

## **CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE** **held remotely via Zoom at 7.45am on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

Present:	Richard Vass Stephen Miles Richard Brown Mary Argent	Chair Chair of Governors  Associate Member
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton	Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Stephen Lawlor Mark Rowell	Headteacher

#### **ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Stephen Lawlor and Mark Rowell due to School commitments.

#### **ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

2. No declarations of business interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2020-21, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality were made.

#### **ITEM 3 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

3. Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for AY 2020-21. The Chair proposed Richard Brown for the role and this was seconded by Steve Miles. There were no other nominations.

4. **Decision.** Richard Brown was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the Facilities & Finance Committee for AY 2020-21.

#### **ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

5. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were approved as a true record and would be signed electronically as a result of the Coronavirus situation.

#### **ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING**

6. **Item 4, Para 4 – Chartwells Contract.** A one-year extension to the Chartwells catering contract from September 2020 had been approved by the Management Committee by email in August 2020. The current School catering situation was summarised and it was reported that sales were around 50% down but that this was slowly increasing.

7. **Item 4, Para 5 – Cash Flow Forecast.** The Cashflow Forecast report had still to be split out to show individual bank accounts and would be revised for future monthly reports.

8. **Item 6, Para 14 – Furloughed Staff.** Two peripatetic music teachers who had been furloughed during the School's COVID closure were now back working on their usual contracted hours.

9. **Item 11, Para 22 – Lettings.** The Business Manager advised that there had been no lettings during the Summer holiday. The swimming pool had now re-opened and was working at just above break even. The swimming pool lettings rates had been dropped slightly for the Autumn Term 2020 in order to help support the hirers.

#### **ACTION**

**M Mulgrew**

## **ITEM 6 – CHAIR’S ACTION**

## **ACTION**

10. A summary of all chairs’ actions taken since the last Full GB meeting was received and noted.

## **ITEM 7 – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

11. **Decision**. The terms of reference for the Facilities & Finance Committee were received un-amended for annual review and approved as presented.

## **ITEM 8 – FINANCIAL UPDATE AND REPORTS**

12. The 2019-20 Management Accounts for May and June 2020, including Income and Expenditure Reports, Cash Flow Forecast Reports and Balance Sheets were received for information. The accounts had previously been received by the Full GB by email. The Management Committee had recently agreed that Management Reports for July were not required as there was so little change from the August accounts and that there would be consolidated July/August reports. The Business Manager advised that School finances were not looking as problematic as had been feared and that there may even be a small end-of-year surplus. All trips insurance claims except one had been paid out. There had been no word from the Government on a re-imbursement claim of £9000 for additional COVID-related items and Governors noted the loss of income from cancelled lettings. It was confirmed that the April 2020 2.75% support staff pay increase had now been agreed and backdated payment processed. The September 2020 teachers’ pay increase was still awaiting final Government approval. The meeting was reminded that a 2% increase in staff costs had been assumed in the School budget figures for FY 2020-21.

13. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to send a report on the financial impact of the confirmed staff pay increases to the Committee by email.

M Mulgrew

14. It was reported that the School had lost approximately half its annual other income, ie non-Government such as lettings, but that there had been some offset through savings in utility bills from March to June when the School was closed. Two members of the peripatetic music staff had been furloughed up to 1<sup>st</sup> September and additional financial support would be available from the Job Retention Scheme. It was stated that there had been a very slow take up of music lessons initially but that numbers were now near to normal. The meeting was advised that there were 154 students in Year 12, 14 higher than the number used in previous forecasts, and that each additional Year 12 student brings in £4,180 income per year. The efforts of the School to increase student numbers in the Sixth Form were commended by the Committee. The extra Year 12 students helped to offset the loss of the extra ten students usually brought in to Year 10. The movements in and out of the School at the end of Year 11 were discussed, only 14 girls had moved to KEGS compared to 22 in the previous year. The Committee noted that the increase in student numbers was encouraging and that the impact on financial forecasts needed to be investigated.

## **ITEM 9 – SSEF PROJECT & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

15. **Item 9.1 – SSEF Project Update**. An SSEF project status report dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and a project progress report dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were received for information. The Business Manager stated that the project was progressing well and on track for the teaching block to be finished in May 2021 and the Sports Hall in July 2021. It was noted that the internal fit-out stage was possibly the more problematic stage of the project in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 regulations. Investigation work had begun on the repurposing of the current Gym into the new Library and the current Library into an additional Art Room. Initial estimates on the cost of the repurposing was between £400-500,000 and the sum of £495,000 had been used in the SSEF bid. It was noted that there was still a contingency of £233,000 within the project financials and that most of the building costs were coming in as expected. The meeting discussed the SSEF project plans against the current financial figures.

16. **Item 9.2 - Solar PV Panels**. The meeting was advised that the Management Committee had supported the proposal to maximise the solar PV panels within the SSEF project but had delegated

the decision as to whether to add any School capital to the maximisation plan to the Facilities & Finance Committee. Details of the Schools Energy Co-operative solar PV scheme were received and the option figures discussed in relation to the outlay, payback and benefits to the School. The 25-year payback period and the option to provide capital investment at a later stage were noted.

**ACTION**

17. **Decision**. The Committee agreed with the proposal to maximise the solar PV panels but not inject any capital into the scheme at the present time. It was agreed that the School would wait and see if there was any capital remaining at the end of the SSEF project and review the option to inject a capital contribution at that stage.

**M Mulgrew**

18. **Item 9.3 – Premises Team Report**. A report on Site Team activity from Spring 2020 to date was received for information. The Committee noted the diligent work of the Site Team during the lockdown period and commended the incredible job they had done in recent months. The pro-active work of the Site Team was praised in relation to the financial savings gained by the School. The meeting was advised that the members of the Site Team had lost their usual remuneration for overtime during the lockdown and the financial options available for recognising their efforts were discussed.

19. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to pass on the thanks of the Committee to the Site Team and to investigate the options available for financially rewarding the work of the Site Team.

**M Mulgrew**

## **ITEM 10 – POLICIES**

20. The following policies were presented and new amendments reviewed. The policies were approved as stated:

- 10.1 – CCHS Financial Regulations & Scheme of Delegation 2020-21 – approved as presented with an annual review and recommended for presentation to the Full GB on 15th October 2020. As required, the Committee considered the qualifications of the Business Manager and were happy with her qualifications (Degree in Accounting & Financial Management and ACCA qualified) in respect of her role as the School's Chief Financial Officer.
- 10.2 – Health & Safety Policy 2020-21 - approved as presented with an annual review.
- 10.3 – First Aid Policy - approved as presented with an annual review.
- 10.4 – Asbestos Management Plan - approved as presented with an annual review.
- 10.5 – Lone Working Policy & Lone Working Risk Assessment - approved as presented with a 2-year review. The meeting noted the procedures in place for the Site Team when lone working.

## **ITEM 11 – SCHOOLS BENCHMARKING DATA**

21. The Business Manager presented Schools Financial Benchmarking Data which compared CCHS to 18 other SSGS and local similar schools. The benchmarking data covered in-year balance and reserves; income and grant funding; expenditure items, and workforce data. It was noted that the data related to 2018-19 information and that the School's financial situation had changed for the better since then. It was noted that it was very hard to compare schools without full details and that the data did not show any great anomalies. Governors queried why the School's Qualified Teacher Status was lower than the other schools and it was suggested that it was a result of a high number of peripatetic music teachers who were not officially classified as qualified teachers. It was suggested that the data showed that everything was as expected and that the School was well-run with nothing extraordinary standing out from the other schools.

22. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to investigate the reported QTS figure.

**M Mulgrew**

## **ITEM 12 – HEALTH & SAFETY**

23. The Health & Safety (H&S) Review for the year 2019-20 was received for discussion and an error on graph scaling was noted. The Business Manager confirmed that twenty-three minor incidents had been reported over the year, slightly higher than the previous year. Governors noted the higher number of burn/scald incidents arising in the Science Department and questioned whether

there was a need to address the issue. It was reported that the burns and scalds generally arose from students not following the Science Department protocols.

**ACTION**

24. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to send out a corrected version of the minor incident graph and also agreed to check with the Science Department to see if there was a need to reinforce the safety protocols with students.

**M Mulgrew**

### **ITEM 13 – GDPR UPDATE**

25. The Business Manager gave a verbal update on the GDPR situation and reported that there was nothing material to report. There had been a small number of mini Subjects Access Requests relating to the Summer public examination results all of which had been logged. Governors queried if there had been any Freedom of Information requests following the Black Lives Matter issue and it was reported that there had been one request from a journalist asking for the number of racist incidents that had been logged at the School.

### **ITEM 14 – IT UPDATE**

26. An IT update report dated September 2020 was received. The Committee was informed that eight classroom projectors had been replaced with touchscreen televisions over the Summer along with a new Drama Studio projector at a cost of £35,500. However there was still an urgent need to replace a further five projectors when the School's finances permitted it. The meeting discussed the reasons and urgency of the replacement. The additional five projectors had been in the original replacement plan which had been scaled-back at the start of COVID-19 and the Committee noted the need to replace the projectors as soon as possible. The improvement of the School's overall IT situation and its ongoing equipment replacement programme was noted.

27. **Decision**. It was agreed that once the School's end-of-year finances were known the Business Manager would email the Committee to ask for approval for the additional television expenditure.

**M Mulgrew**

### **ITEM 15 – RISK REGISTER**

28. **Decision**. The Facilities & Finance Committee and SSEF sections of the CCHS Risk Register were received for termly review and approved as presented. It was noted that additional pandemic-related risks still need to be incorporated into the Risk Register. The use of the document within the School was debated and the robust risk culture within the School was stressed.

### **ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

29. **CIF Roofing Project**. The Business Manager reported that during the CIF-funded roof replacement work currently being undertaken at the School it had been found that the insulation did not meet building regulation standards in some areas and would cost an additional £9000 to comply. As the insulation work had to be done the Business Manager reported that she intended to go back to the Government to ask for extra funding to cover the essential work.

### **ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

30. **Decision**. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 7.45am on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 via Zoom.

**All**

The meeting closed at 9.10am.

Agreed as a true record.

R Vass, Chair

18<sup>th</sup> November 2020