

## CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

### Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held in School & via Zoom at 7.45am on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

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

#### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence 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 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. With one typographic correction, the minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 were approved as a true record.

#### ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 7, Para 9 – SSEF Project. The Business Manager advised that there had been no progress with the SSEF final accounts. Discussions were still underway between PCH, Horizon and the School. The Chair queried whether the previously suggested £65,000 variation figure was still realistic and was advised that a figure of nearer £80,000 was being proposed by the constructors. Certain variation figures were still being challenged by the School and it was likely that the discussions would be ongoing right until the end of the formal retention period – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

#### ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

5. There was no specific Chair's Action to report since the last meeting. Only routine payments and purchase orders had been approved, all in line with the current Financial Regulations.

#### ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL UPDATE

6. The School's Financial Management Report for Month 6 (February 2022) was received, and its content noted. The Business Manager advised that the main income variances were due to unexpected in-year DfE grants and higher than anticipated lettings income. The reasons for adverse expenditure variances were explained including: telephone equipment, fitness suite equipment and general premises costs. The budget contingency figure had been reduced and would continue to be reduced up to the end of the financial year as it had not been required. The Business Manager advised that the budget was trending towards break-even at the end of the year, or possibly a very small surplus of around £20,000. The contingency was to be phased down by around £10,000 per month. Governors requested further information on the additional grant income and noted that some of the increased income would continue as student numbers increased year-on-year. The significant effect that Sixth Form student numbers had on income was stressed and it was stated that having a Sixth Form of over 300 students was critical, and nearer 320-330 students preferable.

#### ACTION

7. The Business Manager was questioned on the School's current utility contracts and advised that the gas tariff was fixed until September 2024 and electricity until September 2023. Some contingency had been built into the budget in case of lost suppliers, and incremental costs had also been included in future forecasts to address increased prices when the fixed term contracts ended. Governors commended the forward-planning of the Business Manager. The Committee were advised of one exception which was the electricity contract for the new SSEF buildings; this had only been taken for one-year and came to an end in May 2022. The contract was to go out to tender the following day and a significantly higher tariff was expected. It was confirmed that there had been no Freedom of Information requests relating to the School's current utility contracts. Overall, it was suggested that the School was in good shape financially. There were no issues to note about the forecast report.

### **ITEM 7 – SSEF PROJECT & CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

8. Further to what was stated in Para 4, there was little else to report. The Business Manager advised that Horizon was currently working through defects and that their project manager had moved on to another project. The School still holds a 5% retention figure and so it was in the contractor's interest to clear the defects before the end of the retention period, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. In relation to campus development, the School's canteen had been refurbished during the Easter holidays. There was now increased preparation space which would allow a wider range of products to be offered and the flow of student customers had improved. The cost of the refurbishment had been covered by Chartwells as part of their catering contract.

### **ITEM 8 – AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES**

9. The second Juniper Internal Scrutiny Report for 2021-22 dated March 2022 was received and discussed. There were only two very minor findings from the audit. The report had previously been received at the Full GB meeting in March 2022 when it had been agreed that the School would continue paying Mileage & Subsistence claims via BACS, contrary to the Juniper report finding. The Chair noted that, in light of the fact that the Juniper Internal Scrutiny reports found very few items to report, it may be more beneficial to extend the external audits to other areas of the School eg SEN, Pupil Premium, Governance etc. The Committee were advised that a second Juniper audit covering Cyber Security had already been undertaken and had been very productive. The final Cyber Security audit report had not yet been received by the School. The Headteacher reported that a new School Effectiveness Partner had been into the School twice and had looked at pastoral systems and safeguarding. Future visits were to look at teaching and learning and undertake subject deep dives. The School had also had additional LA safeguarding audits in the previous academic year. It was reported that the School had worked with many external agencies during the recent pandemic, and that this was to continue.

10. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to send out the Juniper Cyber Security audit report by email once received.

**M Mulgrew**

### **ITEM 9 – POLICIES**

11. **Item 9a - Lettings Policy & Lettings Rates 2022-23 - Decision.** The School Lettings Policy and Lettings Rates for Academic Year 2022-23 were received for approval and proposed changes noted. There had been no changes to the Lettings Rates which had been benchmarked against other local schools. Governors noted that lettings income had increased and queried the School's current lettings capacity. It was reported that there was no capacity for more lettings in the swimming pool and there was limited capacity for the Sports Hall which was about 2/3 full. The Business Manager advised that the School was receiving more requests for unsocial hours and that the School was investigating as this issue which would need additional Site Team staffing. The very low usage of the recording studio was noted and discussed. The Lettings Policy and Lettings Rates for 2022-23 were **approved** as presented.

12. **Item 9b – Charges & Remissions Policy - Decision.** The statutory Charges & Remission Policy was received with no amendments and **approved** as presented with a 2-year review.

## **ITEM 10 – IT UPDATE**

13. The Business Manager advised that the current big IT project was the WiFi upgrade; delivery dates for the new equipment were awaited which it was hoped to be installed during the May Half Term. The next IT project was the server contract which ended in the Summer. The School was currently investigating options and would present a proposal at the next meeting. The meeting discussed the concept of cloud storage and the need to have precise scoping was stressed.

## **ITEM 11 – GDPR**

14. There were no major GDPR issues to report. The School's annual GDPR audit was to occur the following week and 'Good assurance' was expected to continue as the School's high standards had been maintained. Governors queried if there had been any Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and were advised that most were parent/pupil led and related to waiting lists and admissions. It was confirmed that there was generally one FOI request every couple of months.

## **ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

15. No other items were raised for discussion.

## **ITEM 13 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

16. **Decision.** It was agreed that the next meeting would be hybrid (in School and via Zoom) and held at 7.45am on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022.

**ACTION**

**All**

The meeting closed at 8.23am.

R Vass, Chair

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022