CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the School & via Zoom at 7.45am on Wednesday 22nd June 2022

Present:	Richard Vass	Chair (via Zoom)
	Stephen Lawlor	Headteacher
	Chris Lamberti	
	Mary Argent	Associate Member (via Zoom)
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew	Business Manager
	Wendy Newton	Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Stephen Miles, Richard Brown	

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **ACTION**

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Steve Miles and Richard Brown.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no declarations of business interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2021-22, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 27th April 2022 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 6, Para 7 – Electricity Contract. The Business Manager confirmed that a new 16-month fixed tariff electricity contract had been taken out for the new SSEF buildings with effect from May 2022. It had been at a slightly lower rate than had been previously advised to Governors.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

5. As reported in Paragraph 4, it was confirmed that the Chair, along with the Chair of Governors, had approved the new SSEF electricity contract on 28th April 2022. All other action had been expenditure approval within the limits of the School's Financial Regulations.

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL UPDATE

6. The School's Financial Management Report for Month 8 (April 2022) was reviewed and its content noted. The Business Manager advised that the current budget forecast was better than the same time last year and the latest outturn, to the end of April 2022, was just over £42,000 surplus. This had been partly driven by unexpected in-year grants relating to higher Sixth Form numbers and a Teachers Pay & Pension grant. The School's finances were considered to be in a healthy position for this point in the financial year. There had been a few variances which were noted by the Committee and the high level of external hiring income was commended.

7. The School Fund (Unrestricted Funds) year-to-May 2022 report was reviewed and discussed. The Business Manager advised that the key item in the report was that the cost of PE coach hire was significantly higher than previously. The different sports activities were to be mapped separately in the next financial year in order to gain a clearer breakdown of the expenditure and to obtain more accurate future budget setting figures. It was stated that whilst the School Fund currently had a significant deficit, ongoing School events were expected to take the fund to breakeven by the end of the financial year.

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ITEM 7 – SCHOOL BUDGET 2022-23 & 3-YEAR FORECAST

ACTION

8. The proposed School budget for 2022-23 and 3-year forecast were received and discussed. An in-year surplus of £39,975 was predicted for FY 2022-23 which was based on very prudent figures and deemed achievable, this included a £40,000 contingency figure which was at this point to be kept for the next two years. The assumptions for the proposed FY 2022-23 budget were highlighted and **approved** by the Committee. It was noted that the biggest unknown was the size of future pay awards as they had a significant impact on total School expenditure, an increase of 4% had been included in the budget and forecasts. The Business Manager advised that utility expenditure had been increased for next year. Whilst most of the School buildings were on fixed price gas and electricity contracts until 2024 and 2023 respectively, the new SSEF buildings may be affected by future increases in utility costs. It was reported that some schools who were not on fixed price contracts had recently seen a 400% increase in their electricity costs. The Asset Management Plan budget for 2022-23 had been allocated a significant increase as there were some specific pieces of work required to be done by the School. The Committee considered that a very prudent budget had been set by the School which had flexibility if required.

9. The 3-year forecast and related-assumptions were noted. The effect of future unknowns such as pupil funding were also noted. The Committee **queried** the future pupil numbers included in the forecast and **challenged** them against the actual capacity of the School. The Headteacher gave additional explanation on the pupil numbers presented and the reasons behind them, including timetable constraints and study space, these were accepted by the Committee. It was noted that the Lower School would be at full capacity by September 2024 and that this should help increase student numbers in the Sixth Form. The Chair stressed that increasing Sixth Form numbers by any amount had a significant effect of the School's income, having 160 students per year group in the Sixth Form versus the 145 budgeted would bring an extra £136,260 of income per year based on current funding rates.

10. **Decision**. The Committee **approved** the 2022-23 School budget and 3-year forecast for presentation to the Full GB on 8th July 2022.

11. Governors reviewed a summary of premises-related contract costs for 2022-23 and noted that the grounds contract figure was above £10,000, hence the need for Governor review.

ITEM 8 – AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES

12. An external Cyber Security Audit had been undertaken by Secure Schools and their report dated May 2022 was received and discussed. The Committee were advised that whilst the audit had identified a significant number of areas of non-compliance the audit deemed CCHS 'above average' in comparison to other schools and that it was a very positive report. Governors queried whether the policies that it had been suggested that should be adopted were too onerous, and it was confirmed the School was happy with them. Three of the policies were to be received later in the meeting and the remainder would be prepared by the Business Manager and IT Manager over the Summer. The main outcome of the audit was that the School was already undertaking a lot of the actions raised in the audit, but they were just not being formally documented. An audit suggestion to have a cyber security link governor was discussed and rejected due to lack of required knowledge. Overall, the audit was deemed to be a very positive and useful experience and the auditor had been very impressed that multifactor authentication was already in place for both staff and students.

ITEM 9 – CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

13. A Site Team Report on recent Autumn/Winter activity written by the Site Manager was received for information and the attention given by the Site Team to health & safety issues was commended. The Committee **queried** the use of the Sports Hall in relation to large scale non-sporting activities. It was confirmed that the Sports Hall had been used for the School's Commemoration Service and recent Open Evening and details of the events were received. The Sports Hall had not been used for public examinations but was currently being for Year 10 examinations which had been rescheduled from earlier in the year due to Covid. The Headteacher advised that the use of the Sports Hall for future public examinations was to be investigated by SLT, particularly as increasing

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student numbers would present additional rooming pressures, but that there were concerns about the negative impact that this would have on lettings income. It was stated that there may also be challenges relating to community usage VAT rules. The Chair asked the Business Manager to pass on the thanks of the Committee to the whole Site Team.

ACTION

14. The Business Manager advised that the School had been successful with one of two CIF bids for 2022-23, and that a grant for £220,000 had been awarded towards a £313,000 roofing repair project. The School was required to input £93,000 towards the cost of the project although part of this would be covered by the Devolved Capital Grant. Work on the roofing would begin at the end of the public examinations and was likely to continue until October.

ITEM 10 – SSEF PROJECT

15. The Business Manager advised that the finalisation of the SSEF project would not happen until the end of the defect period, 31st August 2022. There were still a number of defects, most were minor apart from the Sports Hall ventilation system. It was confirmed that £60,000 had already been settled with the contractors and they were claiming an additional £40,000-£50,000 which was considered excessive and was being disputed by the School. The Chair thanked the Business Manager for her hard work in relation to the SSEF project.

ITEM 11 – IT & CYBER SECURITY UPDATE

16. An IT update dated June 2022 was received for information. Major delays had arisen for the delivery of equipment for the WiFi upgrade, approved by Governors in January 2022, it was now not due to be delivered until September 2022. The delays were due to problems getting equipment out of China. The Business Manager advised that the School had put a bid into 'Every Child Online', a charity which re-purposes IT equipment donated from general industry, and had received £80,000 worth of IT equipment including 120 desktop computers and 30 laptops. The equipment would be allocated out and used to replace aged equipment immediately. The Asset Replacement Plan was to be revised to reflect the additional equipment. The School confirmed that a letter of thanks had already been sent to the charity. The Business Manager advised that following the cyber security audit it had been decided to extend the current server contract for one additional year in order to fully investigate the option of moving to a cloud server.

17. Following the completion of the SSEF building project it had become apparent that there were blind spots within the current CCTV coverage and funding for additional CCTV equipment was requested. A detailed written quotation was received from Schoolwatch. The Business Manager advised that three value-for-money quotes had not been obtained as it was a very niche market and difficult to obtain quotes. The School had only moved to Schoolwatch the previous year, when three quotes had been obtained, and it was suggested that it was safer to have the company currently supporting the CCTV system to provide the new equipment. The Headteacher supported the proposal and gave additional security information in relation to safeguarding. The benefits of having full CCTV coverage available within the School were noted.

18. **Decision**. The Committee discussed the situation and **accepted** the reasons why the School had not obtained three quotes for the proposal and **agreed** that the School could progress with the order of additional CCTV equipment from Schoolwatch to the sum of £20,358.

19. **Decision**. The Business Manager presented a Cyber Incident Response Plan and advised that most of the document related to roles and responsibilities for cyber incidents within the School. The Committee reviewed the document and **approved** it as presented.

ITEM 12 – GDPR

20. The ECC Information Governance Service annual audit of GDPR had taken place on 6th May 2021 and their report was received for information. The School continued to have 'Good Assurance' and was commended on its level of compliance. There were a couple of minor issues relating to contracts and suppliers which were now being addressed by the School. The Chair commended the School on the audit and its work on GDPR. Governors queried the number information requests the

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School received and were advised that there were only about five Freedom of Information Requests per year and even fewer Subject Access Requests. **ACTION**

8.50am – Chris Lamberti left to meeting to attend a GCSE music examination.

ITEM 13 – POLICIES

21. **Decision**. The following polices were reviewed and **approved** as presented with the review periods shown below. The Clerk confirmed that approval of the policies had been received from Richard Brown and Chris Lamberti.

13.1 – First Aid Policy (ECC/Southend H&S model) with a 2-year review. The Committee queried the option of staff transporting students to a hospital in an emergency should an ambulance take too long to arrive. The School stated that this was highly unlikely and would only occur in very exceptional circumstances. The Business Manager **agreed** to add an appropriate caveat to the policy. **M Mulgrew**

13.2 – Mobility Policy (ECC/Southend H&S model) with a 2-year review,
13.3 – Cyber Security – Patch Management Policy (Secure Schools model) with annual review,
13.4 – Cyber Security – Ransomware Policy (Secure Schools model) with annual review, and
13.5 – Cyber Security – Password Policy (Secure Schools model) with annual review.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

22. **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 an additional cyber security specific risk needed to be added to the Facilities & Finance Committee section of the Risk Register. The Business Manager **agreed** to draft a new cyber security risk and send it to the Chair by email for approval by Chair's Action. **M Mulgrew**

ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. Vote of Thanks. It was the final meeting of the year and the Headteacher thanked the Governors, the Business Manager and the teams she manages at the School for all the work undertaken in relation to the Facilities & Finance Committee. The work of the Business Manager was highly commended and appreciated by all.

ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

24. **Decision**. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 7.45am on Wednesday 5th October 2022 (to be formally approved at the Full GB meeting on 8th July 2022). **All**

The meeting closed at 9.02am.

R Vass, Chair 5th October 2022

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