

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held at the School at 7.45am on Wednesday 1st May 2019

Present:	Richard Vass Nicole Chapman Mark Rowell Duncan Stevens	Chair Head
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew Wendy Newton	Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Richard Brown, Mary Argent (received post meeting)	

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Richard Brown and apologies for late arrival were received from the Head. Post meeting the Clerk found apologies from Mary Argent. The meeting discussed the current membership of the Committee in light of a recent resignation.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no declarations of interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2018 – 19.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 6th March 2019 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 4, Para 6 – Business Continuity Plan - Decision. The Business Manager advised that she was reviewing the Business Continuity Plan and would be proposing a formalised reciprocal KEGS sharing agreement.

M Mulgrew

5. Item 5, Para 9 – Deposit Account - Decision. Investigation into higher rate deposit accounts had still to be undertaken by the Business Manager and would be reported at the next meeting.

M Mulgrew

6. Item 5, Para 11 – Extra-Curricular Deficit. The reasons for deficits in the region of £2000 in extra-curricular Music and Mandarin were received and the Business Manager stated that the issues had now been addressed. Approval of extra-curricular lesson rates for academic year 2019-20 would be received by the Committee by email.

M Mulgrew

7. Item 8, Para 17 – Dining Room Glazing - Decision. Investigation into the reason why the replacement of the Dining Room windows glazing had not been part of the scope of the H&S actions still to be undertaken by the Business Manager.

M Mulgrew

8. Item 8, Para 19 – Risk Assessments - Decision. Discussion continued on the responsibility for risk assessments for School productions and it was suggested that staff may be unaware of their responsibilities. The need to maintain registers of students on-site during School evening events was stressed. The Business Manager agreed to deliver awareness training on risk assessments at the Staff Meeting in June.

M Mulgrew

8.15am – The Head joined the meeting.

9. Item 10, Para 23 – SSEF Funding - Decision. It was confirmed that the first SSEF payment had been received in March 2019 and that the initial Schedule of Payments had not yet changed

despite the known project slippage. All SSEF funding was to be kept separate from other School funds and would be recorded independently. The need for an additional SSEF Project sub-committee was discussed. Concern was raised about the lack of detailed Governor information on the SSEF project timeline and on the recent resignation of the only Governor with building project expertise on the GB. It was suggested that a regular written SSEF Update report from the Business Manager & Project Manager would overcome the need for an additional Governor sub-committee.

ACTION

M Mulgrew

10. Item 10, Para 25 – Swimming Pool. An income and expenditure analysis of the swimming pool had been received by the Chair of Governors and the issue had been discussed at the Full GB meeting in March 2019. It had been agreed that the swimming pool was not viable in the long-term without major refurbishment. Updated building and equipment quotes were awaited and would be used for a grant bid from Sports England as soon as they were received. It was confirmed that the pool was currently fully let and that income did affect the School's VAT status. The School would be required to match any funding received from Sports England.

11. Item 11, Para 28 – Safety Barriers - Decision. Contact with ECC concerning additional pedestrian safety barriers on Broomfield Road had not yet been undertaken.

Head

ITEM 5 – FINANCIAL REPORTS

12. Item 5.1 – Income and Expenditure Report. The 2018-19 year-to-date Income and Expenditure Report for Month 7 (to 31st March 2019) was received. There had been minor changes which were summarised. The Business Manager reported that an additional £7000 had been received from Chartwells Caterers and that the £40,000 contingency was still untouched, mainly due to an additional £48,000 capital grant recently received from DfE. Some minor overspend to date had occurred in utilities, recruitment and general maintenance. Income to date was slightly behind what was expected mainly due to the recent loss of swimming pool income. The Committee reviewed the report and queried specific entries.

13. Item 12.2 – Additional Capital Funds (Taken out of agenda order) - Decision. An unexpected additional DfE capital grant of £48,000 had been received by the School. The Business Manager proposed that the grant should be used as follows: £12,500 for the Quad damp-proofing work; £22,000 for the removal of the Science Ramp, and up to £15,000 for roof remediation work. Any expenditure above £48,000 would then come from the Budget contingency figure. The Committee agreed with the proposed expenditure plan.

M Mulgrew

14. Item 5.2 – Cash Flow Forecast Report. The Cashflow Forecast Report for April to August 2019 was received and noted.

ITEM 6 – DEFICIT REDUCTION STRATEGY

15. As tasked at the Full GB meeting in March 2019, the Business Manager presented a report which showed the variation between the budget deficit strategies agreed in November 2018 to those implemented to date and gave explanations for the reasons why they had not been introduced when applicable. More prudent forecasts for future letting income to AY2022-23 were reported and the meeting discussed the suggested figures in relation to possible additional future lettings. It was noted that gauging the size of future sports lettings income was difficult. The importance to the School of the swimming pool lettings income was noted along with the possible loss of income during any future refurbishment.

16. Decision. The Business Manager agreed to send the swimming pool viability report to the Committee by email as soon as the updated refurbishment costs had been received.

M Mulgrew

17. Budget deficit strategies relating to the reduction of subjects offered in KS5 had only been partially introduced, only Russian and Mandarin had been removed, and the restriction to KS5 students only taking 3 A Levels had not been implemented. The reasons behind the decisions were explained by the Head and Business Manager and related to the subject offers being made by other schools and the possible effect of losing students after KS4. Details of how other alternative savings had been made were explained, coming mainly through staffing changes. The significance and loss

of the savings which had been initially put forward by the School were noted by the Committee and discussed. It was suggested that deferred savings would still be made. The Head stressed the issue of lagged student funding and its overall effect on School finances. It was reported that whilst a small in-year surplus of £20,000 was expected next year, the overall cumulative deficit next year would be £(109,000).

18. The budget deficit strategy to increase teacher contact time from 42 to 43 hours per fortnight had not been implemented for September 2019. The meeting discussed the proposal and noted its sensitivity and effect on teachers. The savings impact would mainly be through reduced part-time teacher hours and estimated at being around £30,000. The Head explained the problems behind timetabling an additional hour. Governors queried why the savings figure had changed so significantly since they were originally presented in November 2018 (£120,000) and additional explanation was received. The Committee discussed teacher contact time in comparison to other schools and recognized that such changes were not easy decisions to make. Governors stressed that the School had known deficits ahead and needed to aim for a balanced budget in the long term, especially within restricted funds, and that a clear picture of future finances was required. The adverse effect of the increased employer contributions to Teachers' Pensions was acknowledged. The need for additional savings was discussed at length and Governors stated that further budget deficit options were required, however unpalatable they may be for the School.

19. **Decision.** The School agreed to prepare revised forecasts and new budget deficit proposals which addressed the aim to reach a balanced budget for the next meeting.

**Head
M Mulgrew**

9.10am – Mark Rowell left the meeting to teach.

20. The meeting was informed that the School, along with other grammar schools in Essex, had now fallen below the minimum guaranteed GAG funding for students. Governors discussed how the issue could be addressed with the DfE and Government.

ITEM 7 – GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

21. Further to the report received at the Full GB meeting, the Business Manager advised that 63% of staff had now completed the mandatory GDPR training. Issues with the ECC GDPR training system programme had now been resolved and a new training programme was due to start which all remaining members of staff would be required to undertake, along with any new staff in the future. A staff meeting awareness session on subject access requests had been held and a new data breach reporting tool was now in place within the School. One data breach relating to a spam email had been reported and was now closed down as immaterial. The School Information Asset Register was complete and the School Data Flow Mapping was near completion. It was reported that there was still a lot of document archiving to undertake, both in paper and electronic form.

ITEM 8 – HEALTH & SAFETY

22. The minutes of the H&S Committee meeting held on 28th February 2019 were received and noted. The Business Manager advised that the new, temporary fire escape for the Science Block had been specifically tested during a recent fire drill and that it had been realised that modifications were required; the stairs had since been re-configured over the Easter holiday. It was noted that the fire procedures for the whole School would need to be reviewed in light of the new building project.

ITEM 9 – LETTINGS POLICY & LETTING RATES FOR 2019-20

23. Revised Lettings Policy and Conditions of Hire were received for approval following a number of administrative amendments. A 2% cost of living increase was proposed for most of the hourly lettings rates for academic year 2019-20. It was noted that some of the commercial and community letting rates had been amalgamated to provide a simpler structure. The need to maximise lettings using appropriate and competitive rates was noted. The lettings rates for one additional large scale hirer was still to be assessed as they used separate, personalised rates.

24. **Decision.** The Lettings Policy & Conditions of Hire and the Lettings Rates for AY 2019-20 were approved as presented with an annual review.

ACTION
M Mulgrew

ITEM 10 – IT

25. A paper prepared by the IT Manager outlining a proposal for a server upgrade was received by the Committee. The Business Manager explained the options which had been investigated and stated that the School's recommendation was for a 3-year operating lease with Odyssey Education. The meeting discussed the options and it was suggested that the ESFA may have specific rules concerning schools taking out operating leases. The justification for a server upgrade at this point was raised by Governors and some extra information was received. It was stated that additional information was required on the cost and associated risks involved in not undertaking the upgrade. It was confirmed that the cost of a new operating lease could be covered from within the current IT budget.

26. Decisions.

a. The Business Manager agreed to investigate ESFA rules on leases and to ascertain if the preferred contract could be cancelled or if there was a contract break point in the lease.

M Mulgrew

b. The Committee agreed in principle to the proposal to take out a 3-year operating lease with Odyssey Education at a cost of £36,158.17; final approval would be given by email once the Business Manager had provided additional justification on the need for the server upgrade.

M Mulgrew

9.45am – The Head left the meeting to undertake Staff Briefing.

ITEM 11 – CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

27. The Business Manager advised that until the final design and build contractor had been appointed and the finalised design agreed it was not possible to have a project plan or timescale for Governors. The meeting received information on the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) threshold in relation to the SSEF project and it was stated that the decision to undertake an enabling package of demolition and preparation work in advance had reduced the SSEF building project to below the OJEU threshold. The decision to undertake the enabling work in advance and for it to be considered outside the scope of the main SSEF contract had been agreed by ECC Legal as a standalone project in its own right.

28. The enabling work package had now gone out to tender closing on 17th May 2019, and demolition was proposed to commence on 24th June 2019 after the last public examination had taken place. It was hoped that: planning permission would go out in June 2019, the SSEF building tender package go out in July; the building contract let by September and that work would commence in October or November 2019. The meeting discussed the proposed timescale for the enabling work tender decision, how the decision would be made and who would be involved in the decision making process. It was suggested that the size of the contract would require high level approval such as Management Committee or even Full GB approval. The Committee debated the issue of passing responsibility for deciding possible companies to a project manager and also the concept of fixed price contracts. The Business Manager advised that the School had started stripping the Bancroft Building of lockers and other equipment in preparation for the demolition.

29. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to check the ESFA and School Financial Regulations in relation to high cost contract approval and expenditure.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 12 – REVIEW OF PREMISES PROJECTS

30. **Item 12.1 – Premises Overview.** The Committee received a report of in house projects undertaken by the Site Team since the last meeting in March 2019 and commended the Site Team for their continuing hard work. It was noted that a large number of SSEF project-related surveys had been undertaken during the Easter holiday alongside the removal of the Science Ramp and damp remediation work. A structural surveyor and refurbishment specialist had assessed the swimming pool and their recommendations and costs were awaited for inclusion in the Sports England bid. It had been suggested that the School had a strong case for a successful bid and that verbal decisions

were usually received in 4-6 weeks from the date of submission but that full cost approval can take months.

ACTION

31. Item 12.2 – Additional Capital Funds. This item was discussed earlier in the meeting and reported in Paragraph 13 above.

32. Item 12.3 - Roof Repairs. Debated later in the meeting and reported in Paragraph 37.

33. Item 12.4 – CIF Window Replacement Bid. The meeting was informed that the School had been successful with a DfE CIF bid and had received circa. £89,000 for the replacement of windows around the Quad.

ITEM 13 – RISK REGISTER

34. The Facilities & Finance section of the CCHS Risk Register was presented for termly review. It was noted that there was a need to cover a number of additional risks relating to the SSEF project. The meeting discussed the difference between the risk responses of 'Treat' and 'Tolerate' and it was suggested that there was a need to review the current risk responses at some stage.

35. **Decision**. It was agreed that an additional section would be added to the School Risk Register entitled 'Facilities & Finance Committee – SSEF Risks', to be populated by the Business Manager and presented for approval at the next meeting.

**Clerk
M Mulgrew**

ITEM 14 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

36. Benchmarking. The Business Manager tabled the DfE Benchmarking Record Card for 2017-18 which had been received the previous day and suggested that the data seemed spurious as some of it was inconsistent with the School's own data. The meeting reviewed the data and discussed the information received. It was noted that there was no explanation of how the figures were calculated or on what basis. The Business Manager intended to investigate the new DfE benchmarking tool online to try and obtain definitions for the data presented.

10.35am – The Head and Mark Rowell re-joined the meeting.

37. Item 12.3 - Roof Repairs – Decision. A paper outlining the need for urgent roof repairs was reviewed by the Committee and the good work of the Site Manager in compiling the report was commended. Imperative remedial roof repairs were now required and quotes for the work had been received. Details of the work and possible contractors were received and the Committee agreed with the Business Manager's proposal that Gable Roofing should receive the contract at a cost of £13,080, this expenditure would be covered by the additional DfE capital funds discussed previously.

M Mulgrew

38. Lord Agnew Letter - Decision. A letter from Lord Agnew, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System, was tabled for information. The aim of the letter was to reinforce correct audit processes within schools. The Clerk agreed to forward the letter to all Governors along with the Financial Management Reports, Item 5.1. (**Clerk's Note**. Undertaken Friday 3rd July.)

Clerk

39. Deputy Head Appointment. The Head informed the Committee that a new Deputy Head, Mrs Emma Ledwidge, had now been appointed for September 2019.

ITEM 15 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

40. **Decision**. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 7.45am on Wednesday 26th June 2019.

All

The meeting closed at 10.50am.

Agreed as a true record.

R Vass, Chair

26th June 2019