



# 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 AT 9:00 A.M., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022.

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:**

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

**REGRETS:** S. Bambridge

The Board met In-Camera from 9:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

**CALL:**

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:54 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. 2022-2023 Preliminary Budget Presentation
- B. Budget Deliberations for 2022-2023

Dr. Linda Ross, Chairperson, provided opening remarks and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Trustee Ross noted that it was not going to be an easy day, it was going to be a difficult budget. The division had been directed by the Province to freeze the special levy, and although there has been a 2% Property Tax Offset Grant (PTOG) provided, due to inflationary increases, and to salary adjustments, which are well-deserved by our staff, it will leave the Division in a deficit position. With freezing the special levy, property taxes will go down slightly. On a home assessed at \$270,000, taxes will decrease by \$19.49.

While some people will be happy to see tax decreases, it will make other people unhappy, as we are starting the day with a \$1.2 million shortfall. Eighty-six point 5 percent (86.5%) of costs are in payroll. The Board had directed Senior Administration to investigate possible reductions, staying as far away from the classrooms as possible.

Mr. Mathew Gustafson, Superintendent/CEO, also provided remarks, noting that in October 1890, Brandon School District 129 was formed, which means this was the 132<sup>nd</sup> Brandon School Division

Budget. While the school day may look different in comparison to 1890, the importance of education remains the same, as well as the hopes of Division parents in the development of their children. The School Division Vision is *"to be a centre of educational excellence, built on community partnerships, effective leadership and exemplary practices"*. Our Mission is to *"strive to enable each student to achieve maximum intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth"*. The Division accomplishes this through the provision of programs and services which facilitate the development of students as healthy, contributing members of society. The Budget process today provides the foundation for those programs and services, and he took the opportunity to acknowledge the importance of the Board's work and thanked them for their careful deliberations.

A) 2022-2023 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 2022-2023 Operating Budget. The Preliminary Financial Budget 2022-2023 document was circulated to Trustees.

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

- Budget Development Process
- Preliminary 2022-2023 Operating Budget
- Budget Requests
- Special Requirement / Levy
- Next Steps

Mr. Labossiere noted that the objective of Budget Deliberations is to give tentative approval to the final budget. The local municipalities must be advised of the Division's Special Levy for 2022 on or before March 15, 2022. He added that the 2022-2023 Preliminary Operating Budget had been prepared in accordance with Board direction, along with funding received from the Provincial Government as communicated by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning on February 4, 2022, and additional information received from the Province on February 16, 2022. The budget requests totalling \$216,100 are not included in the budget totals and would therefore be add-ons. Mr. Labossiere advised that the Preliminary Budget reflects total operating expenditures of \$115.5 million for 2022-2023. Current budget estimates reflect a shortfall of \$1.2 million after applying a 2% increase for the special requirement. In order to achieve a balanced budget, the Board of Trustees will need to make reductions to budget expenditures. The document has been prepared to reflect the operations of the Division, and the policies and directions and decisions made by the Board of Trustees to date, are subject to any further direction the Board of Trustees may give.

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 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 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 1.12% increase in school assessment, there is a \$19.49 decrease in annual school taxes (1.10% decrease) for a home assessed at \$270,000.

The Secretary-Treasurer concluded that the 2022-2023 Operating Budget was now the Board's Budget to deliberate and give tentative approval to the Budget.

B) Budget Deliberations for 2022-2023

The Board Chairperson asked the Superintendent/CEO to walk the Board through potential areas where they could make some budget reductions.

Mr. Gustafson provided the following budget reductions for Board consideration. Discussion took place with Trustees asking questions and speaking for or against each item.

- a) Removal of Attendance Officer Position – **AGREED (6-2) – (\$25,800)**
- b) Reconfiguration of High School Lunch Supervision – **AGREED (6-2) – (\$2,700)**
- c) Reduce Professional Development for Support Staff by 2 days – **REVISED** to 1 day – **AGREED (5-3) – (\$57,900)**
- d) 5% Reduction to School Learning Resources – **AGREED – (5-3) – (\$12,100)**

**BREAK:** 12:15 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

- e) Modular Classrooms – **AGREED – (\$56,400)**  
Fund additional costs for the six (6) modular classrooms through the New School Capital Reserve and Accumulated Surplus.
- f) Contribution to the Food for Thought Program – **REJECTED**
- g) Fleet Vehicle – Truck – **AGREED (7-1) - (\$50,000)**
- h) Elimination of Health Care Aide Program – **AGREED – (\$45,500)**  
Trustees had initially rejected this reduction, then revisited it after the In-Camera session.
- i) 5% Reduction to Professional Development – **AGREED – (6-2) – (\$57,000)**
- j) Trustee Election Costs from Surplus – **AGREED – (\$47,900)**

The Board met In-Camera from 1:40 p.m. to 5:10 p.m.

**BREAK:** 5:10 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

The Board met In-Camera from 6:15 p.m. to 6:54 p.m.

Trustee Ross indicated that during the In-Camera session, the Board identified (8.75) positions to reduce, with none being classroom teaching positions, for a total reduction of (\$756,600). This was still a shortfall of \$147,200. After the Board revisited two items from earlier: the Food for Thought contribution, and Health Care Aide Program, Trustees agreed to eliminate the Health Care Aide Program for a reduction of \$45,500, which left a shortfall of \$101,700.

The Budget Requests recommended for consideration were presented as follows:

**Trustee/Board Committee Budget Requests:**

Spanish Language Classes – Grades 11 and 12 (1.5 FTE)	\$146,100
Truth and Reconciliation Teaching Tools	\$ 70,000

**Total Budget Requests for 2022-2023:** **\$216,100**

The Budget Requests recommended by individual Board Members/Committees for consideration were discussed with Trustees speaking for or against each recommended enhancement item with the following results:

- a) Spanish Language Classes – Grades 11 and 12 (1.5 FTE) – \$216,100 - **REJECTED (6-2)**

Trustee Foley spoke to his Trustee Budget Request and provided rationale for the request.

- b) Truth and Reconciliation Teaching Tools - \$70,000 – **AGREED**

Trustee Gobeil spoke to his Trustee Budget Request and provided rationale for the request. Trustees agreed unanimously to support this request, and to have it added to the budget.

Trustee Ross advised that there is another option to making further reductions, which would be to fund the 2022-2023 Budget deficit out of surplus.

The Secretary-Treasurer indicated that the shortfall was at \$171,700 after approval of Trustee Gobeil’s budget request. He also noted that the vehicle replacement of \$50,000 will be added back into next year’s budget. Mr. Labossiere added that the additional \$3.5 million in funding that the Province is providing to the Division for the current year (2021-2022) for incremental costs for wages pressures/COVID costs, will allow the Division to replenish the accumulated surplus that was used for retro payments and salary settlements and meet the Board’s 2% requirement for accumulated surplus. As the deficit is a small number versus the overall budget, he would support a deficit budget. This would keep the \$171,700 in next year’s budget, and the deficit would be dealt with at that time.

Trustee Murray asked, for clarification, if the Division is putting \$171,700, unfunded, into next year’s budget. The Secretary-Treasurer confirmed that the \$171,700 is still part of the Budget, and is the Division’s starting point next year. The Board agreed to proceed to fund the deficit budget out of Accumulated Surplus.

Trustees Letain and Fallis thanked Senior Administration and Mr. Labossiere and his team for the detailed information provided and answers to all the Board’s questions, and for the hard work that went behind that.

Mr. Murray – Ms. Fallis  
That the meeting do now adjourn (7:53 p.m.)  
Carried.

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Chairperson

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Secretary-Treasurer