

ITEM	14
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	33
COUNCIL MEETING	May 2/77

Re: COURSE ON BURNABY MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT
(ITEM 5, REPORT NO. 50, AUGUST 3, 1976)

The Municipality and the School District collaborated on the development of a course on municipal government when approval in principle was obtained from Council in November, 1975. The course was subsequently finalized and offered to the public during the spring quarter, 1976. An evaluation of the course disclosed that the persons who attended had gained a practical knowledge of their local government, and members of staff who provided instruction without exception found it to be a highly rewarding experience.

Council on August 3, 1976 gave approval to have the course offered again during the winter quarter, 1977. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on this second offering which has just recently been completed.

Approximately thirty-five persons attended the first class on January 18, 1977. Attendance remained relatively stable for about three weeks and then gradually decreased over the remaining ten weeks with the result that the last session on March 29 was attended by a class of seventeen students (the reference to students is used in a broad sense because the persons who attended the course were of all ages and from different walks of life).

Some reduction in attendance was expected. For one thing, the classes were free, and persons did not have to make any form of financial commitment in order to attend. Nor was credit given for completion of the course. Persons could attend one, all or any of the classes depending on their inclination and interests. The facilities in the school on a few occasions were not completely satisfactory due to background noise which interfered with instruction, but overall, accommodation could not be regarded as having any appreciable adverse affect on attendance; in fact, the accommodation as a rule was very good. It is interesting to note that our experience with respect to attendance paralleled the pattern that was experienced during the first offering last year even though the two courses were made available during different times of the year.

Staff in consultation with representatives from the School District have concluded that there would not be much point in offering the course again for at least two or three years. It is anticipated that it will take approximately this long before sufficient interest develops to warrant offering the course again.

Council will be able to obtain an appreciation for students' reactions to the course from the following summary of responses that were made on completed questionnaires:

A. Question: In what way was the course of value to you?

- (a) "Obtained an insight in Municipal Affairs."
- (b) "Becoming aware."
- (c) "Just wanted to find out more about how Burnaby operated. Took it for general interest."
- (d) "It was practical-not sensationalized as out of the newspapers. These are the facts."
- (e) "It gave me a good idea how my municipality is run and how funds are distributed."

B. Rating

The questionnaire included a section on which students could conveniently express their general impressions on the course. The section as it appears on the questionnaire is as follows:

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"Please rate this course for:

	Poor	Satisfactory			Excellent
(a) Course content - - - - -	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Presentation of the course - - -	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Overall satisfaction with the course - - - - -	1	2	3	4	5
(d) How do you rate the instructors - -	1	2	3	4	5"

The ratings received the following responses (The figures in parantheses represent the number of students replying):

	Poor	Satisfactory			Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
(a) Course content - - - - -		(2)	(2)	(5)	(2)
(b) Presentation of the course - - -		(1)	(4)	(6)	(1)
(c) Overall satisfaction - - - - -		(1)	(3)	(6)	(1)
(d) Instructors - - - - -		(4)	(4)		(3)

Mr. Dave Carter, moderator for the course and Vice-Principal of Edmonds Elementary - Junior Secondary School, in a letter dated April 25, 1977 to the Municipal Manager advised that he was "especially impressed with the amount of preparation that municipal employees had gone to and also with the quality of the hand-out materials which were given to members of the class. I think it would be unfortunate to judge the success of this year's programme on the basis of the number of students who attended because I believe that although the class ended with only seventeen students in attendance, they were extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic in summary, I believe the major strengths of the programme were the amount of preparation, the quality of hand-out material, the enthusiasm of the participants, the co-operation between the School Board and the Municipality and the fact that it was a de-mystification programme for many people who attended."

In conclusion, the second course, like the first, was by every standard successful in every respect. It would appear that students, on the basis of comments received on questionnaires and through feedback obtained from the various sessions, have gained a practical knowledge of how their local government operates and is organized. Moreover, there is no doubt but that members of staff who participated benefitted significantly from the experience.

We would be remiss if we did not express our grateful appreciation to all members of the School District who actively participated in organizing the course and who gave instruction on school related matters to the class. In this regard, special appreciation should be extended to Mr. Dave Carter, the moderator, and Mr. Elliott Grieve, the Co-ordinator of Community Education. Their services were invaluable.

We would also like to extend a special acknowledgement to Mr. F. Bunnell of the G.V.R.D. and to Mr. Dennis Grant of the U.B.C.M. who appeared as guest lecturers at the last session. It is obvious, upon reflection, that the course content would have been lacking in essential detail had they not given so freely of their time. The Municipal Manager has taken the liberty of expressing appreciation in writing to Mr. Bunnell, and also to Mr. Grant through Mr. C.S.J. McKelvey, Executive Director of the U.B.C.M.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Burnaby School Board and Dr. Elmer Proese, Superintendent of Schools.

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