

Ashley St. Pierre, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

Finance Committee

Monday January 6, 2025 11:00AM
Zoom Meeting

Committee Members Present

Shane Hall, Committee Chair
Julie Bertram, Trustee
Chantal Phillips, Trustee
Howard Wesley, Trustee
Craig Myles, Director of Education
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business

Staff Present

Wende Proulx, Manager of Finance
Lesley Marshall, Executive Assistant
Deb Bartlett, Communications Officer
Patricia Lupton, Executive Assistant to the Director of Education

1. Call to Order

SBO Van Haesendonck called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM. Following the roll call, it was noted that the meeting had quorum.

2. Election of Chair – SBO Seija Van Haesendonck

SBO Van Haesendonck thanked Trustee Hall for his work as Chair of the Finance Committee for the last year. SBO Van Haesendonck opened the floor to nominations for the Finance Committee Chair position.

Trustee Wesley nominated Trustee Hall for Chair.

Trustee Hall noted his potential acceptance but inquired as to the interest of someone else taking the role as he has chaired for two years and would be willing to cede the chair position to someone else if they wish to grow their role within the committee.

SBO Van Haesendonck again called for nominations, with no additional nominations received.

A third call for nominations was offered. None were received.

Trustee Hall accepted the nomination.

2.1. Motion: Moved by Trustee Bertram, and seconded by Trustee Wesley, that nominations be closed. Carried.

Trustee Wesley noted that it was great that Trustee Hall was willing to continue in the role as he has done a fantastic job. Trustee Hall thanked Trustee Wesley and looks forward to the next year.

2.2. Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley and seconded by Trustee Bertram, that Trustee Hall be acclaimed as the Chair of NNDSB's Finance Committee for a one-year term beginning immediately and ending at the close of the Board of Trustee's annual organizational meeting.

SBO Van Haesendonck passed the meeting over to the Chair.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The Chair called for declarations of conflict of interest with none noted.

4. Approval of Agenda

4.1. Motion: Moved by Trustee Bertram, and seconded by Trustee Wesley, that the agenda for the meeting of January 6, 2025 be approved.

5. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

5.1. Motion: Moved by SBO Van Haesendonck and seconded by Trustee Wesley, that the minutes of the meeting held on September 17, 2024 be approved.

6. Business Arising - None

7. Review of Quarterly Report

SBO Van Haesendonck was asked to speak to the December Quarterly Report. She noted that the second page of the report reflects updated balances for Accumulated Surplus and Deferred Revenues following the completion of the August 31, 2024 audited financial statements.

Trustee Phillips inquired about the Trustee initiatives fund and whether it could be distributed to schools similarly to last year, with it potentially geared towards school food programs.

SBO Van Haesendonck noted that in 2023-24, the distribution of the fund to schools was approved by the board in the spring, when no other applications had been received for the use of funds. She also noted that the funds were dispersed equally to each school, and this is potentially not the most equitable division, and that if the funds were to be distributed again, they may wish to consider an enrolment-based distribution or based on other factors. It was suggested that this could be brought to the attention of the Director's office with a notice of motion, to be included on the agenda of a future committee of the whole meeting.

7.1. Motion: Moved by Trustee Phillips and seconded by Trustee Bertram, that the Finance Committee recommends the Quarterly Report as at November 30, 2024 be presented to the Board of Trustees for review.

8. New Business

8.1. Terms of Reference

No revisions were recommended, and no questions or concerns were raised.

8.2. 2024-25 Revised Estimates

SBO Van Haesendonck spoke to the revised estimates circulated in the agenda package. She noted that the 2024-25 Revised Estimates have been brought forward to the committee for review and recommendation to the board for approval as the projected financial position of the board has moved from a small operating surplus in the Estimates to a deficit for compliance purposes of (\$1,535,203).

SBO Van Haesendonck noted the report provided additional information, but essentially, there was a significant drop in enrolment from projected numbers, resulting in a decrease in enrolment of 2.9% from estimates and consequentially a decrease in enrollment driven allocations.

Although enrolment dropped, resulting in a decrease in enrolment-driven allocations, revenue increased overall as the Ministry updated salary benchmarks between completion of the Estimates and preparation of Revised Estimates.

Expenditures also increased for two main reasons in the 2024-25 Revised Estimates, specifically the updating of salary grids in the Revised Estimates for all employee groups not updated in the Estimates, resulting in an increase in salaries/benefits; and, an increase to budgeted transportation expenditures by \$690,480, which increased the projected transportation deficit from \$2.14 million at Estimates to \$2.78 million in Revised Estimates.

SBO Van Haesendonck noted that approximately 71% of the overall board expenditures are salaries and benefits, which are mostly a fixed cost once the school year begins. Subsequently when an enrolment decline is experienced following the preparation of the Estimates, staffing cannot be easily adjusted until the following school year.

NNDSB must submit an In-Year Deficit Elimination Plan to indicate how it will eliminate the deficit for compliance purposes of (\$1,535,203) as part of the EFIS submission, and this plan must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The proposed in-year deficit is lower than the allowable limit of 1% of operating allocation (\$1,633,140) so no approval is required from the Minister of Education.

Trustee Phillips offered concern regarding the ongoing issue of transportation costs and under funding and inquired as to whether alternative transportation could reduce costs. SBO Van Haesendonck acknowledged that the continuing transportation deficit is a provincial concern, and that regular conversations are occurring within the

appropriate avenues regarding this issue. It was again reiterated that alternative means of transportation, such as more students using public transportation, would ultimately not reduce the board's transportation deficit, as the board generates funding based on students eligible for bussing; reduced students eligible for bussing would also reduce the available funding.

Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley, seconded by Trustee Bertram that the Finance Committee of the Near North District School Board recommends the 2024-2025 Revised Estimates be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Trustee Bertram, seconded by Trustee Wesley that the Finance Committee of the Near North District School Board recommends the 2024-2025 Revised Estimates In-Year Deficit Elimination Plan be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Carried.

8.3. Review of draft 2025-2026 Budget Manual

SBO Van Haesendonck was invited to speak to the draft 2025-2026 Budget Manual. It follows the same format as last year's budget manual with updated budget timetable contingent on receipt of Ministry Core Education funding details. This draft manual will be reviewed by Executive Council following the Finance Committee's review, and then shared with all relevant budget holders.

8.4. Review 2024-2025 Capital Projects List

SBO Van Haesendonck was invited to speak to the 2024-2025 Capital Projects List. She noted that as discussed last year, individual projects do not have estimated costs assigned in the report, partly because they are higher level estimates. Additionally, as these projects are tendered publicly, staff want to ensure that bids received reflect the actual cost of the project and are not based on the available budget for the project. Although costs were not identified for individual projects, SBO Van Haesendonck did mention several projects as they are anticipated to be more costly projects due to the extent of the project:

MT Davidson – full school HVAC upgrade; as the Ministry is encouraging boards to use school renewal/school condition improvement funding to continue their work of upgrading HVAC systems throughout board facilities, and MT Davidson was not included in the CVRIS funding, this project has been identified as a priority upgrade for 2024-25;

Silver Birches roof replacement – this will be a higher cost project as a full roof replacement is required;

Silver Birches site improvements – unlike a significant number of the board's elementary schools, especially those in residential neighbourhoods, the school property is not fenced, which has resulted in an informal walking path that travels through the school property; individuals moving through the neighbourhood often end up travelling through the school property during school hours, including with dogs (both leashed and unleashed); school administration and facilities staff have also managed an increasing level of refuse on the property creating health and safety issues, and there has more recently been encampments in the wooded areas of the

property; this project has multiple components including a full perimeter fence, add some exterior lighting and security cameras, complete some tree clearing to increase visibility across the property and reduce the potential for encampments, and also renovate the rear entrance and stairs of the school;

Motion: Moved by Trustee Bertram and seconded by Trustee Phillips, that the Finance Committee recommends the 2024-2025 capital projects list be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

- 9. Next Meeting Date:** the meeting date of March 18, 2025 may fall on the same day as the March Board meeting if that meeting is adjusted, and as such, members agreed that the 24th would be preferable for scheduling. Staff will circulate a poll for timing of meeting before scheduling.

10. Adjournment

With no further business to note, Committee Chair tabled the following motion:

Motion: Moved by Trustee Wesley and seconded by SBO Van Haesendonck that there being no further business to discuss, on January 6, 2025, the Finance Committee stands adjourned at 11:53am. -CARRIED.