

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

### **Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the School & via Teams at 7.45am on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

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

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

1. There were no apologies for absence, all Committee members were present.

#### **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 2022-23, 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 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were approved as a true record.

#### **ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING**

4. There were no matters arising.

#### **ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION**

5. There was no Chair’s Action to report, only routine financial approvals had been undertaken.

#### **ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL UPDATE**

6. The School’s Financial Management Report, balance sheet and cashflow forecast for Month 8 (April 2023) were reviewed and contents noted. The Business Manager advised that finances were trending towards break-even for the end of this financial year (31<sup>st</sup> August 2023). There were a number of variances mainly for trips but these related to timing issues and would balance out in due course. The un-budgeted teachers’ pay rise was having a major effect on overall figures. Some areas of income been under-forecast and utility costs had been over-forecast, both of which had helped the break-even situation. Governors queried the size of the additional income figure and were advised that an un-forecast Teachers’ Pension Grant for 16-19 made up most of the additional income figure. The Committee queried specific figures within the report and the Business Manager gave additional explanation. Governors noted new, additional pressures on expenditure costs which was confirmed by the Business Manager.

7. A report on Unrestricted Funds to Month 7 (March 2023) was reviewed and noted. The significant decrease in parental contributions and increase in trip outgoings were highlighted, putting Unrestricted Funds under pressure. Governors queried the current bank interest rates and the effect on the School’s accounts; whilst interest rates had increased slightly the rise had had a negligible effect against increasing expenditure costs. It was reported that School costs had gone up significantly with inflation - such as the price of paper and exercise books doubling since last year. Labour costs had also risen and resulted in contract prices increasing. It was confirmed that music lessons broke even and that music lesson prices had been increased for next year.

#### **ACTION**

## **ITEM 7 – SCHOOL BUDGET 2023 -24 & THREE-YEAR FORECAST**

## **ACTION**

8. The proposed School Budget for 2023-24 and 3-year forecast were reviewed and questioned in depth by the Committee. The Business Manager advised that normally a very prudent budget which included a small contingency figure was prepared, however the budget for next year showed income and expenditure as actually expected and had no contingency included. The only area of the budget which may have leeway was utility costs which were about to be re-negotiated by the School. Every contract had been reviewed to ensure cost effectiveness. The budget had assumed a 5% increase in teachers' pay however the current STRB had recommended 6.5% for Main Scale teachers and 3% for Upper Pay and Leadership Pay Scales. The curriculum budget had been increased due to actual need for extra classes and subjects driven by increased pupil numbers. Premises contracts had increased significantly alongside increasing chemical costs which affected cleaning products and pool chemicals. The 2023-24 budget was based on zero additional Government funding at the current time and showed an expected in year deficit of £76,047 which would have to be covered by School reserves unless there were any changes in Government income. It was reported that other School Business Managers were reporting 6-figure deficits for next year.

9. The Committee agreed that nothing more could be done with regard to the in year deficit until Government funding for 2023-24 was announced, and that there may be a need to re-forecast the budget before the end of the current financial year if new information was received. Governors noted that the School was always very prudent with expenditure costs and always aimed at a balanced budget. The assumed future pupil numbers were deemed realistic, and the beneficial effect of extra Sixth Form students was noted. The Headteacher confirmed that all 2023-24 staffing needs had been included in the budget figures. The increasing in year deficit figure within the 3-year forecast was noted and discussed.

### **10. Decisions**

- a. The Committee recommended the School Budget for 2023-24 and 3-Year Forecast for presentation to the Full GB at their next meeting.
- b. It was agreed that the Business Manager would submit the budget to DfE as break-even but showing a draw down on School reserves.

**Clerk**

**M Mulgrew**

## **ITEM 8 – AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES**

11. There were no new audit items to discuss.

## **ITEM 9 – CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

12. The Business Manager advised that the replacement of the Cadbury Building boiler was to start the following week in preparation for the Autumn Term. The Committee were also advised that following a PCH recommendation, the School had decided to appeal the recent unsuccessful CIF bid, the result of which was awaited.

## **ITEM 10 – IT & CYBER SECURITY UPDATE**

13. An IT update for June 2023 was received for information. The School was currently reviewing the move to OneDrive in relation to data security and AppLocker had been installed to prevent the download of any unsafe software. The BitLocker encryption tool was also being evaluated to protect the School hard drive. The aim of all the new software was to protect the School's data from cyber-attack. It was reported that there were 200-300 attempted cyber-attacks per day, none of which had been successful to date. The School was looking at moving the School's network to the cloud to minimise server usage. The cost implications of moving everything to the cloud were discussed and Governors suggested that a full cost benefit analysis would be required before the School committed to full cloud usage. The Staff Governor confirmed that School IT systems were good and that there were no remote access accessibility issues. Governors commended the School for their work on cyber-security and position the School had attained in relation to IT security, and asked for their thanks to be passed to the IT Manager.

## **ITEM 11 – SITE TEAM REPORT**

## **ACTION**

14. The Site Team Report for Summer 2023 was reviewed. The Committee commended the work undertaken by the Site Team to repair major damp issues in the new Staff Workroom. The Business Manager confirmed that there had been no further leaks since the roof had been repaired. It was reported that the old Staff Workroom had now been stripped and re-decorated and was currently being used as an exam room. The issue of less-than-perfect acoustics of the room was raised, and it was suggested that additional sound screening may be possible, subject to cost. Following storms in March there had been some significant tree damage across the School site, some of which had affected neighbouring properties. The tree issues had now been addressed by a tree surgeon and new fences installed where necessary. Governors suggested that an updated tree survey of the whole School site may be beneficial.

15. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to investigate a new tree survey.

**M Mulgrew**

16. The Business Manager advised that Swim England had come back stating that they would not support any grant bids as the age of the School swimming pool would not fulfil their environmental sustainability criteria with the pool's current infrastructure. ECC had however visited and suggested that the pool was suitable for one specific grant and the Business Manager intended to move forward on that grant application. ECC had stated that there was deficit water space within Chelmsford and the loss of the CCHS swimming pool would significantly increase the deficit. It was also reported that Great Baddow School had refurbished their own swimming pool at a cost of around £150,000 and had offered help to CCHS with information and supplier contacts. The Business Manager was to visit the Great Baddow pool the following week. The large amount of time required by the CCHS Site Team to keep the swimming pool running was noted. The School was about to start a £250,000 swimming pool appeal, the first stage of which was to raise £35,000 for new plant and gas works. Governors noted that without immediate repair of the swimming pool in the near future the pool would have to close, with the associated loss of an important facility as well as a significant loss of lettings income. Governors noted the installation of vape detectors in the School's toilet blocks and asked whether vaping was a problem within the School. The Headteacher advised that whilst vaping was known to be a major issue in other schools, there had only been two incidents at CCHS. The installation of vape detectors was deemed to be precautionary and act as a deterrent to students.

## **ITEM 12 – HEALTH & SAFETY**

17. The minutes of the School Health & Safety Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April were received for information and noted. The Business Manager reported that following changes in Sports England guidance, all School policies referring to concussion had been changed to state that a student was not allowed to do sport for two weeks following any suspected or confirmed concussion injury. Governors requested feedback following a RIDDOR reportable injury. The issue had been discussed with ECC who had been happy that the School had followed all the correct procedures and there had been no feedback from the HSE. The injury had been deemed to be an unfortunate accident.

## **ITEM 13 – GDPR**

18. The Business Manager reported that there was one on-going Freedom of Information request relating to the Year 7 Entrance Test. The issue had been passed to the School's external Data Protection Officer who had drafted an appropriate response for the School. Outline details of the issue were explained and noted. Governors received the School's annual GDPR audit report produced by the ECC Information Governance Service and noted that no major GDPR issues were raised. One minor issue relating to the evidencing of staff GDPR training had been reported and the School's current procedures were explained.

## **ITEM 14 – POLICIES**

19. **Decision**. The following policies were reviewed and **approved** as presented with the review periods shown below.

14.1 – Lettings Policy & Lettings Rates 2023-24 with an annual review. Governors noted that the proposed lettings rates had been bench-marked against other schools and were comparable.

- 14.2 – Cyber Security – Patch Management Policy (Secure Schools model) with annual review.
- 14.3 – Cyber Security – Ransomware Policy (Secure Schools model) with annual review.
- 14.4 – Cyber Security – Password Policy (Secure Schools model) with annual review.

**ACTION**

## **ITEM 15 – RISK REGISTER**

20. **Decision.** The Facilities & Finance Committee and SSEF sections of the CCHS Risk Register were received for termly review and approved as presented. The continued need for the SSEF section was discussed. The Business Manager **agreed** to review the document to assess if the capital development risks could be incorporated into the facilities section of the Risk Register.

**M Mulgrew**

## **ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

21. **Full GB Meeting - Decision.** The Headteacher advised that a day of NEU industrial action had been announced for Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July, the date of the Summer Term Full GB meeting, and that SLT would be unavailable to attend a GB meeting on that date. It was **agreed** that the Full GB meeting would move to be 8.00am on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July and the Clerk **agreed** to inform the other Governors.

**All**

## **ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

22. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was **agreed** as 7.45am on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (subject to Full GB approval on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023).

**All**

23. This was the last meeting to be chaired by Richard Vass and the Chair of Governors thanked Richard for his hard work as Chair of the Committee. Richard Vass thanked the other members of the Committee for their participation and engagement during his time as Chair and thanked the Business Manager and Finance Team for their support and continuing hard work.

The meeting closed at 8.50am.

Chair                      4<sup>th</sup> October 2023