

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**12:00 pm, Wednesday, September 13, 2023
School Board Office**

MEETING NOTES

Present: Dale Lawson (Chair), Rob Hill, Maureen Mason, Jaclyn Miller, Kirsten Van't Schip

Also in attendance: Jay Yule (Superintendent), Steve Hopkins (Secretary-Treasurer)

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm by Chair Lawson.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved: K. Van't Schip

Seconded: J. Miller

THAT the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda of September 13, 2023, be adopted as circulated.

Status: Carried

2. STANDING COMMITTEES

2.a) Education & Strategic Planning Committee

i) 2023-2027 Draft Strategic Plan

J. Yule presented a draft strategic plan for the board's consideration. Feedback was requested regarding the territorial acknowledgment and the plan's duration. A motion will be sought at the September Regular meeting to adopt the plan.

Trustees considered the territorial acknowledgment in the draft and proposed including an acknowledgment translated into Ayajuthem, in addition to the English text.

They also deliberated on the term of the strategic plan and collectively decided to extend it from four to five years, aiming to ease the transition for the incoming board after the local government election. S. Hopkins will verify with the ministry to confirm if a five-year plan aligns with the new guidelines for Enhancing Student Learning.

Trustees discussed potential changes to the plan, particularly in terms of the descriptive language associated with the board values. While acknowledging the benefits of both arguments, they opted to retain the descriptive words enclosed in brackets after the board's key values. Final decisions on formatting the document for public distribution will be made by the communications staff.

There was also debate over whether to incorporate additional descriptors, such as "what we mean" statements, for the six identified strategic priorities. Advocates believed it would offer added clarity to the public, while opponents contended that the operational implementation plan for the strategic plan would provide that clarity, along with measurable results. Trustees agreed to maintain the priorities as stated, emphasizing that images and quotes could enhance the document's emotional impact. They further agreed that a concise plan may be better received by the public.

2.b) Finance & Facilities Committee

i) 2022/2023 Financial Statement Discussion & Analysis (FSD&A)

S. Hopkins provided additional details to support the Summary of Significant Events detailed in the FSD&A document. He reported that:

- 35% of the district's total enrollment consists of students in blended learning programs, who may not necessarily reside in Powell River.
- 25% of the district's overall operating grant is derived from unique student needs funding, which includes inclusive education, English language learners, and Indigenous education.
- Before and after-school programs continue at all schools, tied to early learning programs.
- Education coordinator positions were maintained in the last fiscal year, and will be again in the current school year, and an additional Family Liaison position was added.
- Funding to support the development of the strategic plan was only required in the previous fiscal year, as the board worked on developing a new plan.
- Capital works and equipment upgrades include equipment for the commercial kitchen at Brooks, replacement of irreparable service vehicles, roofing upgrades to support new equipment, LED lighting upgrades, and the installation of solar arrays at two sites.
- The second and final phase of the playfield improvement project at Brooks Secondary was completed. Work also continued at Edgehill and Kelly Creek school sites to support future daycares.
- A comparison of the statement of financial positions to the prior year was discussed. It was reported that the variance in cash was largely attributed to planned spending of surplus funds.
- Regarding the liability attributed to the Asset Retirement Obligations, it is a result of new accounting standards and represents an anticipated future cost of dealing with remediation items. This item is not considered to be owing and is offset by capital.

- Higher than forecasted enrollment of online learning students in February and May influenced the variance in budgeted to actual operating grants.
- Labour settlement grants affected the variance in Other Ministry grants due to a delayed announcement after the amended budget was adopted.
- Last year, it was anticipated that surplus funds would be spent, which created an operating deficit. S. Hopkins reported that the district retains approximately 2 million in surplus funds.
- Variances in expenses for administrative positions were due to administrative positions being mistakenly categorized under Other Professional Salaries in the amended budget. Unfilled positions account for the remaining balance.
- Special purpose funds detail funds with restrictions on spending. The “Student & Family Affordability Fund” was one-year-only funding intended to ease the burden for families.
- Funds have been allocated for new spaces linked to new daycares. We anticipate these funds to be utilized this year. No funds are allocated under PEP, but we've been successful in applying since the onset. Six playgrounds have already been added, and there are no other sites for application.

ii) 2022/2023 Draft Audited Financial Statements

The draft financial statements have been provided for informational purposes. The financial auditors will be present at the Regular Meeting on September 20 to furnish supplementary details. The auditors will present their findings at the public meeting.

iii) District Operations Report

S. Hopkins reviewed the report and provided details regarding the delivery and installation of portables. Additionally, there have been updates to the bus registration process which aligned with existing administrative procedures. As a result, more students were able to be fully registered for the bus on the first day of school.

2.c) Policy Committee

i) Trustee Code of Conduct Criteria

Chair Lawson highlighted that the materials received from BCSTA contain recommendations for the necessary development of Trustee Codes of Conduct. She emphasized that boards are required to have a code of conduct established by April 2024. S. Hopkins stated that staff will carefully review the recommendations and present a draft for review at a later meeting, most likely in the fall, to ensure compliance with the deadline.

3. COMMITTEE REPORTS

3.a) N/A

There were no items to discuss.

4. OTHER INFORMATION

4.a) South Coast Branch – BCSTA Spring Learning Series

K. Van't Schip will contact the president of the South Coast Branch for further details regarding the scheduled date and location. Initial indications suggest that the learning

series might occur on the lower coast. Trustees concur that the draft program is intriguing.

4.b) VISTA Branch Event on October 13th & 14th

Trustees considered an invitation to attend a VISTA Branch event and concluded that it may not serve as an appropriate model, given disparities in size and membership. They agreed that there is higher value in nurturing growth and collaboration with the South Coast Branch, rather than transitioning to VISTA.

4.c) Board Work Plan – For Information

M. Mason proposed incorporating dates for superintendent and board evaluations into the plan. Trustees discussed the possibility of forming an ad hoc committee for planning, but ultimately concurred that given the interest of most trustees, the Committee of the Whole would serve as a more suitable forum for deliberation. J. Yule committed to presenting pertinent policies at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting, providing trustees with the opportunity to contemplate dates for the work plan.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

SH/er