

**MINUTES OF THE NEW WESTMINSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OPERATIONS POLICY & PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, September 15, 2020, 6:15 PM**

**Via Webex Livestream**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Anita Ansari, Chair	Karim Hachlaf, Superintendent
	Dee Beattie, Trustee	Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer
	Danielle Connelly, Trustee	Maryam Naser, Associate Superintendent
	Gurveen Dhaliwal, Vice Chair	Robert Weston, Executive Director, Human Resources
	Mark Gifford, Trustee	Guests:
	Mary Lalji, Trustee	Members of the Public
	Maya Russell, Trustee	Andrew Bordignon, Senior Manager, KPMG
		Kathleen Chad, Principal, Richard McBride Elementary
		Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects
		Tim Holloway, Engagement Partner, KPMG
		Jen Knight, Richard McBride Elementary PAC
		Grant Lachmuth, Black Wolf Consulting
		Julie MacLellan, Reporter, New Westminster Record
		Cheryl Sluis, Richard McBride Elementary PAC
		Caroline Manders, Recording Secretary

*Chair Connelly recognized and acknowledged the Qayqayt First Nation, as well as all Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play and we do our work.*

**1. Approval of Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 6:16pm.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the agenda for the September 15, 2020 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting be adopted as distributed.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2. Presentation**

a. 2019-20 Audit Findings Report

Andrew Bordignon, Senior Manager, and Tim Holloway, Engagement Partner of KPMG presented highlights of the Audit Findings Report:

- No significant concerns were identified. Auditor Bordignon indicated that he is very pleased with the audit and has no reservations about sharing any information pertaining to the audit in public.
- Asset-retirement obligation has been deferred by a year due to COVID-19.
- Areas of Audit Focus and Results:
  - Audit response to COVID-19 pandemic, which caused ways-of-work to change with people working from home. No gaps in management reporting were identified.
  - Non-capital deferred contribution: no anomalies and/or issues were identified.
  - Tangible capital assets and deferred capital contributions: assess reasonable assessments for District.

- School generated funds: no issues were noted in audit testing.
- Employee future benefits and salaries are a significant portion of the District's operations. The calculation is generated usually in March, however, this year COVID-19 and the teachers' contract changed the assumptions slightly but were deemed immaterial.
- Financial statements are prepared using public standards regulations.
- Fraud risk from management override controls: none were identified.
- Adjustments & differences: none were identified as material; some left uncorrected as they are immaterial.
- Control and Other Observations: Auditors have no recommendations and no control deficiencies identified within the District.
- Management Representation Letter is signed upon completion of the audit.

*KPMG Engagement Partner, Tim Holloway left the meeting at 6:31pm.*

i. 2019-20 Year-End Review

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham thanked the Finance Team and the Auditors for their work in completing a successful audit.

An overview of the 2019-20 budget year was provided:

- Significant impact to assumptions in budget due to COVID-19:
  - Reviewed enrolment which impacts funding.
- Highlighted surplus initiatives approved for operationalization.
- Reviewed capital projects underway.
- Funds:
  - Financial statements are comprised of three funds:
  - The surplus funds were reviewed.
  - Surplus/Accumulated Surplus over time was highlighted.
- 2020-21 Budget:
  - Challenging year with much uncertainty:
    - International student revenue decline.
    - Decreases in funding due to distributed learning or home schooling options available (District has taken steps to mitigate impact).
    - In May 2020, a deficit budget was approved; COVID-19 contingency of \$1.7 million to be internally restricted to deal with any possible future expenses related to COVID-19.
  - Reviewed Statement of Financial Position:
    - Financial Position Health Indicators: everything is on-track; no areas for concern.
- Operating Fund:
  - Includes teachers' labour settlement funding.
  - Differences from budget to actual resulting from pandemic.
  - Savings due to suspension of in-class instruction.
  - Anticipated deficit of \$545,205; actual surplus of \$1,038,252
  - \$1 million of additional local capital approved for NWSS furniture and equipment after amended budget approval.
  - Significant over-spending for inclusive education compared to funding.
  - Operating Fund Health Indicators were reviewed.

Auditor Bordignon explained that enrolment testing was completed and no issues were identified. The Auditors then confirm the accuracy of the numbers directly with the Ministry of Education.

School-generated funds are a common identified risk for all Districts. As more Districts have moved to an online payment platform, this will minimize risk. Internal audits are conducted for various school sites throughout the year.

- Special Purpose Fund: monies received for a specific purpose, have restrictions for their use. Renewed Ministry focus on keeping unused balances low; therefore Districts should keep school-generated funds low; New Westminster Schools has reduced their special purpose deferred balances by nearly \$1 million, which is a good thing.
- Capital Additions:
  - Facility improvements - \$9.5 million.
  - \$37.3 million is included for the current school construction projects.

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham cautioned the Board that the 2021-2022 budget year will continue to be challenging in light of so many unknown variables due to COVID-19.

#### **Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approval of the 2019-20 Financial Statements as presented.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*KPMG Senior Manager, Andrew Bordignon left the meeting at 7:30pm.*

### **3. Comment & Question Period from Visitors**

*Please note that we will answer questions during Question Period near the end of the meeting.*

### **4. Reports from Senior Management**

#### **a. Capital Projects Update**

##### **i. Richard McBride Elementary School**

Director of Capital Projects Crowe provided highlights:

- Progress on the project has not been impeded by COVID-19.
- Building Permit has been issued by the City of New Westminster.
- Installation of steel frame structure will start soon.
- Budget is on-track; change-orders had caused the budget to fluctuate more than usual; change-order strategies has been implemented to mitigate budget fluctuation.
- Playground structure was completed ahead of schedule due to students not being onsite over the past several months.

Trustee Ansari thanked the project team for their work in moving along this project and for completing the playground in time for school re-opening.

##### **ii. New Westminster Secondary School**

Chief Project Officer Lachmuth provided an update:

- \$80 million of the construction budget has been spent.
- Overall completion is at 75% (Phase 1 & 2); workers onsite 150-170.
- Maintenance/IT building construction is going well. Should be completed the same time as the high school.

- July and August saw the installation of various mechanical and other equipment; installation of doors, Gym equipment, partitions, stair railings, final paint, completion of pedestrian crossing on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
- September to mid-October will see completion of millwork, commissioning of fire alarm system, completion of cladding, concrete sidewalks and final paving of roadways, start of soft landscaping.

Superintendent Hachlaf hopes to provide an update soon regarding a mid-year move to the new high school.

b. Operations Update

i. July-September 2020 Operations Update

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided highlights of the Operations Report. Superintendent Hachlaf briefly described the re-configured classrooms, installation of directional signage, and the additional/enhanced cleaning protocols put in place within the District's sites.

ii. COVID-19 Special Purpose Funding Grants

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham explained the funding received from the provincial and federal governments.

Safe Return to School Grant (Provincial Allocation) is: \$488,210:

- Custodial staffing: \$269,238 (5 additional custodians hired)
- Hand hygiene: \$107,344 (30 portable pump wash stations added)
- Cleaning supplies: \$59,701
- Reusable masks: \$26,241 (2 reusable face masks for all employees and students in middle and secondary school – 10,000 masks; 1,500 child-size masks for K-5, if requested)
- Technology: \$25,686 (online support – loaning of computers or software; working on a strategy to best apply these funds)

Safe Return to Class (Federal Funding) \$2,548,446, draft general plan of expenditure, may be subject to change:

- \$1,543,750 for learning resources and supports.
- \$978,696 for health and safety.
- \$6,000 for transportation.
- \$nil for before and after school care.

Management to report back on final expenditure plans at the September 29 Regular Open Board meeting.

Mental health supports for schools, at the time of writing, school districts had not yet received their allocations. However, the District expects to receive \$23K (based on FTE allocations). Based on reports, districts will determine how funds are best used to support students.

Trustee Connelly provided the following overview of 2020/21 operating grant security due to COVID-19:

Given the current funding formula allocation and the difference between in-class (\$7,560 per FTE), Distributed Learning funding (\$6,100 per FTE), and home schooling (\$250 per headcount) there is a potential for school districts to lose significant money in their operating grants as they try to accommodate the needs of all students during this global pandemic. Discussion followed. It was felt that the majority of Trustees would like to wait for the results of the 1701 report at the end of September and evaluate at that time whether the following motion would be necessary.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) advocate to the Ministry of Education (The Honorable Rob Fleming) to commit that no school district in British Columbia will incur a negative impact to their operating grants this school year (2020/2021), regardless of how students in their districts opt to have their education delivered.***

**MOTION DEFEATED**

- c. Richard McBride Elementary School Re-naming Proposal  
Superintendent Hachlaf provided the following overview.

- June 17, 2020 District received letter from Richard McBride Elementary School Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to initiate a re-naming process.
- Consistent with [Administrative Procedure 542 – Re-naming of Schools and District Facilities](#), the Board has agreed to move forward with the activation of the re-naming committee. This initiative also has the support of both Unions.
- Timeline:
  - September to mid-October: Superintendent will coordinate invitation and confirmation of representatives for re-naming Committee.
  - Mid-October to November 12: Committee Chair sets meeting(s) to develop consultation plan and timeline.
  - November 17: Operations Committee presents plan and timeline to the Board of Education.

On behalf of the Board, Trustee Ansari thanked the Richard McBride PAC for their thoughtful letter and the important work that is being embarked upon.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approval of the creation of the re-naming committee for Richard McBride Elementary School and the proposed timeline.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- d. 2020-21 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided highlights of the revised 2020-21 Board and Committee meeting schedule:

- One In-Camera meeting per month to take place before the Regular Open Board meeting.
- That Education (5:00pm) and Operations (6:15pm) meetings be held on same day.
- December and March Committee meetings – these months are compressed due to winter and spring breaks respectively; proposed that committee meetings not be held in December and March and rely on the board meeting immediately preceding and succeeding these normally scheduled committee dates.
- Since the pandemic was declared in March 2020, the Board of Education has been conducting its meetings virtually, which have been very successful and have helped to engage a number of participants who otherwise would not normally participate.
- Neighbouring districts were canvassed and there are combinations of in-person and online and other various hybrid versions.

- The cost to retrofit the School Board Office's Board Room to host virtual meetings is approximately \$9,000.

The Trustees indicated that they wish to pursue a hybrid-approach of both in-person and online. Superintendent Hachlaf indicated that the addition of this technology would be helpful to other meetings held within the District such as District Leadership and staff meetings. Trustee Connelly asked that further discussion regarding the method of delivery of 2020-21 Board meetings take place at the October 13, 2020 Operations Committee meeting.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approval of the revised 2020-21 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**5. General Announcements**

An in-depth discussion on the Board's anti-racism initiative will take place at the November 17, 2020 Operations Committee meeting.

**6. New Business**

- a. Motions to BCSTA Provincial Council (Oct.23-24, 2020)  
None to submit.

**7. Old Business**

Nil.

**8. Question Period (15 Minutes)**

Superintendent Hachlaf thanked the Richard McBride Elementary School Principal, Kathleen Chad and PAC representatives Jen Knight and Cheryl Sluis for bringing forward the renaming proposal.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.