

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held via Zoom at 7.45am on Wednesday 6th October 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

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies to receive, 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 2021-22, or conflicts of interest, or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

3. Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for AY 2021-22. Richard Brown volunteered for the role and there were no other nominations.

4. **Decision.** Richard Brown was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the Facilities & Finance Committee for AY 2021-22.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

5. After one typographic correction, the minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 23rd June 2021 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING

6. Item 9, Para 13 – SSEF Buildings. The Headteacher outlined the School's plans for the formal opening of the new SSEF buildings. Two separate events had initially been suggested but this concept was currently being reviewed by SLT in light of the Covid restrictions. The intention is still to have the formal openings within this academic year.

7. **Decision.** The Headteacher agreed to present the opening plans for the new SSEF buildings to the Committee in due course.

ITEM 6 – CHAIR'S ACTION

8. A summary of committee chairs' actions and email approvals taken since the last Full GB meeting was reviewed. The Chair also reported that there had been some sizeable SSEF expenditure signoffs but that all were within the School's Financial Regulation approval limits.

ITEM 7 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

ACTION

S Lawlor

ITEM 8 – FINANCIAL UPDATE

ACTION

10. The School Management Accounts for June 2021 were received for information and included an Income and Expenditure Report, a Balance Sheet and a Cash Flow Forecast. The Business Manager advised that the management accounts for July and August would be one consolidated report and that the Finance Team were currently working on the year end accounts. The headline items and assumptions made within the June management accounts were summarised by the Business Manager and noted. The end of June outturn was reported as being in the region of a £47,000 surplus, an improvement on the previously reported breakeven outturn. Some exceptional expenditure relating to the SSEF project remained, trending the end of year outturn to breakeven or possibly a small surplus, this was considered good in light of the circumstances of the past year. Lettings continued to be stable, and the £20,000 contingency remained in the outturn figure. A summer exam fee rebate of around £30,000 was still expected, and the Government is to cover the cost of the November examination fees. Governors noted the additional Covid-related grants received from the Government and the Business Manager advised that they were criteria-based and required evidence from the School.

11. The School had received a large grant from Sports England to equip the new Sports Hall plus a £2000 grant from the Ann Jones Education Foundation for science equipment. The School PA had also made a substantial donation towards new equipment relating to the SSEF project, and the Governors queried if any further items remained outstanding. It was reported that a Wolfson Foundation bid for upgrading specific science equipment was to be sent later this term. The Business Manager advised that the next fundraising focus would be for the swimming pool and that there was much interest from local organisations for keeping the pool facility. It was reported that the 2021-22 budget was tight and that some pre-pay items would be covered from this year's budget if any surplus remained at the end of the year. Governors queried if there had been any adverse effect from the recent energy crisis and the Business Manager advised that fortunately the gas and electricity contracts had been fixed for three years at a historic low in 2020 so the School should not be affected.

12. **Decision.** In light of the complexity of the past year, the Chair agreed to review the completed year end accounts alongside them being submitted to the School accountants.

Chair

ITEM 9 – SSEF PROJECT & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

13. The SSEF Project Status Dashboard dated 28th May 2021 was received for information. The Sports Hall and teaching block had now been completed, snagging continued and any new defects arising were being raised with the contractor and fixed. External works were largely complete. The School had now taken possession of the new Library but some fit-out work remained and it was to be opened for student-use directly after half term. The Business Manager advised that once the SSEF accounts had been finalised there would be further discussion with the project managers to ascertain if any budget left would cover other capital development projects, primarily the conversion of the old changing rooms into additional dining space as this was a School priority, it had previously been costed at around £150,000. The SSEF accounts information may not be available until later this year.

14. It was reported that everyone in School was very pleased with the new buildings and that there had been good parental feedback at recent School events. Governors considered the buildings to be superb and fitted in well with the rest of the School site. It was reported that lettings for the new Sport Hall were nearly at capacity already. The meeting discussed the fitting out of the new facilities and what additional items may be required, such as audio equipment within the Sports Hall. It was suggested that this may be a good time to initiate a fund-raising drive whilst the SSEF buildings were new and had increased parental interest. The Headteacher advised that following reduced activities during Covid, the PA were eager to start fund-raising activities for the School once more. The Chair put on record his thanks to the Business Manager for her excellent work throughout the SSEF project.

ITEM 10 – POLICIES

15. **Decisions.** The following policies were presented and new amendments reviewed. The policies were approved as follows:

- a. Item 10.1 – CCHS Financial Regulations & Scheme of Delegation 2021-22 – Approved as presented with an annual review and recommended for presentation for Full GB approval on 15th October 2021.
- b. Item 10.2 – Health & Safety Policy 2021-22 - Approved as presented with an annual review. The Business Manager advised that the School had now changed from Southend H&S Advisory Service and returned to ECC H&S Advisory Service, their previous advisor.
- c. Item 10.3 – Asbestos Management Plan - Approved as presented with an annual review. Governors queried whether the Site Team's asbestos training had any mandatory renewal period and the Business Manager agreed to investigate the issue.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 11 – HEALTH & SAFETY

16. The Health & Safety (H&S) Review for 2020-21 was received and discussed. Only eighteen minor incidents had been reported over the year, none of which were RIDDOR reportable. Governors noted the higher proportion of PE incidents, these were deemed to be expected in a physical activity. The Business Manager reported that there had been no practical fire evacuations in the last year due to the Covid restrictions but that virtual walkthroughs had been undertaken instead. The Headteacher reminded the Committee that to improve safeguarding within the School all students had been issued with door entry fobs last year and that new security gates had been installed at the Seymour House entrance to further secure the School site.

ITEM 12 – GDPR UPDATE

17. The Business Manager advised that there was nothing major GDPR-related to note. There had been a few Freedom of Information requests relating to the School entrance test, no GDPR breaches and GDPR policies were updated when required. The re-appearance of the Governor Portal on the School website was welcomed by the Governors as the Portal had better security for viewing School documents.

ITEM 13 – IT UPDATE

18. An IT update report dated September 2021 was received. A new VoIP telephone system had recently gone live at the School, the contract for which was slightly cheaper than the previous ISDN system contract and the Business Manager explained the benefits of the new system. Smart TVs and projectors continued to be rolled out and the new IT equipment in the SSEF buildings was now in place. A small amount of IT-related work remained in order to get the new Library ready for student use. Governors asked if there was a pressing need for any further IT equipment at this time. It was stated that there was no need for anything outside the current IT replacement plan but that staff laptop and classroom desktop replacement would be expedited when finances permitted. It was suggested that an update on the classroom smartboard replacement plan would be useful for Governors to ascertain if additional funds could be found to expedite the pace of smartboard replacement. The Committee was advised that IT equipment had increased significantly in price over the past year and that it might be worth waiting to see if prices fall again before buying any new equipment.

19. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to update the smartboard replacement plan for the Committee.

M Mulgrew

20. The Headteacher advised that the School was currently advertising for a new IT team member. The position was for an IT support engineer with a digital learning focus who would be used to assist with the support of IT in the classroom with a focus on an IT teaching and learning strategy.

8.35am – Mark Rowell left the meeting to undertake School gate duty.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

21. **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 the SSEF section would need to be reconsidered at the next meeting.

ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. **Site Team Work - Decision.** The Headteacher reminded the Committee how hard the members of the Site Team had worked over the past year and in particular over the summer months in order to get the School ready for the start of the new academic year. It was suggested that a formal letter of thanks from the Committee would be appreciated and the issue was discussed.

23. **Meeting Format - Decision.** The Chair canvassed the Committee for their views on the format of future meetings. It was noted that whilst Zoom meetings were convenient for working Governors, part of the Committee's remit was the School facilities and that regular reviews of the site were necessary. The Committee discussed the issue and agreed that the next meeting would be held in person at the School and would include a School tour of facilities after the meeting. The opportunity would also be taken to thank the Site Team in person.

All**ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

24. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 7.45am on Wednesday 17th November 2021 in the School and would be followed by a site tour.

All

The meeting closed at 8.52am.

R Vass
Chair

17th November 2021