

JUNE 12, 2019

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BUDGET MEETING

The Waterloo Region District School Board held a Special Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting this evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Education Centre Boardroom, with the following members in attendance: J. Herring (Chairperson), K. Meissner, C. Millar, S. Piatkowski, M. Ramsay, K. Smith, N. Waddell, C. Watson, J. Weston, C. Whetham and K. Woodcock.

Student Trustee O. Judelson-Kelly was in attendance and Student Trustee B. Wahl was not in attendance.

The following senior administration members were in attendance: J. Bryant (Director of Education and Secretary), M. Gerard, L. Read and M. Weinert.

Other staff in attendance: F. Frasheri, W. Jocques, S. Reidel, L. Slupeiks and W. Zhou.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson J. Herring called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Moved by K. Woodcock, seconded by K. Smith:

That the agenda of the June 12, 2019, Special Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting be approved.

-Carried-

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson J. Herring reminded trustees that since this is a Special Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting, only the budget may be discussed.

Trustee K. Meissner welcomed 2019-2020 Student Trustee N. Chenthivelnathan to the meeting.

REPORTS

FISCAL TASK FORCE QUARTERLY UPDATE

This report was provided for information.

The quarterly report focused on the 2019-2020 Budget Survey Results. Budget Survey themes included graduation rates, mathematics learning and achievement, student well-being, staff

JUNE 12, 2019

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BUDGET MEETING

well-being, school renewal and resource allocation. The survey responses have been forwarded to departments and operational goal leads to inform their work for the next school year. Changes to funding will limit what the board can support in the upcoming school year.

Trustees asked a number of clarifying questions.

Student Trustee O. Judelson-Kelly joined the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

2019-2020 BUDGET OVERVIEW PRESENTATION

Coordinating Superintendent M. Gerard presented the 2019-2020 Budget Update. He reviewed the Budget information and Interim Financial Statements which trustees received at the June 10, 2019, Committee of the Whole meeting.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding retention and growth.

Staff continue to use the Strategic Priorities as guiding principles for the budget along with the trustee direction received at the May 13, 2019, Committee of the Whole meeting. M. Gerard reviewed the budget process timelines and referenced the difficulties encountered by the delayed release of information from the Ministry of Education (MOE).

M. Gerard reviewed the funding components of the 2019-20 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) which includes Classroom, School, Local Management and Specific Government Priorities. The MOE provides capital funding through a variety of programs including School Renewal Allocation (SRA) and School Condition Improvement Grant (SCI). The Capital Priorities process for 2019-2020 is yet to be announced by the MOE. The Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) (previously referred to as Education Program Other (EPO) Grants) is funding which supports government priorities. The MOE has announced the PPF investments but staff are still awaiting the Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) confirming the funding.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding existing capital funding approvals, servicing debt and TPAs.

M. Gerard reviewed how the GSNs are driven by inputs such as student enrolment, school sites and sizes, programs offered and geographic, socio-economic and demographic factors. Enrolment has increased at the WRDSB. He presented the Pupil Foundation Grant funding decreases based on funded class size changes and the Attrition Protection Funding which will be available but reduced over the next four years to allow for “natural” attrition as opposed to lay-offs. Additional revenue changes include reductions in the Qualifications and Experiences Grant and increases in the Special Education Grant.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the Special Education Grant and staff agreed to further expand on the additional Behaviour Expertise Amount.

Trustee M. Ramsay joined the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

JUNE 12, 2019

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BUDGET MEETING

M. Gerard reviewed other revenue changes including the expiration of the Local Priorities Funding (LFP), reductions in Cost Adjustment Allocation for Non-Teaching Staff, reductions in Human Resources Transition Supplement, the introduction of the International Student Recovery Amounts, increases to School Operational Allocation, increases to Transportation funding, and increases to Salary Benchmark funding.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding stop-arm cameras and international student tuition.

M. Gerard presented the changes in PPFs including 2 cancelled grants: Innovation in Learning Fund, Outreach Coordinator and Priority Schools. He agreed to check if trustees ever received a report on the Priority Schools funding and school criteria.

Further information on Capital and Maintenance was provided to trustees. Upon receiving questions about air conditioning in schools, M. Gerard confirmed that the past initiative to air condition six specified schools would continue but that any new pilot projects would not be implemented in the coming year based on limited funds.

In reviewing the expenditures, M. Gerard shared that the fiscal strategy is to match expenses to the available revenues on an annual basis. He then provided the key changes to expenditures and supporting rationale.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding secondary course options, the aviation program, student supports and school travel planners. Staff confirmed that keeping student services was a priority, the service levels may change for staff supports and they continue to review how delivery models can be changed to provide support more efficiently.

M. Gerard announced that a balanced budget was achieved for 2019-2020. Shortfalls primarily driven by Secondary Class Size Changes and the elimination of the local priorities fund were addressed by redeployment of central staff back to schools and savings identified in other service departments.

Trustee C. Whetham left the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding retirement notices for the redeployed staff. Staff agreed to see if they can determine the number of central staff who opted for retirement over redeployment to schools. Questions were also asked about staff well-being and the retirement gratuity.

M. Gerard shared what the implications would be if the board choose to run a deficit. He also shared budget risks which include the outcome of collective bargaining, teacher attrition, political environment and economy and enrolment volatility. Trustees were provided with information on the Minister's Task Force on School Boards.

JUNE 12, 2019

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE BUDGET MEETING

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding the Minister's Task Force on School Boards and many agreed that it would not be of value for WRDSB.

M. Gerard presented Special Projects, previously known as New Initiatives. The process has changed so that projects must match to needs and priorities within the system and will be brought to trustees throughout the year rather than just at budget time. There will be no additional requests for Special projects as part of the 2019-2020 budget recommendations.

Trustees asked questions of clarification regarding Special Projects and accumulated surplus.

M. Gerard reviewed the next steps for the remainder of the budget process.

ADJOURNMENT

2. Moved by K. Smith, seconded by K. Woodcock:

That Trustees rise and reconvene in a Special In Camera Board Meeting.

-Carried-

The trustees rose at 8:56 p.m. to reconvene in a Special In Camera Board Meeting.