



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

**Regular Board Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Via Zoom**

**Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 6:30 p.m.**

Official Trustee: Sherri Bell

Administration: Deb Whitten, Superintendent, Katrina Stride, Secretary-Treasurer, Tom Aerts, Associate Superintendent, Sean Powell, Acting Associate Superintendent, Julie Lutner, Associate Secretary-Treasurer, Hervinder Parmar, Director of Finance, Budgets and Financial Reporting, Dr. Shelly Wilton, Director of Indigenous Education, Marni Vistisen-Harwood, Director of Facilities Services, Sarah Winkler, VPVPA

Songhees Nation: Anevay Quocksister, Student Success Manager

Partners: Shawna Abbott, CUPE 947, Carolyn Howe, GVTA, Carlene Nex, VCPAC

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**A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING**

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

**A.1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories**

Official Trustee Bell recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

The Official Trustee provided opening remarks and introductions were made.

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

The Official Trustee passed the following motion:

That the February 25, 2025 agenda be approved.

**A.3. Approval of the Minutes**

Approval of the January 27, 2025 Regular Board Minutes

The Official Trustee passed the following motion:

That the January 27, 2025 Regular Board minutes be approved.

**A.4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

None.

**A.5. Student Achievement**

None.

**A.6. District Presentations**

None.

**A.7. Community Presentations (5 minutes per presentation)**

- a. Cliff Boldt presented on their recommendation of Student/Youth Councils in School District 61.

Official Trustee Bell thanked Mr. Boldt for the presentation.

**B. CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**C. OFFICIAL TRUSTEE REPORT**

**C.1. Official Trustee Report**

Official Trustee Sherri Bell provided a verbal report. Official Trustee Bell shared that she has set up meetings with each of the Rightsholders/Partners and is working on setting up an in-person Rightsholders/Partner Table meeting that could potentially meet monthly to replace the Education Policy and Directions and Operations Policy and Planning Committee meetings.

Official Trustee Bell advised that the next Board of Education meeting will be held on March 31, 2025.

Official Trustee Bell also advised that the Safety Plan will continue to be developed with the direction of Dr. Kevin Godden.

**D. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**D.1. Audit Sub-Committee**

The Official Trustee passed the following motion:

That the Official Trustee of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) accept the December 2024 Quarterly Financial Report.

**E. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS**

**E.1. Superintendent's Report**

- a. Monthly Report

Superintendent Whitten presented the report for information.

- b. School Calendars Update

Associate Superintendent Aerts presented the school calendar update for information.

**E.2. Secretary-Treasurer's Report**

- a. Monthly Report

Secretary-Treasurer Stride presented the report for information.

- b. 2024-2025 Amended Annual Budget Bylaw

Secretary-Treasurer Stride provided thanks to Julie Lutner, Associate Secretary-Treasurer and Hervinder Parmer, Director of Finance, Budgets and Financial Reporting and the entire Financial Services team for all their work on the amended annual budget.

Secretary-Treasurer Stride presented the 2024-2025 Amended Annual Budget.

The Official Trustee passed the following motion:

That the Official Trustee of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) agree to give all three readings of the 2024-2025 Amended Annual Budget Bylaw at the Regular Board meeting on February 25, 2025.

The Official Trustee passed three readings of the following bylaw:

That the School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) 2024-2025 Amended Annual Budget Bylaw in the amount of \$331,794,923 be:

Read a first time the 25th day of February, 2025;

Read a second time the 25th day of February, 2025;

Read a third time, passed and adopted the 25th day of February, 2025;

And that the Secretary-Treasurer and the Official Trustee be authorized to sign, seal and execute this Bylaw on behalf of the Board.

The Official Trustee passed the following motion:

That the Official Trustee of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve \$1,623,613 of the projected unrestricted operating surplus at June 30, 2025 to be carried forward and applied towards the projected deficit for the 2025-2026 Annual Budget.

c. Monthly Financial Report: January 2025

Secretary-Treasurer Stride provided the report for information.

d. Facilities Operations and Capital Projects Update: February 2025

Director of Facilities Vistisen-Harwood provided the report for information.

Official Trustee Bell had questions of clarification.

e. 2025-2026 Budget Update

i. 2025-2026 Ministry-Funded Enrolment Projections

Secretary-Treasurer Stride provided the enrolment projections for information.

ii. 2025-2026 Budget Development Process - New

Secretary-Treasurer Stride provided the new 2025-2026 Budget Development Process for approval and provided an overview of the process to date.

Official Trustee Bell and Partners had questions of clarification.

The Official Trustee passed the following motion:

That the Official Trustee of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) approve the new 2025-2026 Budget Development Process including looking for an additional day and time to meet with stakeholders and partners between April 2, 2025 and April 8, 2025.

## **F. QUESTION PERIOD**

Q: I am a parent of three children, in elementary, middle, and high schools in SD61. Our family was at every protest, to ensure that SD61 continued its excellent music programs, including elementary strings. They are a fundamental part of education. My worry, and my question is, are elementary strings, and middle school music, being considered for reductions in next year's budget?

A: Official Trustee Bell stated that it is too early to discuss specific budget items.

Q: Without an email address for our newly appointed trustee, I am wondering if you help our families understand how to best advocate for our district's music programs?

A: Official Trustee Bell stated that the email address for the appointed Trustee is [officialtrustee@sd61.bc.ca](mailto:officialtrustee@sd61.bc.ca).

Q: We have recently seen the deterioration of our elementary strings program, and a decrease in staffing for music programs resulting in increased class sizes. What will you do to keep our music programs thriving, accessible and well-funded, as this is a clearly a strong desire of our school community as well as the community at large?

A: Official Trustee Bell stated that it is too early to discuss specific budget items.

Q: Given the overwhelming response from District 61 families to this School District's proposed cuts to Elementary Strings and Middle School Music in the past, are you considering making cuts to these valuable programs?

A: Official Trustee Bell stated that it is too early to discuss specific budget items.

Q: How will parent input be sought for next year's budget process since the education partners meeting is being held during working hours and parents (through their official representative VCPAC) will likely not be able to attend?

A: Official Trustee Bell stated that if parents are not able to be at the table, she will talk to the President of VCPAC and they will figure out an alternative together, as input from parents is essential.

## **G. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF IN-CAMERA ITEMS**

**G.1. Record of In-Camera Board of Education Meeting – January 27, 2025**

## **H. NEW BUSINESS/NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

### **H.1. New Business**

None.

### **H.2. Notice of Motions**

None.

## **I. ADJOURNMENT**

Official Trustee Bell shared that Wednesday, February 26, 2025, is Pink Shirt Day and reflected on how the more we can bring true stories to our families about bullying and spread positivity and respect the better we will all be.

The Official Trustee adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

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Official Trustee

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Secretary-Treasurer