

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board

Annual Report on Reserves

November 25, 2010

The purpose of this report is to annually summarize the various reserves whether they are working or committed reserve accounts held by this Board. The first portion of the report speaks to the need and value of reserves in general terms. There are two types of reserve accounts. Working reserves have no specific committed purpose although they may be needed to cover various outstanding obligations. Committed reserves are amounts which, although held by the Board, must be spent on activities approved by the appropriate ministry, legislation, collective agreements, Board resolutions or decisions reached as part of the Board budget process. The report will also discuss significant accounts within accrued liabilities and deferred revenue as these do have implications for the level of committed reserves, the operating budget and the working reserve.

The report which follows sets out all reserve accounts. First is a discussion of the working reserve. Then the report describes each committed reserve and provides the rationale for that reserve. The actual amount of each reserve as of December 31, 2009 is included and is consistent with the amounts recorded in the final 2009 audit. Any annual transfer of operating funds into a committed reserve from the operating budget is noted.

There is a restriction in the District Social Services Administration Board Act (DSSAB) on the level of working reserves which the Board may have. The Board has a policy which provides for a maximum working reserve which is below the limits set in the legislation.

Through our discussions with this Board's auditor there appears to be no restriction on the level of committed reserves which the Board may hold. However, for each committed reserve there should be a sound rationale for the creation of the reserve, the amount of the reserve and any decision to add to that committed reserve. Funds should be withdrawn from a committed reserve only to meet those obligations or purposes for which the reserve was originally created. If the obligation or purpose for which the reserve was created is reduced this should be reflected in the amount of the reserve. If the obligation no longer exists or if the original purpose is no longer valid then that committed reserve should be eliminated.

As part of the completion of this document we are providing specific recommendations related to the working reserve and each committed reserve. These recommendations attempt to take into consideration several factors.

These factors include:

- The Board decision to build EMS bases in Foleyet and Little Current in 2010
- The reduction in the Board's gross operating budget which will occur in 2010 and 2011 with the upload of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefit cost
- The cumulative impact of the significant infusion of capital repair funding into the social housing sector through the Social Housing Renovation and Repair (SHRRP) program which ends March 2011
- The uncertainty concerning this Board's role and any financial implications related to the Charles Pascal report on early learning and child care and the provinces decision to implement the Full-Day Early-Learning Kindergarten program.
- Recommendations in the recently received report on Housing Affordability and Needs Study
- Results of the Building Condition Assessments completed on all DSB owned buildings by Stonewell Group will be used to develop long term capital plans for all Board properties.

The recommendations are based on several principles including:

- Committed reserves established for a particular program should be kept within that program area since they often include provincial payments.
- Each committed reserve must have a rationale for its existence, its amount and the appropriateness of any additional transfer from the operating budget.
- Where possible similar reserve accounts have been combined.
- If delays in adjusting the reserve are appropriate a future review date has been established.
- All committed reserves which include the annual revolving of funds must be reviewed annually through the creation of five year or greater estimated expenditure plans.

Accrued Liabilities

Within the accrued liabilities section of the 2009 audit there is an amount of \$534,642. This amount represents monies set aside specifically for the payment of severance to EMS employees under a collective agreement. This severance obligation must be shown as a liability to the Board and be provided for.

Deferred Revenue

Within the deferred revenue section there is an amount of \$1,011,822. This amount is the 100% provincially funded unconditional grant which was directed to the Board in the first year of the Best Start initiative. The Board passed a resolution upon receipt of these funds that they would be used for any decommissioning costs related to the termination of the Best Start program. Although the Federal government ended its funding towards the Best Start program, the Provincial government funded the extension of this program effective April 1, 2010. However, there is a significant report on the issue of child care and early childhood development completed by Dr. Charles Pascal. This report, if implemented, may have long-term impacts on this Board's role in the provision of a variety of children's services. The Provincial government has received the Pascal report and in October 2009 the Premier announced Ontario's plan to move ahead with an Extended Full-Day Early-Learning program for four and five-year-olds. The program was renamed Full-Day Early-Learning Kindergarten program which will be managed by the Ministry of Education. The goal is to have the program for four and five-year-olds fully implemented in all schools by 2015-2016. This program also includes extended hours for before and after school care that will be directly run by the Boards of Education. The implementation of this plan will affect the viability of existing non-profit child care providers.

#1 Recommendation:

On an annual basis, the Board will reassess the advisability of continuing to hold these funds as deferred revenue based on the implementation of the Full-Day Early-Learning Kindergarten program and its impact on the viability of the non-profit child care providers.

Reasons for Reserves

The Board requires reserves for a variety of reasons.

Specific Liabilities:

Reserves are needed to cover specific liabilities. These liabilities include unpaid bills, legal proceedings, subsidy adjustments, etc.

Prevention of Borrowing:

The Board has several programs in which it expends reserves and then must wait for the retroactive payment of subsidies. The Board has developed a levy system in which it waits for the retroactive payment of municipal and unincorporated levies. If the Board has no reserve it must borrow, at significant cost, to cover these expenditures. The need for working reserves in the Ontario Works Program is somewhat mitigated by the upfront provincial funding of the allowances portion of this program.

Reduction / Elimination of Bank Charges:

Because the Board has reserves, it has been able, through a competitive tendering process, to negotiate very reasonable terms with a bank. Those terms provide for an interest payment at 1.0% and a set service fee of \$550 per month which covers all transactions. If reserves are not adequate the Board would pay high interest costs and bank charges.

Ability to Respond to Long Term Capital Needs:

The presence of committed working reserves allows the Board to respond to capital requirements. A recent example of this is the construction of the Chapleau EMS station. The purchase of Hagar and Espanola EMS stations were funded in this manner.

In the Emergency Medical Services program, there is the need for ongoing capital repairs for the bases which the Board either owns outright or leases. Ambulances also need replacement as they age. The presence of reserves allows these two significant areas of EMS expenditure to occur without creating huge year to year shifts in the municipal levy.

In the Housing Services program, reserves are needed as the building components and fixtures move through their life cycle. The reserves allow us to deal with exceptional and recurring capital requirements.

Ability to Respond to Significant Program Changes:

The Board operates several programs which have been subject to huge cost shifts. This can occur in the Ontario Works program due to changes in unemployment rates. EMS costs can and have dramatically changed by adjustments in the availability of local health care or as a result of unilateral provincial decisions. Since this Board delivers provincially mandated programs, significant increases in costs can occur as a result of changes in provincial legislation.

Ability to Respond to Significant Grant or Cost Sharing Changes:

The Board is subject to the unilateral decisions of the Province and the Federal government to reduce grants or change cost sharing. This has been and will continue to be a reality with all four program areas under this Board's jurisdiction. Reserves provide some ability, at least in the short term, to offset these sudden unilateral decisions. In almost all of the downloaded programs, open ended cost sharing has been replaced by unilaterally set grants. The actual net impact of the recent announcements of the uploading of costs will be noted in the annual calculation of the amount of reserves to be retained.

Working Reserve

The total amount of the working reserve which the Board may retain is 15% of the Board's current year's estimates as set out in the District Social Services Administration Board Act and Regulations. The legislation does not speak to committed reserves.

The following excerpt from the regulations notes that the working reserve may be up to 15% of the total estimates of the Board for the year. The Board estimates are not simply the amount required by the Board for the municipal levy. The estimates include the amounts which the Board requires from senior levels of government to have a balanced budget.

ESTIMATES AND RESERVES

7. (1) *Each board shall in each year apportion among the jurisdictions in its district, in accordance with section 6, the amounts that it estimates will be required to defray the expenditures for social services for that year and shall on or before March 31 of that year notify,*
 - (a) *the clerk of each municipality of the amount to be provided by that municipality; and*
 - (b) *the Minister responsible for each social service of the amount to be provided by the Minister with respect to that social service under section 8 of the Act. O. Reg. 37/99, s. 5 (1).*
- (2) *If a board that has given notice of its estimated expenditures incurs additional costs for social services that were not anticipated at the time the notice was given, the additional costs shall be apportioned and notification given in accordance with subsection (1). O. Reg. 278/98, s. 7 (2); O. Reg. 37/99, s. 5 (2).*
- (3) *In preparing the estimates, the board may provide for a reserve for working reserves in a year not to exceed 15 per cent of the total estimates of the board for the year. O. Reg. 278/98, s. 7 (3).*
- (4) *If the actual expenditures of a board for a year are greater or less than the estimated expenditures for that year, the board shall, in preparing the estimates of the amount required to defray its expenditures for the following year,*
 - (a) *make due allowance for any surplus that will be available from the preceding*
 - (b) *provide for any deficit of the preceding year. O. Reg. 278/98, s. 7 (4).*

This report completed in November 2010 uses the 2010 gross estimated operating costs from the approved budget. The gross estimated costs are used to be consistent with legislation and because the Board expends gross funds prior to receiving any offsets of provincial grants, cost sharing or the receipt of municipal levies.

The working reserve can not exceed 15% of the total estimated 2010 expenditures.

2010 total estimated expenditures \$35,350,587.
15% is \$ 5,302,588.

Board Policy Re Working Reserves

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board has adopted a policy to have working reserves set at 15% of the *municipal* share of the DSB's current operating budget.

Specifically the policy is

"To maintain a Working Reserve that is set at a maximum of 15% of the annualized municipal share of the DSB's operating current budget."

2010 municipal share of the operating 2010 budget \$9,046,623
15% is \$1,356,993.

The above policy provides for a working reserve which is less than that provided for by the legislation.

Based on the 2009 audit, the Board has working reserves of \$1,354,549.

#2 Recommendation:

The Board reaffirms its existing policy related to the working reserve.

Committed Reserves

In addition to the Board's working reserve, there are a number of committed reserves. These have been established by legislation, Board resolutions or as a result of decisions reached as part of the budget process. These funds are set aside for a specific purpose/obligation and are used to meet those specific purposes/obligations.

Each year, in some of these committed reserves, funds are flowed into the reserve and flowed out to meet the specific expenditure requirements. An example of this is the EMS Ambulance reserve. In that case, \$350,000 goes into the account annually and the number of required ambulances based on a 5-year renewal plan is purchased from that account each year. As a result, this committed reserve balance may change significantly from audit to audit. To identify those types of committed reserves we have added the title "Revolving" after the reserve title.

In other committed reserves, no expenditures are made unless specific criteria are met. An example is the EMS Severance Committed Reserve in which funds are only payable upon the departure of those employees.

The existence of these committed reserves reduces the likelihood that the municipal share will vary significantly from year to year. An example of this is the ambulance replacement reserve allows us to levy a consistent amount each year, even though the number of ambulances purchased may fluctuate dramatically from year to year.

Information Technology (IT) Committed Reserve (Revolving)
Balance end of 2009 is \$142,033.

Due to the rapid evolution of technology, and new hardware requirements as a result of provincially mandated systems, there is a need for a committed reserve to avoid significant year to year fluctuations. All of the programs rely on the continuous functioning of a District wide IT system. Accordingly, funds must be available to immediately replace IT components that may fail.

In 2010 this reserve was augmented by a transfer of \$85,000 from the operating budget.

Public Housing Capital Repair (Revolving)
Balance end of 2009 is \$1,414,514.

The Ministry has passed regulations requiring each Consolidated Municipal Service Manager or DSSAB to expend a prescribed amount each year for capital repairs for its directly operated public housing portfolio. In this jurisdiction, the public housing portfolio ownership is registered to the Board. Prior to devolution, the capital needs for the public housing portfolio were met by the Province from general revenues and from Federal subsidies.

As a result of Provincial regulations, the amount for the Board to expend each year for capital repairs of the public housing portfolio is \$803 per unit per year. For the transferred public housing units the amount is $281 \times \$803 = \$225,657$. In the 2010 Budget the Board increased its contribution from \$74,043 to \$100,000 bringing the total amount to \$325,657 being levied each year as part of the Housing Services Budget. With the additional contribution to this reserve it was decided that this reserve would become a "Revolving" reserve with the requirement that at minimum the \$225,657 in Federal Funding must be utilized on an annual basis. These funds are used each year to fund the capital repairs approved for that year.

In 2010 this reserve was augmented by a transfer of \$100,000 from the operating budget.

In 2010 Building Condition Assessments (BCA) were completed on all social housing properties. These BCAs have allowed for the creation of a multi-year consolidated capital repair plan which has been included in the Draft 2011 Budget.

The staff used the multi-year consolidated capital repair plan to determine the amount of annual contribution required to set a minimum amount to be retained in the Public Housing Capital Repair Committed Reserve. Based on the BCAs, an annual contribution of \$405,537 is required in order to maintain the existing Public Housing stock. This would mean an additional annual contribution of \$79,880 by this DSB. At the October 2010 Board meeting, the Board passed a resolution asking that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing fund the shortfall and this increase was not included in the 2011 estimates.

C.A. MacMillan Place (CAMP) Capital Committed Reserve
Balance end of 2009 is \$208,190.

This non profit project has been transferred to direct administration of the DSB. However, the DSB is required to act as if it is a non-profit board in its handling of the financing for this project. This project requires its own committed capital reserve as any other non-profit.

In 2010 this reserve was augmented by a transfer of \$19,738 from the operating budget. This amount reflects the reserve allocation which would occur as a non-profit.

The existence of this reserve must be separately retained due to SHRA regulations and the operating agreements.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Working Fund/Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Committed Reserve (Revolving)
Balance end of 2009 is \$77,050.

In past years in order to retain any unspent funding from MOHLTC, the unspent funding must be transferred to a committed reserve. DSB was required to put a matching amount into that committed reserve. These funds are normally expended in the following budget year.

EMS Patient Care Equipment Committed Reserve (Revolving)
Balance end of 2009 is \$247,567.

The need for medical supplies and equipment can change from year to year due to Ministry requirements, disease outbreaks and product replacement cycles. In order to avoid significant fluctuations in the budget process year to year, an amount is being transferred by the budget process into this committed reserve. Funds are flowed into this committed reserve and are flowed out to meet the specific expenditure requirements each year.

In 2010 this reserve was augmented by a transfer of \$60,000 from the operating budget.

EMS Severance Committed Reserve
Balance end of 2009 is \$299,986.

The original base funding template for Emergency Medical Services included an annual reserve transfer for future severance liabilities related to this Program in the amount of \$52,133. There was an initial one time transfer from MOHLTC of \$215,296. The annual reserve transfer was discontinued during the 2004 budget process. The current collective agreement has imposed additional liabilities relating to this fund since that time. The total future unadjusted liability is \$534,642. This is a maximum liability which would not likely ever occur as it involves all the employees impacted retiring or being laid off at once.

In this case the maximum liability is already fully met for 2010 by an Accrued Liability of \$534,642 as reported in the 2009 audit. The 2009 Reserve report recommended that this reserve be closed and funds transferred to an EMS Building reserve. This was investigated through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and we were advised that the reserve must be maintained and only used for severance purposes.

In 2010 an actuarial analysis was completed and determined that the current level of accrued liability for this severance obligation was adequate.

EMS Vehicle Replacement Committed Reserve (Revolving)
Balance end of 2009 is \$507,881.

The ambulance replacement policy states a cycle of 7 years. This cycle is greater than the MOHLTC recommended 5-year cycle. The need for ambulances can change from year to year due to call volume and the total kilometers traveled. In order to avoid significant fluctuations in the budget process year to year, a fixed amount is transferred. Regardless of the number of ambulances required a fixed

amount of \$350,000 flows into this committed reserve each year. Funds are flowed into this committed reserve and are flowed out to meet the specific expenditure requirements.

In 2010 this reserve was augmented by a transfer of \$350,000 from the operating budget.

**Non-EMS Vehicle Replacement Committed Reserve (Revolving)
Balance end of 2009 is \$235,000.**

For the operation of the Ontario Works programs, there is a need for vehicles to transport clients to education, training and job readiness programs. In 2000, the Ministry of Community and Social Services funded the initial vehicle purchase. There is a single vehicle for the IT department which also needs periodic replacement. The replacement of these vehicles is the responsibility of the DSB. The need for these vehicles can change from year to year. In order to avoid significant fluctuations in the budget process year to year, a fixed amount is transferred. Regardless of the number of vehicles required a fixed amount of \$17,000 flows into this committed reserve each year. Funds are flowed into this committed reserve and are flowed out to meet the specific expenditure requirements

In 2010 this reserve was augmented by a transfer of \$17,000 from the operating budget.

Summary

This report, once approved, will be added to the Finance section of the Board website as an ongoing reference document and be updated annually based on the prior years' audit and the current year estimates. See the summary chart in Appendix A.

Appendix A	
Title of Reserve	2009 Reserve Balance
Working Reserve	\$1,354,549
Information Technology (IT) Reserve	\$142,033
Public Housing Capital Repair Reserve	\$1,414,514
CAMP Capital Reserve	\$208,190
EMS Fund/MOHLTC Reserve	\$77,050
EMS Patient Care Equipment Reserve	\$247,567
EMS Severance Reserve	\$299,986
EMS Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$507,881
Non-EMS Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$235,000
Total Reserves per 2009 Audited Financial Statements	\$4,486,770