



BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, THE BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION, HELD IN THE J. L. MILNE BOARDROOM, ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1031 - 6TH STREET, BRANDON, MANITOBA, AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS, AT 9:00 A.M., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

L. Ross, Chairperson	
S. Bambridge, Vice-Chairperson	
C. Ekenna	K. Fallis
B. Foley	J. Gobeil
D. Kejick	L. Letain
J. Murray	

ALSO PRESENT:

D. Labossiere, Secretary-Treasurer
M. Gustafson, A/Superintendent / CEO
E. McFadzen, Assistant Superintendent
E. Jamora, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
B. Sangster, Recording Secretary
T. Curtis, Video Streaming Operator

The Board met In-Camera from 9:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m.

CALL:

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:23 a.m. with a traditional heritage acknowledgement and referred to the Call.

The meeting had been called for the purpose of considering the following:

- a) 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Presentation
- b) Budget Deliberations for 2021-2022

Dr. Linda Ross, Chairperson, provided opening remarks and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Trustee Ross noted that it was going to be an unusual budget deliberation process. This is due to the funding announcement from the Province, along with the mandate to freeze the local levy, meaning there will be a decrease in the mill rate, such that the education property tax on an average single family residential property (a home assessed at \$270,000) will **decrease by \$21.62**. (This decrease is due to increased assessment from new construction.)

While people are generally happy to see tax decreases, the constraints placed on School Divisions by the Province leaves the Brandon School Division in the position where the Division will have to make reductions to the budget of approximately \$720,500. Had the Division been able to retain the \$21.62 on the average residential property, that would have meant \$600,556 that the Division would not have to cut from the budget.

The additional \$720,000 reduction to the Brandon School Division budget is a particularly challenging task, since over 85% of the budget is spent on staff – teachers and support staff. Reducing teacher positions means increases in class size, and class size is correlated with student outcomes.

The Board provided direction to Senior Administration to provide scenarios to address the deficit, while working within the priorities identified by the Board. These priorities included:

- Minimizing the impact of budget cuts on the classroom
- Focusing particularly on early and middle years
- Maintaining programming
- Focusing on Divisional budget lines, rather than on school-based budgets

In these unusual circumstances, the Board today in its budget deliberations will examine the scenarios provided by Administration, and determine where to make significant reductions. These are difficult decisions that will adversely affect our students, but that is the task before the Board.

a) 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Presentation

Mr. Denis Labossiere, Secretary-Treasurer, indicated that the purpose of his presentation and corresponding document was to provide information for the Brandon School Division Board of Trustees regarding the 2021-2022 Operating Budget. The Financial Budget 2021-2022 document was circulated to Trustees.

The Secretary-Treasurer indicated the outline he would be following:

- Budget development process
- Preliminary 2021-2022 Operating Budget
- Budget and Sustainability requests
- Special Requirement/Levy
- Next Steps

The Secretary-Treasurer highlighted the factors impacting the budget considerations and also provided details regarding the budget development process and the directions provided by the Board to Senior Administration. Mr. Labossiere reviewed how the Division compared to the Manitoba Provincial Average and similar divisions such as St. James and Seven Oaks using the 2020-2021 Provincial Draft FRAME Budget Report. He spoke to enrollment and the development of the staffing budget. Mr. Labossiere provided detailed information regarding the current status of the accumulated surplus and the capital reserve accounts.

Mr. Labossiere reviewed the Special Requirement, the effect of the School Year Budget on the Special Levy and the Budget and Sustainability Requests. He provided highlights of the Ministerial Direction and guidelines used in developing the preliminary Budget.

Mr. Labossiere indicated that with the freeze on the Special Levy and a 1.22% increase in school assessment, there is a \$21.62 decrease in annual school taxes (1.21% decrease) for a typical home assessed at \$270,000.

The Secretary-Treasurer spoke on the special requirement, noting the difference between 2021 and 2020 is \$983,487. The Special Levy remains the same for 2021, while the Mill Rate decreases by 1.21%. There is a budget shortfall in the Preliminary Budget of \$720,500. The Board is tasked with balancing the budget and addressing this shortfall.

The Secretary-Treasurer concluded with a review of the next steps and upcoming dates in the Budget Process.

b) Budget Deliberations for 2021-2022

The Budget and Sustainability Requests recommended for consideration were presented as follows:

Trustee/Board Committee Budget Requests:

School Counsellors (8.0 FTE)	\$734,400
School Nutrition Programs	\$1,200,000

Senior Administration Budget & Sustainability Requests:

\$ 0

Total Trustee/Board Committee Budget Requests and Senior Administration Budget & Sustainability Requests for 2021-2022: **\$1,934,400**

Trustee Murray spoke on his two (2) budget request items. He asked that the request for School Counsellors (8.0 FTE) and School Nutrition Programs be withdrawn from the Budget. He asked them to be removed, not because they are not needed, because they are needed. We cannot approve these requests this year because of the impossible position the Division has been placed in, at a time when the stress on our school system, and in fact in this country and around the world, is unprecedented. Children hear what we say, and know the position we are in, and their fear is very real. That should not be the fear of children in our system. We are trying very hard to meet our students' needs educationally, emotionally and physically.

Senior Administration presented the Board with the following Budget Reduction Options for their consideration:

2021-2022 BSD Budget Reduction Options

Options reflect a combination of salary/FTE and budget line reductions. FTE reductions do not have to be in whole FTE intervals. A partial FTE reduction would correspond with the appropriate budget line reductions. 1 Teacher FTE = \$91,800

Option 1: 3 FTE reduction and \$445,100 budget line reductions in the areas of:

- Divisional based supplies
- Divisional PD budget lines
- Advertising budget line reductions
- Divisional based salary

Option 2: 2 FTE reduction and \$536,900 budget line reductions.

- Budget line reductions in Option 1
- \$91,800 further reductions in the areas of:

- Further divisional based supplies reductions
- Further Divisional PD budget lines
- PD lines for Specialist delivered PD
- Empower reading PD/supplies
- Fleet replacement

Option 3: 1 FTE reduction and \$628,700 budget line reductions

- Budget line reductions in Option 1
- Budget line reductions in Option 2
- \$91,800 of reductions from the following choices:
 - Educational Assistant PD. 1 day = \$47,700
 - School Based Learning Supplies. Every \$1/student reduction = \$8,747.50
 - School Based PD. Every 1% reduction = \$3,700
- Welcome to Kindergarten. Maximum \$15,000 reduction
- EBI associated lines. Maximum \$10,000 reduction

Discussion took place and Trustees spoke on the withdrawal of Trustee Murray's two (2) Budget Requests and the three (3) scenarios provided for consideration. Trustees asked questions for clarification.

The Board directed Senior Administration to proceed with Budget Reduction Option 1 to eliminate the budget shortfall, and change all budget lines that need to be reflected to do this. Mr. Labossiere indicated that the changes will be made and the revised Budget with these reductions will be presented to the Board at the 2021-2022 Public Budget Presentation/Consultation on Monday, March 1, 2021.

Trustee Ross deeply apologized to the Division students, to the staff and to the community for what the Board had to do to public education. The Trustees are not happy about the decisions they had to make, but there were difficult decisions to make and they had no options. Trustee Ross does not expect people to like what the Board did, but hopes they will understand why the Board had to do it.

Trustee Fallis thanked Senior Administration for helping find the best way to make these cuts and come up with the balanced budget that is needed. She also thanked those working in Division schools.

Ms. Fallis – Ms. Bambridge

That the meeting do now adjourn (11:55 a.m.)

Carried.

Chairperson

Secretary-Treasurer