



**The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)  
April 4, 2012 Special Board Budget Meeting – S.J. Willis Auditorium, 923 Topaz Avenue**

---

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Trustees Peg Orcherton, Chair, Bev Horsman, Vice-Chair, Catherine Alpha, Tom Ferris, Elaine Leonard, Michael McEvoy, Diane McNally, Deborah Nohr

**Administration:**

John Gaipman, Superintendent of Schools, George Ambeault, Secretary-Treasurer, Sherri Bell, Associate Superintendent, Pat Duncan, Associate Superintendent, Debra Laser, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Seamus Howley, Director of Facilities Services, Sylvia Holinaty, Recording Secretary

**Regrets:** Trustee Edith Loring-Kuhanga

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.

Chair Orcherton recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

**A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING**

Chair Orcherton stated that this meeting was an opportunity for the public to address the Board with respect to any budget issues. At the completion of the presentations, each Trustee will provide comments to the public and will also be available to answer any questions after adjournment of the meeting. The next meeting for the Board to approve the 2012/2013 Annual Budget will be held on April 16, 2012 at 7:00 pm in the Tolmie Boardroom at 556 Boleskine Road.

**B. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS ON THE 2012/2013 BUDGET**

**1. Karen Higginbotham – Funding Needs for Students at George Jay**

Ms. Higginbotham, a kindergarten teacher for seven years, recognized that class sizes are lower at George Jay Elementary in many cases, thereby allowing teachers to have a greater impact on student learning as a result of more time spent with each student. She also stated that the school has a very good Youth and Family counselor; offers an in-school Eagles' Nest program as an alternate location to complete work and get needed support, and has several Smart Boards and other technologies enabling new ways of exploring the curriculum.

Ms. Higginbotham summarized the areas where additional funding would be beneficial to support the diverse learning needs of the students:

- Hiring more psychologists to designate students sooner so that the students will receive appropriate support early on.
- Providing additional social and emotional support for students at George Jay.
- More money for technology, i.e. Smart boards, document cameras, laptops, digital projectors and iPads.

## **2. Deanna Turner-Ritchie –Language Arts Pilot Project at George Jay**

Ms. Turner-Ritchie, a teacher at George Jay, spoke about the Language Arts Pilot Project and stated that the Principal of George Jay also participates in this program, but that her time is limited due to the administrative responsibilities of her job. Ms. Turner-Ritchie commented that this program is very worthwhile and plays a significant role in student learning. The school is in need of more funding to continue the Language Arts Pilot Project.

## **3. Leslie Waters – Library Books**

Ms. Waters, a librarian at George Jay, brought two large boxes with her to demonstrate what \$2,000.00 worth of books looks like. She stated that the Parent Advisory Council at George Jay does not have the capability to raise money to purchase additional books needed to keep the library resourced adequately. Ms. Waters concluded by informing the Trustees that the students at George Jay have an appetite for books and that more funding is necessary to buy additional library books.

## **4. Rob Paynter – Budget Related Matters**

Mr. Paynter raised a number of points for consideration including potential cost savings from centralized purchasing; summarizing the themes emerging from the educational partner groups input; information contained in the Saanich School Districts' budget package; enrolment projections used for future capital projects; and the use of a referendum to raise dollars to offset the \$8.3 million deficit. Chair Orcherton thanked Mr. Paynter for his presentation and recommended that further questions or comments be forwarded to the Trustees by email for consideration and response.

Chair Orcherton turned the meeting over to the Trustees for their comments.

Trustee Ferris stated that the Board values input from teachers and thanked the teachers from George Jay for their presentation.

Trustee McNally thanked the presenters for expressing their views. She noted that Trustees are sensitive to the issues and wants the public to know that Trustees are listening and understand their concerns.

Trustee Leonard thanked the presenters for taking the time to attend the meeting and for voicing their concerns. She added that in response to the recommendation that the District use public tax dollars to offset the deficit, in her fifteen years on the Board, we have never been allowed this option due the required criteria.

Trustee McEvoy thanked the presenters and stated that he found their comments to be very constructive. He added that the District advocates very strongly for additional funding, but the money is controlled at the provincial level.

Trustee Nohr thanked the presenters for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting. She stated that, as a former teacher, she has worked in the "have" schools and has seen the resource discrepancy that exists in inner city schools such as George Jay. Trustee Nohr added that she intends to put forth motions for additions to the budget to assist vulnerable learners at the board budget meeting.

Trustee Alpha commented that funding for public education needs to be made an issue in the next government election and that public funding for private schools should be ended. Trustee Alpha stated that she will continue to advocate for increased public education funding.

Trustee Horsman thanked the attendees for their presentations adding that the Eagles' Nest is a great name for the resource room at George Jay. She continued by saying that the Board might not be able to make giant steps given the budget situation, but there is the opportunity to make additions to the budget for the next school year.

Chair Orcherton thanked the presenters and the public for their attendance at tonight's meeting. She clarified that the new Oak Bay High School capital project provides capacity for projected numbers of students. She also added that referendum funding cannot be used for ongoing operating costs. Chair Orcherton concluded by stating that the Board continues to look for cost savings and to advocate for increased public education funding. She added that any available funding will be used to improve the student learning environment.

**C. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Orcherton thanked the speakers for their presentations. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

**CERTIFIED CORRECT**

---

Secretary-Treasurer

---

Chair