budget item and staff wanted to reflect that had occurred. The remainder of the direction of the motion will be addressed in June 2021 and the policy in the fall of 2021; and

- The \$95,000 of funding directed to the SRO program currently comes out of District funds and not out of the Urban Priorities Grant.

6. New Business - Information and Inquiries

There were no items of new business.

7. Next Meeting

7.1 01 June 2021

Chair Penny (Acting) noted that the 2021-2022 staff-recommended budget will be presented at the 1 June 2021 Committee of the Whole (COW) Budget meeting. On 9 June 2021 and 15 June 2021 delegations and debate on the staff-recommended budget will take place, with possible approval at a Special Board meeting on 15 June 2021 or at the 21 June 2021 Board meeting.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Keith Penny, Acting Chair