

# OTBU Treasurer Report

District 14 OSSTF

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 27, 2020

First, thank you for reading this. Your interest in the finances of our Occasional Teacher Bargaining Unit (through the work of the Budget & Constitution Committees, and other bodies) is a healthy part of an engaged Membership that is critical to maintaining oversight of stewardship for how we collect and disburse funds in serving each and all of our Members.

The 2020-21 budget presented here for approval is, like nearly all aspects of our current lives including our recently ratified central agreement, not immune to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, we have not seen a decrease to our District's provincial funding (through which we receive a significant portion of our funding), nor are our District's reserve investments hurt significantly by the economic downturn from this public health crisis. However, our inability to safely meet together as a body at this AGM to accessibly and freely debate and discuss in person puts us in a very poor position to confidently move forward with sensitive and critical decisions involving our finances. This year's Constitution Committee, which I was a part of when it met in February, was unanimous that it was time to lower the dedicated 0.6% OTBU levy. However, with the realities we face now we felt this is too challenging of a time (in terms of public Membership debate, but also in terms of financial uncertainty) to bring forward such a constitutional change.

As your OTBU Treasurer one of my primary objectives is to ensure greater access to and transparency of how our District funds and administers the finances of its bargaining units, particularly around surpluses, transfers, and reserve funds. These are critical to discussing any potential changes to levies, and I feel very uncomfortable with the current lack of common understanding within our District around these items. For these reasons I feel very strongly that we must engage in open and frank conversations at a District level to develop a clearer and common understanding that allows us to develop a plan that responsibly (i.e. equitably and sustainably) manages our funds and serves our Members. This should be able to occur through a District ad hoc committee that I, as your District (and OTBU) Treasurer, am very strongly pushing for to be created for 2020-21.

Both related to surpluses, transfers, and reserve funds as well as noteworthy for our proposed budget is that the District's proposed 2020-21 budget features an additional \$20k in transfer from the District's Reserve Funds into its operating budget (a 40% increase over last year) that provides the OTBU with an additional \$4k in transfer funding from the District (and the TBU an additional \$8k). This additional funding (and the transfer from reserves that allows this) is a mechanism through which past surpluses (of the District and both of its bargaining units) are reallocated into the annual budgets of these bodies, and that the OTBU has budgeted toward enhanced engagement and capacity building through lines 5940, 5930, and 5815.

Finally, it would be remiss of me to not include this last point in my report.

I feel we are extremely fortunate to have the outstanding leadership in Erin Leonard as our OTBU (and at least for this year, our District) President. With contract negotiations and strike action, COVID-19 and emergency remote teaching, this has arguably been an unparalleled year in the challenges it has brought us as OTBU Members and as a Federation. Yet I feel confident in (and comforted by) the protective, supportive, and inclusive care and action Erin has continued to provide as our leader. While we are very fortunate to have this leadership and care, we must look forward to what (and who) is next to continue this work. And it is with this in mind that our budget has enhanced engagement and capacity building as discussed earlier.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Gartenburg  
OTBU Treasurer, District 14 OSSTF

*Acknowledgements:*

Thanks to the OTBU Budget Committee for their engagement and participation in our Bargaining Unit and Federation: Erin Leonard (President), Keith Noland (Vice President), Ryan McCracken, Dave Wehrmann, and Andrew Gartenburg (Chair & Treasurer).