

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held at the School at 7.45am on Friday 12th February 2021

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

1. The meeting commenced with a Covid-19 update from the Headteacher.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. There were no apologies for absence to receive, all committee members were present.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3. There were 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.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 18th November 2020 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

5. Item 4, Para 5 – Premises Team. The Business Manager advised that staff pay and conditions regulations do not allow for additional staff payments to recompense the Site Team's loss of overtime earnings during the Covid closure. The Business Manager advised that maintenance jobs were now once again being undertaken by the Site Team which would increase their overtime hours. Governors suggested that the future return to normal schooling would hopefully assist in addressing the Site Team's lost overtime earnings.

6. Item 6, Para 13b – Artificial Pitch. The final quote for the replacement of the artificial pitch was still awaited and would be presented in due course. It was suggested that replacement work would ideally be undertaken whilst the SSEF building project was still in progress. The Business Manager advised that the £150,000 currently set aside in the ring-fenced replacement fund had been based on receiving an equal amount from external grants. The next School action would depend on the figures received in the replacement quotes.

7. Decision. The Business Manager agreed to investigate external grants towards the cost of artificial pitch replacement work.

8. Item 7, Para 18 – Catering. The Committee were advised that the School catering contract is to go out to tender through a procurement specialist at no cost to the School. The Business Manager also advised that a 3-month extension to the current contract with Chartwells had been requested until the end of August 2021 in order to align the contract with the academic year, their reply was awaited.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

9. There was no Chair's Action to report.

ACTION

M Mulgrew

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL UPDATE

ACTION

10. The 2020-21 Management Accounts for November 2020, including an Income and Expenditure Report, Cash Flow Forecast Report and Balance Sheet, were received for information. The accounts for September and October 2020 had previously been received by email. The Business Manager highlighted the detrimental effect of the loss of lettings income which had only been around £20,000 in the first three months of the year against £140,000 anticipated in the full year budget. Based on possible full-year lettings income of only £40,000, it was suggested that the lack of lettings income was likely to produce an end of year deficit of £50,000 - £60,000. It was confirmed that no additional Government or insurance offsets were available to assist.

11. The current format of the Income & Expenditure Report was queried and it was suggested that an accruals-based format would be more beneficial in order to show actual budget differences. It was noted that bank balance details had not transferred across onto the Cash Flow Report and the Business Manager confirmed that there was no liquidity problem with: £260,000 in a 30-day deposit account, £250,000 in a long-term access account and all other funds in immediate access. The Chair advised that negative variances showing in the Cash Flow Report were primarily due to the finance timings of the SSEF building project.

12. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to revise the format of the report for the next financial year starting in September 2021.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 7 – SSEF PROJECT & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

13. An SSEF project status report dated 2nd February 2021 was received for information and the Business Manager gave a verbal update on progress. The status of the teaching block was now classified as Amber due to 12 weeks' slippage caused by Covid-19 and adverse weather. The teaching block had now been prioritised for completion over the sports hall, with pre-slippage completion dates of 24th May and 12th July 2021 respectively. (**Post meeting update:** Horizon are still hoping to meet target dates and are monitoring weekly). The summer holiday would permit a further 6-weeks' slippage after which temporary accommodation would be required, the building cost of which could possibly be covered by DfE because of the Covid outbreak. The Business Manager also advised that a soakaway on the sports field was now flooding and needed urgent replacement in order to fulfil a BREEAM requirement and as lorries were getting stuck in the area. The cost of a replacement was awaited and would need to be a variation to the SSEF project and come from the project contingency figure. The Committee were advised that the issue of unrecoverable VAT costs was being kept under close scrutiny after recent VAT ruling.

14. The design stage for the repurposing of the Old Gym into a new Library was nearly complete and was to go out to tender by the end of March. The conversion would hopefully be completed and ready for use by September 2021. The Business Manager was thanked for her work in relation to the building projects and in particular the clear explanatory reports on the SSEF project. The Headteacher advised that new photographs and virtual tours of the new Library were to be sent out to the School community in order to raise excitement within the School. It was suggested that using of the School website would be beneficial for wider public viewing and student recruitment.

15. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to send the Committee the latest SSEF contractor's report by email.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 8 – IT UPDATE

16. An updated IT Asset Replacement Plan to 2026 was presented and it was noted that this year's expenditure was mainly for the replacement of student computers. The Business Manager confirmed that the replacement expenditure would hopefully come out of the asset replacement budget and that there could also be some smoothing of IT expenditure between years. It was possible that there may be a need for extra IT funding but this would depend on future Government funding levels once known. The Headteacher stressed the new importance placed on IT tools in relation to teaching and learning as a result of Covid-19 situation. The Committee stressed the need to be aware of any new IT requirements as early as possible in order to be able to plan for future expenditure.

17. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to re-present the IT Asset Replacement Plan at the next meeting after the new funding figures had been received and the future budget considered.

ITEM 9 – RISK REGISTER

18. **Decision.** The Facilities & Finance Committee and SSEF sections of the CCHS Risk Register were received for termly review. A new financial risk (F66) to cover supplier contracts ending unexpectedly during the school year had been produced for consideration. The Committee reviewed and approved the new risk and approved the remainder of the document as presented.

ITEM 10 – SITE TEAM REPORT

19. A report on Site Team activity during the autumn and winter months prepared by the Site Manager was received for information. The Committee reviewed the projects which had been undertaken and commended the Site Team for their continuing hard work for the School. Much of the work in the Autumn Term had been Covid-related and the Chair noted the stress put onto the members of the Site Team relating to the additional Covid-specific tasks. The Business Manager advised that problems had arisen from recent roof repair work and the Health & Safety work of the Site Manager was highly praised. The cost savings arising from the in-house projects of the Site Team were noted. The Headteacher praised the quality of the finished site work and the skills of the Site Team. It was suggested that further updating of the students' toilet facilities within the School would be beneficial and appreciated by the students.

20. **Decisions.** The Business Manager agreed to pass on the thanks of the Governors to the Site Team and discuss what additional improvements could be made on the students' toilet facilities with the Site Manager.

ITEM 11 – GDPR

21. The Business Manager gave a verbal update on GDPR issues and reported that there had been around 15 data privacy impact assessments in recent months. There had also been one significant data breach at the end of the Autumn Term which had resulted in exclusion action for two students. The breach had been fully investigated and referred to the School's Data Protection Officer who had approved the remedial steps already undertaken by the School. The issue did not need to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office. In light of the likely in-school examination grading occurring again next summer, it was suggested that there would probably be an increase in grade information challenges from students next term.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. **Write Off Request - Decision.** The Business Manager put forward a request to write off the sum of £420 for the cost of six Year 14 revised UCAS reference writing charges. It was suggested that it would be insensitive to ask the students to pay for the references in light of the exceptional Covid-19 circumstances. The Committee approved the write off of £420.

ITEM 13 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 7.45am on Wednesday 28th April 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.01am.

Agreed as a true record.

All

R Vass
Chair

28th April 2021