

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

**Tuesday, April 13, 2021, 6:30 PM  
Via Webex Livestream**

- PRESENT**
- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Gurveen Dhaliwal, Chair    | Karim Hachlaf, Superintendent                        |
| Dee Beattie, Vice Chair    | Bettina Ketcham, Secretary-Treasurer                 |
| Danielle Connelly, Trustee | Maryam Naser, Associate Superintendent               |
| Mark Gifford, Trustee      | Robert Weston, Executive Director of Human Resources |
| Mary Lalji, Trustee        | Caroline Manders, Recording Secretary                |
| Maya Russell, Trustee      | Guests:  |
|                            | Dave Crowe, Director of Capital Projects             |
|                            | Julie MacLellan, Reporter, New Westminster Record    |
|                            | Sarah Wethered, President, NWTU                      |
- REGRETS** Anita Ansari, Trustee

*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 6:55 pm.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the agenda for the April 13, 2021 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting be adopted as distributed.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2. Comment & Question Period from Visitors**

Nil.

**3. Reports from Senior Management**

a. Capital Projects Update

i. Richard McBride Elementary School Replacement Project

Director of Capital Projects Crowe provided highlights:

- Project is on-track; no areas of concern were identified.
- Milestones:
  - Furniture purchasing has commenced early due to long lead times required for delivery (due to COVID-19 delays).
  - Technology - 3D modeling system has been used to provide staff and stakeholders an opportunity to see what the new building will look like, specifically classrooms and other spaces.
  - Moving company will be meeting with staff to explain how the move will take place.
  - Steel stud installation is underway; mechanical and electrical rough-in.

- Preparation for demolition is underway - demo permit has been applied for.
- Building envelope work has begun.
- Summer break work planning will commence late April, early May, which will start the surface preparation.

ii. NWSS Project Update

Director of Capital Projects Crowe explained that the demolition of the former school site is very complex; the Massey Theatre needs to be made a stand-alone building as it currently shares utilities with the former school site. Work on the new school's deficiency list is now down to 40 items. There is a two-year warranty period on the building so any required repairs will be covered by the warranty.

b. Operations Update

i. Facilities Report March/April 2021

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham indicated that the District received a \$1.6 million upgrade funding for HVAC improvements at Queensborough Middle and Lord Tweedsmuir schools. Additional requests from the District for major capital projects, including the Queen Elizabeth expansion project, will be forthcoming from the Ministry in early May. In preparation for the 2021-22 school year, portables have been procured to ensure that school sites will have sufficient capacity. The 2021-22 budget process is now underway.

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham explained that the COVID-19 reporting requested by the Ministry is not unusual, and will help the District identify any budget-related concerns.

ii. March 31, 2021 Financial Report

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided highlights:

- Revenue:
  - 3 months remaining of budget year and 30% left of budget (Operating Budget).
  - NWSS Site has been rented out to filming opportunities prior to it being decommissioned.
- Expenses:
  - On-target.
  - Salaries: are tracking well with 3 months remaining of the school year:
    - Substitute Salaries: sit higher though not a concern
  - No other areas were highlighted of concern.

iii. TIS Update

Associate Superintendent Naser highlighted the following:

1. IT is working with Finance to work on refresh on laptops (half to be replaced later this Spring).
2. Staffing in IT continues - IT Technologist position has now been filled; Senior Technologists position – HR is shortlisting candidates.

3. SharePoint site - Indigenous Education SharePoint site was launched, which will provide the District with all required resources pertaining to Indigenous Education.
  4. Staff at Glenbrook Middle School will work with IT to roll-out the Bring Your Own Device program (voluntary basis). The work will begin with students to bring their own devices as a learning tool, for example, the class would be provided with a few days of orientation and tutorials on how to use the device within the classroom setting, including education around good digital citizenship.
- c. 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Update
- Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham began her review of the 2021-22 budget by indicating that the Strategic Plan has been very helpful in prioritizing budget priorities and has helped to streamline the budget process. The 2021-22 school year will see an increase in enrolment of about 200 students and there will also be a rate change, which results in an increase of \$4.4 million over last year's budget.
- i. Structural Surplus / Deficit
- Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham reviewed the status of the District's surplus/deficit. The Ministry suggests that Districts retain approximately 3% surplus for 'rainy days' to be able to react to any emergencies such as roof leaks, equipment failure, etc. At the end of 2020-21 budget year, the District will have a surplus of \$3.8 million.
- International Enrolment has decreased significantly due to COVID-19 situation (decreased from 411 to 110 students), as a result the accumulated surplus reserves will also decrease. Federal and Provincial special COVID-19 funding has helped to boost the District's bottom line. The Structural Deficit numbers were reviewed in detail.
- The estimated Deficit is \$1.8 million, which will reduce the \$3.8 million surplus to \$2 million (the District's safety net level). The International program is estimated to have 120 students, which will rebound the funding. Ongoing Structural Deficit will be \$1.035 million, which is the amount, which requires the attention of the Board.
- Option 1: do nothing until accumulated surplus is gone and then have to do an abrupt change - this would result in \$2.016 million (does not include any adjustments). Current year's operation would be 1.9 years.
- Option 2: Efficiencies taken over time - this would result in Accumulated Surplus of \$2.5 million (based on \$500K in efficiencies) in 2022-23 would need to find \$1 million in efficiencies to end up at \$2.4 million.
- The budget process is fluid and things could change, however, the numbers presented are close to what they will be at the end of this fiscal year. Budget consultations with stakeholder groups have been scheduled for the week of April 19.
- Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham reminded the Committee that at the May Operations meeting, the April Revenue and Expenses reports will reflect the return to in-class instruction; when compared to 2020 information, expenses were much lower due to the suspension of in-class instruction.

d. Columbia Square Lease Update

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham provided an update. The Columbia Square Lease has been renegotiated to be extended to 2022, and may be extended for an additional year should it be required. The Alternate Programs staff has asked that a wall be built to separate a large classroom, which would provide an additional learning space as well as a noise barrier (to minimize noise when people come up the back entrance stairs). Numerous attempts to reach out to the landlord to request changes be made to the contract's wording regarding the request by the District for students to use the front entrance, rather than the back entrance, have been met with staunch resistance from the landlord, and the District was told that if it wants to continue with the lease, that stipulation will remain in the lease.

e. COVID-19 Update

Superintendent Hachlaf provided highlights:

- COVID-19 exposures from March 5 to April 8:
  - Previous period - February 9 to March 4:
    - Notifications have increased.
    - 3 exposures were reported during the first week of Spring Break.
    - After the Easter long weekend, there has been a significant increase.
    - With the increase in variants, what happens in the community reflects the status in schools.
  - Updated and expanded health and safety guidelines:
    - Vaccinations for front-line workers
      - Uncertainty as to when this will happen, it is hoped that there will be an update later this week after a meeting with Fraser Health, and hopefully no later than early next week.

Superintendent Hachlaf addressed the delays in reporting by Fraser Health. The turnaround currently is 3-5 days, which is slightly longer than from what it was earlier this year. Principals and Vice Principals are working diligently through weekends to turn around the notices as quickly as possible.

f. Board and Committee Meeting Calendar - September 2021 to June 2022

Secretary-Treasurer Ketcham presented the draft 2021-22 Board Meeting Schedule. It was suggested that the budget review be moved to April.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy & Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) approval of the Board and Committee Meeting Calendar 2021-2022 as amended.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**4. General Announcements**

Nil.

**5. New Business**

a. School Site Acquisition Charges

Trustee Connelly brought forward the following recommendations as developed by the BCSTA Capital Working Group. It was suggested that a fourth motion be added to include the City of New Westminster.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) send a letter of support to the BCSTA Capital Working Group and their nine recommendations made regarding School Site Acquisition Charges.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to advocate to the Ministry of Education (The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside) and other ministries involved in administering the School Site Acquisition Charge legislation to review and amend the maximum allowable school site acquisition charges established in the legislation to reflect current property values and acquisition costs as per the BCSTA Capital Working Group.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to advocate to the Ministry of Education (The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside) and other ministries involved in municipal legislation to request legislative and regulatory changes be introduced requiring municipal governments to include the cost of off-site servicing of new schools in their municipal development cost charges and to include schools in the list of developments for which Development Cost Charges (DCCs) may be waived or reduced in the Local Government Act.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to write a letter to the City of New Westminster requesting that Development Cost Charges (DCCs) be waived or reduced in the Local Government Act.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. COVID-19 Funding

Trustee Connelly introduced the two motions, which resulted from a March 21, 2021 report from BCSTA President Stephanie Higginson.

**Moved and Seconded**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to write a letter thanking BCSTA for their work to create a report based on feedback from member Boards of Education; and that School District No. 40 write a letter to the Minister of Education (The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside) advocating for adequate and secure funding and resources to support these priorities as part of the pandemic recovery plan.***

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**MOTION WITHDRAWN**

***THAT the Operations Policy and Planning Committee recommend to the Board of Education of School District No. 40 (New Westminster) to write a letter to Stephanie Higginson and the BCSTA for their work to create report based on feedback from member boards of education; and advocate to the Ministry of Education (The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside) for adequate and secure funding and resources to support these priorities so districts can plan for and implement pandemic recovery plans.***

**6. Old Business**

Nil.

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

Nil.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.