



Peace River School Division

Learning Together - Success for All

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 19, 2024

PRSD Board of Trustees approve \$750,000 debenture

Grimshaw, Alta. - The Board of Trustees have approved a \$750,000 debenture required to move forward with important repairs and improvements to the Division's Central Operations building in Grimshaw.

Secretary/Treasurer Rhonda Freeman explained to the Board that when Central Operations moved from Peace River to Grimshaw the renovations to the building did not include any changes or upgrades to the heating and cooling system in the building. As a result of the renovations, and the age of the existing system, there are several spaces in the building that are quite frequently either uncomfortably warm or uncomfortably cold with no ability for the staff in the building to control the temperatures.

The HVAC improvement project, as proposed by Freeman, would change the outdated pneumatic valve controls to electronic controls and create zones within the building that would allow staff to better control the temperature in their office spaces with individual thermostats. The project would also add air conditioning units and cooling coils and update the furnaces in the areas of the building not controlled by the boiler system. The existing boilers do not need to be replaced.

The estimated cost of this project is \$450,000.

Freeman also brought to the attention of the Board the need to resurface the north wing of the building, at an estimated cost of \$500,000. Since 2019, several sections of the roof have been resurfaced, and the north wing is the only remaining section requiring attention.

"Right now, the Division is debt free and has been since 2017. However, at this point I do feel it is fiscally responsible for the board to use debenture as a mechanism to do what needs to be done. School divisions don't have a mechanism for earning, which is why we need to be able to utilize debentures."

Rhonda Freeman, Secretary Treasurer, Peace River School Division

Freeman recommended that the board proceed with an application for a debenture in the amount of approximately \$750,000 with the balance of the costs to be covered by the proportionate capital reserves from System Administration, Operations and Maintenance, and Transportation.

"I support the continued improvement of this building. We can curse the size of it, but I think the size also produces opportunity, and I think we have proved that by bringing in things like our Alternative Education Program and the North Peace Commercial Driving Academy. And, I think, we still have opportunities to grow."

Lori Leitch, Ward 5 Trustee, Peace River School Division

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