



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38 (RICHMOND)

**COUNCIL/BOARD LIAISON COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2001
1:00 p.m.

Place: 4th Floor Meeting Room
School District Administration Office

Present: Trustee Gerry Retallick, Chair
Trustee Sandra Bourque
Councillor Lyn Greenhill

Regrets: Councillor Harold Steves

Also Present: K. L. Morris, Secretary-Treasurer
D. McLellan, General Manager - Urban Development
K. Sparrow, Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
G. Barstow, Manager, Parks Operations
V. Jacques, Manager of Arenas Services
A. Flasch, Recording Secretary

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOVED BY L GREENHILL AND SECONDED BY S. BOURQUE:

THAT the agenda for the Wednesday, March 28, 2001 meeting be adopted with the addition of the Planning & Construction Schedule for Schools (5.2).

CARRIED

2. BRIEFS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nil

3. MINUTES

MOVED BY L. GREENHILL AND SECONDED BY S. BOURQUE:

THAT the minutes of the February 28, 2001 Council/Board Liaison Committee meeting be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Grass Cutting, Block Booking

The Secretary Treasurer spoke to the materials included with the agenda package. He noted that staffs have met a number of times, and he has summarized and put forward options discussed at those meetings. He did not have time to take a draft to City staff, so he put his name on it and moved it forward:

Page 9 Mr. Morris noted that the historical arrangement has been cost-effective for both parties. He added that the School District acquires as much land as it can, as cost-effectively as possible and to the benefit of the entire community. As a result, the City does not have to acquire as much land.

In recent years, the province does not fund the energy costs, which are a significant cost to the district. He added that the figures for incremental energy, have had to be estimated at \$200,000. The School District is now implementing a system that will enable it to better estimate the costs, and the system should be ready for the next school year and will be beneficial in forecasting costs.

B. Fraser entered the meeting during the above (1:10 p.m.).

Page 17 Mr. Morris expressed regret that the City of Richmond Sports Council Sub-Committee report was inadvertently included with the agenda package, as he did not realize it was only in draft form, as it was received from another source. The draft is actually waiting for an up-coming sub-committee meeting of Council and is not official. Dave Semple provided background information, noting that the Sports Council wants to properly present it to Council first, and then forward it to other sources.

Mr. Morris moved through the report and discussed matters on energy usage, user fees, the plan for consultation and the various options considered. He emphasized that there were no recommendations.

There was consensus that affiliated groups should be examined.

D. McLellan spoke to the issue of charges for the use of sports fields, noting that it is a very sensitive issue and they are in the preliminary stages only. He also said that the City has more processes to go through before it gets to possible charges for field uses. Further, he stated that the City will not be considering the option of \$450,000 being given to the School Board, while it may consider Option "B" -- establishing user fees for community groups using Board facilities, and it will be reviewing the affiliation policy.

Mr. Morris responded that revenue generation must be considered by the school district, and other smaller items need to be critically looked at, such as the affiliated groups, etc. More private rentals would likely result, which will reduce school district costs.

Council/Board Liaison Cte - March 28, 2001

3

Further, summer sports "camps" which are presently loosely organized and run by school staffs. The camps generate small amounts of money, and the school district may consider running those camps and hiring staff to run them as a source of revenue generation.

Councillor Greenhill agreed that affiliated groups need to be examined, as who is entitled to affiliation status has become nebulous over a number of years.

She asked if there was something the City could do to assist in funding for community use in consultation with the government and the school district. The Secretary Treasurer noted that the district receives no targeted funding. Allocating funds at this time would mean cuts in other areas.

Dave Semple noted that Delta is spending over \$900,000 for grounds maintenance, Surrey \$2.3M, while Richmond spends a cost-effective \$274,000, all ratios considered, and pointed out the economies the school board is receiving at that rate. He also noted that the budget instruction manual for the school board does have a line item for grounds maintenance. He spoke to the reasons for needing to approach the government jointly, noting the economies that are being realized, and that the school district is being penalized for being the most economically satisfied grounds maintenance City in the province.

Trustee Bourque noted that if lobbying the government was to occur, then other critical matters would be a priority before this issue. She conveyed that the funding required for ESL, special needs students, and other educational needs are high priorities and offered that this issue would be better presented to the government and not the Ministry of Education alone, as it would not be a priority for them. Further, she noted that the Ministry of Education may be inclined to point out that Richmond has lobbied -- and received over the years -- money for maximum amounts of school/park space, where other districts have not been so fortunate.

Additional points Trustee Bourque made included other school districts saving grounds maintenance costs by using gravel, fencing-off, or paving their school sites. She also noted that the school district does not have the option to raise money through taxes, as the City does.

In response to Trustee Bourque also noting that the Ministry of Education is not responsible for anything but education, and seems to view school district buildings as not being there for other purposes, Councillor Greenhill responded that school district revenues should come from education therefore, and not from recreation.

K. Morris noted that there is a wide variety of initiatives in place or in the formative stages to generate revenue for the School District. He stated that operating budgets are expected to drop, and the Board wants to be able to sustain services for children in its care, especially in the areas of special education and integration of special needs children. As an example, he noted that 150 autistic children attend Richmond schools and each requires approximately \$40,000 of service, but the government only provides \$15,000 for each. The School District continues to provide the balance, but is concerned that integration may be restricted from neighbourhood schools in the future, due to lack of funds.

B. Fraser spoke to targeted funds on ESL and special programs. To the extent that the funding is inadequate, he noted there is also limited interchangeability of funds. Many applications have been made for funding, and this year \$700,000 was required for energy, with increases pending. The government is still not ready to acknowledge the over-expenditures.

K. Sparrow spoke to the idea of the School District going into the recreation business, and suggested further exploration is needed. She noted that her department is looking at an integrated strategy so that community associations are not in competition with each other. Ms. Sparrow spoke about the leisure delivery system and what strategies might support the delivery as a whole.

Trustee Bourque noted that there are barriers, and they are being faced by kids in the school system. She added that if the Board cannot create revenue and is forced to start charging fees, such will significantly reduce opportunities, especially for children of low income families. Recreational opportunities outside of school are accepted by society as optional. In school, the government has said that fees for children attending school shall be limited and shall not inhibit any child's ability to participate.

Trustee Retallick noted that the relationship between the City of Richmond and the School District is envied throughout the province. He reiterated that the Board does not want to upset that, but consideration must be given to the territorial nature of the two bodies. The Ministry of Education will note that our operating budget has gone up 72% in the last 10 years, without acknowledging the increased needs and costs. He noted that the affiliated group list will reveal some groups that are able to pay fees, and there will be other things that can be done in consultation and cooperation with the City. He noted the notion of the reputation the Richmond School District has for its service to special needs students, which by word of mouth, increases the number of special needs students arriving in our community. Our high number of autistic students is an example.

Council/Board Liaison Cte - March 28, 2001

5

Trustee Sargent noted that although the School District's mandate is education, the government has conveyed that the Board needs to look at revenue generation for the future, in order to save the services to the children. She conveyed her concern that a new government coming into office may mean a lot less money for Richmond than in the past -- and the loss of any more money means it has to affect the students.

Councillor Greenhill referred back to the options in the report. She stated that Option "A" is not something City Council will consider, Option "B" may have merit, or some other option to be arrived at. She had concerns that the time-line called for options to be forwarded to a larger group at this time. She stated she is not supportive of the options already presented, or forwarding them to other groups at this time.

D. Semple stated that business analysis does need to be done for all options being considered, and equity for a user pay system in some areas, and noted that these things take time. He conveyed the need to go after revenue sources available, while not hurting others, and that the City and the School District need to work together on the strategies.

K. Morris noted that it is a fact that the Richmond School District is a satellite district for special needs children, and each year its uniquely high costs in funding requirements in this area greatly increase. Further, regarding sports "camps" for elite student athletes of grades 11-12, he confirmed that these "camps" have been going on for years and that, due to their exclusivity, these activities are not going to compete with the City's programs.

Mr. Morris referred to the plan for consultation, and noted the March 28th point in the time-line, that options are being discussed, and another option is that none of the options presented be realized, although we have arrived at consensus to examine the list of affiliated groups for deletions. He noted he does not believe that the funds needed are going to be completely realized from more user-pay groups, and agreed that the eventual answer is going to take some time.

There was further consensus that examination of the list of affiliated groups was timely and should go ahead forthwith.

Trustee Bourque noted that the School District, in the meantime, is going to have to proceed as forthrightly as it can to generate revenue for and through its buildings and facilities and the Board will do its best to ensure that it does not conflict untowardly with what the City feels falls under the parks & leisure umbrella.

L. Greenhill noted that the City has information on costs not only for the City of Richmond grounds maintenance, but other areas of the Lower Mainland, and would be pleased to share the information with the School District.

V. Jacques departed the meeting during the above (2:00 p.m.)

4.3 Vandalism & School Site Security

K. Morris spoke to the memorandum included with the agenda and noted that letters from the Board Chairperson will have been sent out inviting participation at the first meeting, scheduled for April 23rd at 10:00 a.m.. Politicians have been invited for the initial meetings to support the idea politically. It was also noted that a new organizational chart for the City of Richmond is available on the City web site.

Mr. Morris also noted that the level of theft, particularly theft of computers, in the past few months has slowed in comparison to the last year. However, another arson attempt was made on General Currie over Spring Break, making it the sixth attempt by vandals to burn the building down over the years. A site by site analysis is needed to determine the appropriate security for each site. It was acknowledged that the City is in the same position.

4.4 Conditions for Zoning for MacNeill Secondary School

The Secretary Treasurer noted that the surveyors are drawing final diagrams for MacNeill Secondary School, and everything that the provincial government was required to approve has been completed. The value of the DCC's are being finalized, and should be over to the City by April 2nd.

4.5 Youth - Safe Meeting Places

Kate Sparrow reported that Wayne Yee and a contractor have been researching from the local youth serving agencies and health nurses about this issue. There is a questionnaire and series of focus groups with youth involved in community centre programs, late night programs, the RCMP, and station Stretch. One area they have been struggling with researching is the immigrant youth. School staff were going to help them identify some of those children in order that focus groups can be initiated. She noted they are hoping to have the analysis completed in the next few weeks, with a report to the Parks & Recreation Culture Committee shortly thereafter.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.1 2001 Capital Budget

A report from the Director of Parks was included with the agenda package. Mr. Semple noted that the proposed capital budget was included with the agenda package, and the public process will go forward during April, with approval by May 15th.

L. Greenhill noted that the capital budget is passed well ahead of the operating budget.

Council/Board Liaison Cte - March 28, 2001

7

K. Morris asked if there was any opportunities for the School District to work together with the City on these budget items. Traffic Safety was mentioned, as well as major sewer, water works, field drainage, and McLennan North design detail.

Councillor Greenhill noted that the City wishes to provide more housing for seniors. Tree harvesting was discussed, and the planting project at Boyd was highlighted. The Sports Statutory Reserve Fund allocation was discussed, as well as acquisition of park land, status of field houses on Palmer and London sites, and the potential caretaker's suite at King George park.

5.2 Planning & Construction Schedule

The Secretary Treasurer circulated the present planning & construction schedule and reviewed the status of MacNeill, Richmond Secondary, McRoberts, Thompson, Hamilton, Currie, Homma, Ferris, and an energy project with Honeywell and BC Hydro for all school facilities,

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

7. PENDING ITEMS

Nil

8. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next meeting of Council/Board Liaison Committee would be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 24, 2001, 10-12:00 at the School District Offices.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY L. GREENHILL AND SECONDED BY S. BOURQUE:

THAT the regular meeting of Council/Board Liaison Committee be adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

CARRIED

Respectfully Submitted,

G. Retallick, Chairperson