



**The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)**

**Special Board Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**August 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**

Trustees Present: Jordan Watters, Elaine Leonard, Nicole Duncan, Tom Ferris, Angie Hentze, Ann Whiteaker, Rob Paynter, Diane McNally, Ryan Painter.

Administration: Deb Whitten, Interim Superintendent, Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, Colin Roberts, Associate Superintendent, Harold Caldwell, Associate Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Andy Canty, Director, Information Technology for Learning.

Stakeholders Present: Winona Waldron, President, GVTA, Jane Massy, President, CUPE 947, Brenna O'Connor, VPVPA, Kalie Dyer, Songhees Nation.

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**A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer Morris explained that she would preside as Chair until after agenda item A.3.a.

**A.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories**

Secretary-Treasurer Morris recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

## **A.2 Approval of the Agenda**

**Moved By** Trustee Leonard

**Seconded By** Trustee Whiteaker

That the August 9, 2021 agenda be approved.

**Carried Unanimously**

## **A.3 Election of Chair**

Secretary-Treasurer Morris called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Board of Education for the term to November 2021.

Nominations were received for Trustees McNally, Duncan, Whiteaker and Paynter.

Trustee Whiteaker accepted the nomination and Trustees McNally, Duncan and Paynter declined. Secretary-Treasurer Morris declared Trustee Whiteaker Chair of the Board of Education by acclamation.

Chair Whiteaker thanked Trustees for trusting her to lead the Board as its Chair.

## **A.4 Election of Vice-Chair**

Chair Whiteaker called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Board of Education for the term to November 2021.

Nominations were received for Trustees McNally, Duncan and Paynter.

Trustee Paynter accepted the nomination and Trustees McNally and Duncan declined. Chair Whiteaker declared Trustee Paynter the Vice-Chair of the Board of Education by acclamation.

## **A.5 Motion to Destroy Election Ballots**

**Moved By** Trustee Leonard

**Seconded By** Trustee Painter

That the election ballots received by text message to Secretary-Treasurer Morris and Interim Superintendent Whitten be destroyed.

**Carried Unanimously**

## **B. QUESTION PERIOD**

**Q:**

I'm very worried about sending my 7 year old to school this September. He is uneligible to be vaccinated and the delta variant is much more contagious than the variants we were dealing with last school year. It scares me that he will be going back to a school that had fewer covid restrictions than it did last year. Are you going to be updating the covid safety plan for sd61 in light of the increasing case counts and increased transmissibility of delta?

**A:**

Interim Superintendent Whitten is waiting to hear from the Ministry of Education on direction for the 2021-2022 school year.

**Q:**

How will our under 12 population be protected once school is back in session in September?

**A:**

Chair Whiteaker, that answer is yet to come. We will have to wait for guidance from the Ministry of Education.

**Q:**

Since the variant is air-born and extremely effective at infecting people, will ALL elementary and middle school students be required to wear medical grade masks as well as school staff, no matter if there is plexus glass up because students and staff are sharing the classroom air for hours at a time and not able to space out. It has been proven that the cotton masks are barely effective. Students and staff should be provided with the proper PPE because we are working with an entirely unvaccinated group of the population. Even though the staff are double vaccinated, the young students in our schools are unable to be and we have absolutely no idea who's parents have also chosen NOT to vaccinate. This uncertainty or inconsistency is like Russian Roulette. Kindergarteners are facing one another, playing in centres, inquiring during at stations during learning and sitting at tables in order to fit. Our children and students are not able to be vaccinated until grade 7; this is a 4th wave of Covid and it's a variant that is very aggressive.

**A:**

Chair Whiteaker, that answer is yet to come. We will have to wait for guidance from the Ministry of Education.

**Q:**

Given that it is within the Board's power and jurisdiction to create safety plans for SD61 schools that exceed the guidance from the Provincial Health Officer, and given that unvaccinated students are at high risk for contracting Covid19 in indoor congregate settings with an airborne virus circulating in the community, what specific science-informed infection prevention and control strategies/interventions will the District be putting in place to protect all unvaccinated students from infection and possible subsequent debilitating chronic illness ("long Covid") during the 2021-2022 school year?

**A:**

Chair Whiteaker, all of these questions are about the back to school plan pertaining to COVID. We are waiting to hear from the Ministry of Education before we implement a plan.

**Q:**

When will there be a third party investigation into the anti-indigenous racism and the white supremacy that was evident in the School District 61 budget process and it's culture? How is this going to be addressed, there should be an investigation.

**A:**

Chair Whiteaker stated that the Chair and Vice-Chair have both resigned. All Trustees will be attending an Anti-Racism training session on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**C. ADJOURNMENT**

That the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

**Moved By** Trustee Leonard

**Seconded By** Trustee Ferris

That the meeting be adjourned.

**Carried Unanimously**

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Chair

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Secretary-Treasurer