

Tab 8

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, BUDGET REPORT

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

7:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

- Trustees Present:** Justine Bell, Christine Boothby, Rob Campbell, Chris Ellis, Lyra Evans, Mark Fisher, Wendy Hough, Jennifer Jennekens, Keith Penny, Sandra Schwartz, 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), Dorothy Baker (Superintendent of Instruction), Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services), Mary Jane Farrish (Superintendent of Instruction), Shannon Smith (Superintendent of Instruction), Michele Giroux (Executive Officer, Corporate Services), Shawn Lehman (Superintendent of Instruction), Eric Hardie (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 of Finance), Sandy Owens (Manager of Business & Learning Technologies), Karyn Carty Ostafichuk (Manager of Planning), Christine Kessler (System Principal, Learning Support Services), Pamela LeMaistre (Manager of Human Resources), Diane Pernari-Hergert (Manager of Communications & Information Services), Sandra Lloyd (Manager of Risk and Supply Chain Management), Nicole Guthrie (Manager of Board Services), Charles D'Aoust (Coordinator of Budget Services), Teri Adamthwaite (Coordinator of Financial Reporting), Rebecca Grandis (Senior Board Coordinator), Amanda Pelkola (Board/Committee Coordinator).
- Non-Voting Representatives Present:** Jennifer Capitani (OCEOC); Jennifer Coleman (OCSSAN); Wulf Heidecker (ETFO); Stephanie Kirkey(OSSTF-Teachers); Jean Trant (OSSTF-SSP); Kelly Granum (OSSTF-OT); David Wildman (OCEOTA); Melodie Gondek (OSSTF-ESP); Troy Cluff (OSSTF-PSSU); Malaka Hendela (OCASC); Harvey Brown (ACE); Connie Allen (SEAC); Rob Kirwan (SEAC) and

Non-affiliated Staff, Stacey Kay.

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

Chair Schwartz called the public session to order at 7:00 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 Lyra Evans,

THAT the agenda be approved.

Carried

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Trustee Campbell declared the following indirect conflict of interest:

Pursuant to Section 2 of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, I wish to declare an indirect conflict of interest in the matter of expenditures and revenues within the staff-recommended budget related explicitly to, both specific, Ottawa GO Club and SPCO interests in 440 Albert, the Rideau Hub or OCENET. Should any debate or votes specific to such matters be discussed, I will recuse myself from the debate and vote. I do not intend to recuse myself from general budget debate or general votes on the budget. Details are available in the public conflict register, available via the OCDSB Website.

4. Delegations

4.1 Lili Miller, re: End of the School Resource Officer (SRO) program

Ms. Miller expressed the opinion that it is well known that there is tremendous racism in law enforcement, including the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). She noted that students in schools need professionals in de-escalation, conflict management and mental health counselors, rather than police who rely on intimidation to manage student behaviour. Ms. Miller asked the Board to consider allocating all funds directed to the OPS to be redirected to the safe and caring professionals she suggested as an alternative to a police presence in schools. She submitted that by not acting, the Board is sending the message that they do not listen to and do not care about racialized students who have been mistreated by the police in District schools. Ms. Miller implored the Board to take action and remove police from schools.

Trustee Bell asked Ms. Miller if she was familiar with specific reports or outreach to students in the District or with any research undertaken on the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

Ms. Miller was aware that youths at the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) presented examples of the mistreatment of racialized students at the hands of the SROs and spoke to the students' reluctance to speak out against this mistreatment in school.

Trustee Lyra Evans asked Ms. Miller if she was of the opinion that this was the sentiment of the IEAC. Ms. Miller noted that the opinion was divided, older members preferred the status quo but younger members requested a change.

4.2 Carolyn Kropp, re: School Council Funding and Return to School Questions

Ms. Kropp questioned staff as to whether school council spending limitations might be updated in light of COVID-19. She expressed concerns over managing class sizes within the District as well as the use of outdoor classrooms. If schools are over capacity would the District consider adding additional portables to those sites.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carson noted that the province has not changed the guidelines for school council spending in light of COVID-19 and staff are not looking to school councils to provide additional financial support to schools. Portables were allocated to schools in June based on enrolment at that time. The rental of tents or domes by school councils is prohibited and staff will not be looking to school councils to provide personal protective equipment (PPE). Regarding ventilation, staff began looking at this in the summer at each school site, some rooms may be a challenge, windows may have to be opened and rooms may have to be taken out of commission, if necessary. The District received additional funding for Chromebooks and iPads. Business and Learning Technologies (B & LT) staff are working with schools to oversee the return of equipment. It is impossible to guarantee that all of the loaned equipment will be returned and that there would not be a deficiency.

Ms. Hendela committed to raise the question of whether technology equipment purchased by school councils and loaned to students will be returned to schools.

5. Matters for Action

5.1 Report 20-063, 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget

Chair Schwartz noted that this meeting is a continuation of the 21 July 2020 budget meeting where staff presented the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget. Since the presentation of the report, additional information and funds have been received. Chair Schwartz thanked staff for their work on the budget and in preparing a back to school plan.

Director Williams-Taylor noted that there have been a number of announcements since the presentation of the budget on 21 July 2020. The Ministry announced its plan to reopen schools and additional funding was provided to ensure a safe return to schools. The provincial plan will see elementary schools opened on a full-time basis and secondary schools opened on a part-time basis, families have the option to continue with remote learning if they choose.

Over the past weeks, staff has worked with the Ministries of Health and Education as well as local health experts to develop information for families and staff prior to welcoming students back on 3 September 2020. The Director noted she would not be presenting a plan at tonight's meeting but would share the following principles that were considered in the return to school plan:

- The safety of students and staff and the ability to work with public health officials in the event of confirmed COVID outbreaks;
- A commitment to ensuring as much as possible the continued support to improve student achievement and well-being; and
- Continually reviewing ideas and processes to ensure the work being done aligns with the cultures of innovation, caring and social responsibility.

Staff have looked at the principles while considering the divergent needs of communities in Ottawa, with equity in the forefront. While the plan that has been developed may not be ideal, it will see schools open in September, with reduced risk to staff and students.

Dr. Petra Duschner was present to speak to the conditions that need to be in place for students upon their return in the fall. She noted that in the context of the last six months, the pandemic and racial issues, all communities have suffered great loss. Student feelings on their return to school will vary. Some students will thrive with the familiarity of school while vulnerable students may require special supports. There is no "one size fits all" solution. Staff, parents and communities must model resilience but must not diminish the emotional impact of the past six months. School Mental Health Ontario is putting together a toolkit and staff will be trained in providing healthy classrooms and recognizing issues. Through working with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) and school mental health supports, staff are positioned to provide the right level of service as students return to school.

CFO Carson advised Trustees Bell and Campbell that answers to a number of their questions will be available at the 13 August 2020 COW Budget meeting.

CFO Carson emphasized that it has been a most unusual year and that staff want to present a budget that will provide flexibility, see the opening of schools, minimize risk and change course as required.

There will be an amendment to the recommendation to capture the authority to proceed with some of the funding from the province through the Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF).

CFO Carson noted the PowerPoint (PPT) being presented tonight is the same one used on 21 July 2020 but with three revised pages to include the recently announced provincial funding to address COVID-related expenses.

The total amount the province has allocated to school boards is \$109,000,000, with the OCDSB receiving \$3,518,792 as their share of the funding for the following:

- Technology related costs (\$528,561);
- Mental health supports (\$198,891);
- Enhanced cleaning allocation (\$140,798);
- Additional staffing-custodial (\$1,816,446);
- Health and safety training-casual staff (\$369,988); and
- Additional supports-special education (\$265,217)

Regarding the additional funding for custodial staffing, CFO Carson noted that there is the potential for an additional 45-60 FTE positions to support daytime cleaning.

Superintendent Symmonds is looking at the mental health and special education support funding to determine how to best use these additional funds with those outlined in the budget.

CFO Carson noted that additional funding of \$234,000,000 from the province that has been identified but not allocated to each board but is anticipated to be \$7,893,792 for the OCDSB share as follows:

- Masks and PPE through the province (through The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services) (\$2,100,000);
- Allocation for mental health supports (\$875,000); and
- Enhanced cleaning allocation (\$1,400,000).

It is estimated that an additional \$30,000,000 from the province will be available for additional teachers to support school boards where class size or supervision is an issue. This funding is available to those boards that

have exceeded the 1% deficit threshold. The OCDSB is in that category but it is unlikely these funds will be allocated on a proportional basis.

CFO Carson noted that these additional dollars will allow enhanced practices from September to at least December and when staff will have a better idea at that time of best practices, enrolment and expenses.

It is anticipated that there will be a projected accumulated surplus of approximately \$37,000,000 by the end of August 2020. These funds are available for compliance and staff are looking at expenditures now to prepare for next year, applying the accounting treatments available. Even if the Board were to incur an over expenditure of \$17,000,000 there would still be an unappropriated surplus of \$19,000,000 available for compliance. During the question period, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question from Trustee Fisher, CFO Carson responded that the \$4,000,000 COVID contingency fund would not be reduced as a result of the additional funding from the province;
- Regarding the reluctance of the province to allow the use of Facilities Renewal and School Condition Index Funding (FRP/SCI) to manage some of the COVID-related building work, CFO Carson noted there is some flexibility but the majority of the work that is being done is short-term in nature and difficult to capitalize. Boards have been quick to use long-term funds for current needs but that would not be the intention of the District. Trustee Fisher hoped that staff would have a discussion with the Ministry and that the Director would raise this issue with the Council of Directors of Education (CODE);
- Trustee Campbell noted that there appears to be a great deal of risk in the budget. CFO Carson agreed that there are uncertainties in the budget and staff is not sure what issues may need to be addressed. The Ministry will be carefully monitoring school boards, but CFO Carson is confident that there are offsetting opportunities for savings if necessary. Some expenditures may need to be postponed;
- In response to a question from Trustee Campbell regarding the assumption that the safety standards minima are sufficient as endorsed as part of the package of mitigation by OPH, CFO Carson responded that staff has been working with OPH since March and they have consulted with OPH on the back to school plan. Director Williams-Taylor noted that emotional safety as well as physical safety was considered in the plan. Staff have been looking at transmission data and looking at layering with provisions in place. Staff is maximizing every opportunity available to ensure student safety;

- Trustee Bell expressed that she wanted to have a better understanding of the risk analysis associated with the funds dedicated to the COVID response with respect to capping class sizes, custodial staffing, mental health supports, and HVAC concerns. Director Williams-Taylor advised that an itemization of funding and results would be very difficult. There have been significant investments in student mental health over the past few years, and staff is looking to augment the programs already in place. With respect to capping class sizes, the District cannot do this unilaterally as there are significant implications. CFO Carson noted that mechanical upgrades are a challenge as this work takes time to design and tender. The need for custodial staff and time is also difficult to assess, and this will become clearer when enrolment numbers are apparent. There will need to be school-by-school flexibility as all sites are different. CFO Carson advised that he would provide a written response to Trustee Bell's request for a COVID risk analysis;
- Ms. Granum expressed concern about secondary occasional teachers (OTs) being itinerant and working with many cohorts. She hoped that a strategy similar to the elementary Daily Occasional Teacher (DOT) program could be employed for secondary OTs;
- Superintendent McCoy responded that staff are looking at risk mitigation strategies for casual and itinerant staff. There is a need to maintain records of staff visiting schools. Human Resources staff intend to put a plan in place for OTs;
- Ms. Trant expressed concern about the amount of cleaning that educational assistants (EAs) may be required to do. CFO Carson noted that staff have looked at the unique needs at Clifford Bowey Public School and the Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education with respect to PPE etc., where a working group of principals has been formed to address the issues. Superintendent Symmonds noted that EAs do participate in the cleaning of surfaces like table tops, etc. Ms. Trant stressed that she hoped that routine cleaning does not fall to her members as they are responsible for the student and not the room;
- Mr. Cluff had concerns about the custodial staffing numbers and how it is that COVID funding can stretch to provide the equivalent of 50 FTE and is the District willing to fund what is needed, given the number of sites and the time needed to clean. CFO Carson responded that this may be more of a question for the province. There may need to be a change in duties as schools may need to be closed for a day if cleaning is required. These would be

individual cases and this budget did not take these into consideration;

- Ms. Gondek mentioned the additional pressure that will be put on B & LT staff as a result of remote learning and queried whether any of the funds allocated for technology could be used for extra staffing or overtime. Superintendent Lehman advised that the allocated funds are for the purchase of technology. He noted that instructional positions have been added to schools. Staff will monitor the workload and if it becomes excessive, will look to redeploy tasks. CFO Carson added that if a department informs staff that there is ongoing overtime, departmental budgets can be reviewed to look for savings in other areas to support the overtime budget;
- Trustee Boothby questioned how staff will ensure that early childhood educators (ECEs) maintain the same cohort as they are often deployed from a classroom to the extended day program where they would be with different students. Superintendent Duah explained that staff are working to ensure EAs stay in the same "bubble" as ECEs;
- Trustee Boothby asked if there was a contingency in the budget for ECEs. CFO Carson responded that there was not currently a specific contingency and that staff are waiting for the outcome of discussions about childcare between the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario;
- Regarding a \$2,700,000 transportation deficit, Trustee Boothby inquired if there are talks with the province about additional funding for transportation. CFO Carson answered that it may be a problem securing additional vehicles and drivers. Looking at the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority's (OSTA) plan the CFO was confident that additional funding was not required; and
- Trustee Lyra Evans inquired as to whether the District will receive masks from the province and what would be the environmental impact. CFO Carson confirmed that students would be receiving reusable masks. Staff has looked at areas where environmentally friendly PPE can be obtained wherever possible.

Moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

- A. THAT the unconsolidated 2020-2021 operating budget of \$1,008.3 million as presented in Report 20-063, 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget and detailed in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder be approved, subject to Ministry authorization to use the accumulated surplus in the amount required to balance the budget;

B. THAT the 2020-2021 capital budget of \$97.9 million as presented in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder, be approved; and

C. THAT the In-Year Deficit Elimination plan as presented in the 2020-2021 Staff-Recommended Budget Binder, be approved.

An amendment moved by Trustee Lyra Evans,

A) THAT \$95,976 be removed from School Programs and Support budget which pays for two dedicated School Resource Officers (SROs) at Gloucester High School and Ridgemont High School; and

B) THAT \$95,976 be put towards hiring a conflict mediator, and a reconciliation officer; to be placed in the same schools to which the SROs were assigned.

During her introduction, Trustee Lyra Evans indicated that the motion is the first step in a process to rebuild the trust of the Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities that have suffered at the hands of the police, noting that by hiring additional police, the District is accepting of the treatment of those communities in schools.

In response to a request for comment, Director Williams-Taylor noted that it would be important to conduct research to determine if the positions suggested in the amendment were the appropriate roles or would there be another type of engagement to meet restorative goals. Work is currently underway on the safe schools policy and a rekindling of a restorative approach is being contemplated.

Associate Director Reynolds outlined the SRO program and the following points were noted:

- When an incident of a criminal nature occurs in schools, the police must be called. SROs are carefully chosen and trained in school board policies, student learning profiles and *the Education Act*. SROs have been members of the Black, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ communities, as well as new Canadians;
- The SRO positions were introduced to support Gloucester High School and Ridgemont High School and their feeder schools in an effort to establish relationships with students in underserved school communities. This would allow staff to do more critical work other

than just being responsive to incidents. Relationship development as well as conflict resolution are the main tenets of the SRO program;

- There are a total of 24 SROs in the current complement. Should the two positions outlined in the amendment be eliminated, OPS may continue to fund 23 positions, one position is largely funded by the OCDSB;
- It would be valuable for the OPS to provide a presentation to trustees on the program; and
- Consultation would be critical to understand the impact of the program on students and to determine what they would like to see in support for schools and students.

Trustee Bell suggested that the OCDSB must act now as police in schools are an issue of concern for marginalized communities.

A sub-amendment moved by Trustee Bell,

THAT the OCDSB pause the SRO program and conduct a review of the program and the impact (both positive and negative) that it has on student populations.

Executive Officer Giroux asked Trustee Bell if the amendment was intended to be added to the Trustee Lyra Evans' amendment or if it was changing the language, as that might be considered a different amendment. Trustee Bell indicated it was a replacement.

Trustee Scott suggested that Trustee Bell's amendment speaks to pausing a program which is a policy decision and not connected to the budget, and therefore should be considered out of order.

Executive Officer Giroux clarified that the specific language, "pausing the program", is a broader policy motion and is not an amendment to the motion that is currently on the floor. The amendment must speak to specific funding. She also noted that Chair Schwartz could make a ruling, if she wished, to allow this as a substitution and Trustee Lyra Evans would be required to withdraw her motion.

Trustee Bell clarified that it is her intent to halt the funding for the SRO program.

A motion to continue the meeting past 10:30 pm was defeated, having failed to receive a 2/3 majority.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Sandra Schwartz, Chair