

## CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

### Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held at the School at 7.45am on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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

#### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mary Argent.

#### 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 2019-20, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality declared.

#### ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were approved as a true record and signed.

#### ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 4, Para 6 – Chartwells Catering Contract. A detailed quote from Chartwells was still awaited and the Business Manager advised that the School would now go out to tender. A one year extension to the current Chartwell's contract was now being investigated in order that other options could be considered, including in-house catering. The meeting received details of issues with the current catering scheme and discussed the catering needs of the School post expansion. Further information would be presented at the next meeting.
5. Item 6, Para 9 – Accounting Roles. The Business Manager advised that there was no formal requirement for the School to have a Governor as Responsible Officer. The required Accounting Officer must be the senior executive of the School ie the Headteacher, and a Chief Financial Officer must be appointed which was the Business Manager. The role of the Responsible Officer is to evaluate the internal financial controls which the School outsourced to Juniper Education.
6. Item 8, Para 25 – Swimming Pool. Details from PCH on environmentally efficient energy systems had been delayed due to the ongoing discussions relating to the swimming pool insurance claim. The Business Manager gave an update on the current situation of the swimming pool and stressed that engineers still confirmed that the actual structure of the swimming pool building itself was sound. The meeting was informed that ECC had advised that no funding was available from them to assist with the cost of the swimming pool repairs.

#### ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

7. The minutes of the stand-alone Audit Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were approved as a true record. The first Internal Controls Evaluation (ICE) report had just been received by the School but had yet to be reviewed. The Business Manager agreed to send the final version of the ICE report out by email once finalised. **(Clerk's Note:** The Chair of Governors and Chair of the Finance Committee had also received the initial ICE report – advised post meeting.)

#### ACTION

M Mulgrew

M Mulgrew

## **ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION**

8. There were no Chair’s Actions to report.

## **ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL REPORTS**

9. Item 6.1 – Income and Expenditure Report. The 2019-20 year-to-date Income and Expenditure Report for Month 4 was received. The Business Manager confirmed that School finances were in a secure position as additional DfE grant money had been received. Reasons for deficit figures for Mandarin tuition and Music Peris were clarified, they were in fact breaking even. The meeting queried the student participation figures for Mandarin and the Headteacher gave additional information. It was noted that the financial situation was looking reasonable, a previously-predicted small end of year surplus of £8,400 had now risen to a possible £40,000.

10. As requested at the last meeting, additional benchmarking information was received on the School’s KPIs. DfE averages had been added for comparison and were discussed against the School figures. Only the teaching cost percentage was higher than the national average but this was expected with the high number of experienced teaching staff in the School.

11. Item 6.2 – Cash Flow Forecast Report -. The Cashflow Forecast Report for January to August 2020 was received and noted. The Chair suggested that a separation between current account and deposit account funds might be beneficial.

12. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to revise the next Cash Forecast Report accordingly.

M Mulgrew

13. Item 6.3 – Balance Sheet. The School Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 was received and noted.

14. Item 6.4 – School Fund Report. The School Fund (Unrestricted Funds) Report for November 2019 to August 2020 was received and noted. The meeting was reminded that the trips admin fee had now reduced and this was likely to affect the total trip admin fee income figure currently shown.

15. Item 6.5 – Three Year Forecast. A 5-year budget report was presented, it was stated that adding the additional two years gave the Committee a better view of long-term finances. In-year deficit figures of £(4,899) and £(102,304) were reported for 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to the effect of lagged funding for pupil numbers. Governors queried when the funding situation would level out and the Business Manager suggested it would be AY 2022-23. The Business Manager went through all the assumptions on which the forecast had been based and explained the detail behind each assumption. Assumed student numbers were based on 140 students in Years 12 and 13, this was discussed by the Committee in relation to actually achieving the figure and the maximum capacity of the School. The Headteacher advised that the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) was due to review overall student numbers with reference to the current expansion project. The financial problems which arise from poor Sixth Form entry numbers were stressed by Governors who stated that there was a need to know the actual demand for Sixth Form places plus the actual capacity of the School. It was noted that the current Years 10 and 11 have 160 and 155 students respectively and it was hoped that the larger cohorts would themselves increase the entry figures in Year 12.

**(Clerk’s Note:** The last variation to the School’s Funding Agreement (July 2019) approved a total capacity of 1260 students, including 360 in the Sixth Form.)

16. The pension rebate was assumed at £180,000, based on student numbers and assuming a cut in the future rebate levels. Pension and Teachers’ Pay Grant rebates had been confirmed for next year but not the level or if they would continue in future years. A cost of living increase of 2% had been assumed. The Chair raised the issue of the reserves set aside for curriculum restructuring and asked what the plan was for this money and how it could be re-purposed. The meeting discussed the possible options and the Headteacher stated that increasing KS5 teaching time from 8 to 9 hours per fortnight was a priority as this would bring us in line with other similar schools and support teachers in delivering content-heavy reformed A level courses. Investment in Sixth Form facilities was also noted as being a major priority in order to aid Year 11 retention and recruitment. It was noted that the final

GAG funding would be known at the end of February.

**ACTION**

### **ITEM 7 – AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES**

17. **Item 7.1 – Terms of Reference - Decision.** Following the decision by Governors to embed the duties of an Audit Committee into those of the Facilities & Finance Committee, a revised set of Committee Terms of Reference (TORs) were presented for consideration. The revised TORs were accepted and agreed would be presented for formal approval at the next Full GB meeting in March.

**Clerk**

18. **Item 7.2 – External School Auditor.** The Business Manager tabled a summary of the tender results received for the role of School Auditor and summarised the content of the report. Big variations were noted in the tender figures and concerned the Business Manager. The possible reasons for the variations were discussed, it was noted that there was now a trend for increasing audit fees within the industry.

19. **Decision.** The Chair and Business Manager agreed to meet with MWS and Edmund Carr to discuss the full content of their services and then send a recommendation to the Committee by email. Formal approval of external School auditor would then be required by the Full GB.

**Chair  
M Mulgrew**

### **ITEM 8 – SSEF PROJECT**

20. Governors had received a full briefing, including the finance aspects, on the SSEF project at the recent Governor Conference and so the Business Manager updated the Committee on recent project actions. Meetings had been held with Seymour House and Keene Homes both of whom were very supportive of the project. The residents of all the houses surrounding the School had been invited to a meeting at the School to discuss any concerns they had with the project and seven neighbours had attended. One pair of residents had voiced discontent and put forward alternative options, their options had since been investigated by PCH and would cost in excess of £150,000 which was prohibitive. The Business Manager advised that she and the contractors would continue to address the concerns of neighbours as they arose. The final discharge of the planning permission was still awaited but preparation work was allowed to take place in the meantime and this was due to commence the following week.

### **ITEM 9 – CHARGES & REMISSION POLICY**

21. Following the decision at the last meeting to revise the administration fees for School trips, the Charges & Remissions Policy had been amended to reflect the changes and was presented for approval.

22. **Decision.** The Charges & Remissions Policy was approved as presented with a 2-year review.

### **ITEM 10 – GDPR**

23. The Committee were briefed on a GDPR issue which had arisen concerning a request from another school to pass on a specific element of student data – the request was considered to be illegal and a breach of GDPR regulations. The issue had been fully investigated with the School's ECC Data Protection Officer, the DfE and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). A compromise solution had been found which circumvented the need for the School to breach GDPR regulations however a formal complaint was now to be filed with the ICO.

### **ITEM 11 – IT UPDATE**

24. The School photocopier lease was due for renewal and tenders for a new contract had been sought. In light of the quotes received, two of which were above the School approval level of £50,000, the Business Manager presented a photocopier replacement proposal paper for Governor ratification and the Committee discussed the proposal and details of the tender quotes.

25. A proposal to replace School projectors with touchscreen televisions was also received for consideration and the problems arising from the current projectors summarised. The Committee put

forward questions about the proposal and the Business Manager gave additional explanation. It was confirmed that there was already one touchscreen television in use within the School and that it worked satisfactorily. There were currently 47 projectors in the School and a rolling programme of full replacement with touchscreen televisions was being proposed. The financial details of the proposal were discussed and it was noted that a large proportion of the cost was being requested from current School reserves. The Business Manager stated that projectors would only be replaced as and when they failed and also suggested that it may be possible to sell on the old projectors although this had not been included in the finances. It was confirmed that the new SSEF project classrooms were due to have touchscreen televisions installed. The Business Manager advised that current technology was consistently cited by teachers as being a barrier to efficient teaching. The meeting was also advised that the costs quoted were likely to be the maximum as the cost of touchscreen televisions was reducing and there were also likely to be economies of scale when purchasing them. Governors noted the message it would send to students about growth and investment in the School - the lifespan of the televisions was quoted as being 20 years. The Committee agreed that the projector proposal was the correct next step for the School and that initial expenditure should go ahead.

**ACTION**

26. **Decisions.**

- a. The Committee agreed with the School's recommendation to proceed with the Capita Kyocera photocopier contract quote.
- b. The Committee approved expenditure for touchscreen televisions of up to £50,000 within AY2020-21 from the current Curriculum Reserves.
- c. The Business Manager agreed to ask the IT Manager to prepare a room-by-room analysis of the state of the current projectors by expected lifespan, faculty/subject and effect on teaching in order to better assess a plan for future expenditure.

**M Mulgrew**

**M Mulgrew**

**M Mulgrew**

**ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER**

27. **Decision.** The Facilities & Finance Committee and SSEF sections of the CCHS Risk Register were presented for termly review and approved as presented.

**ITEM 13 – SITE TEAM REPORT**

28. A Site Team Report of in-house projects was received by the Committee and the student Eco Committee project of planters in the Quad was noted and commended. The Business Manager acknowledged the busyness of the Site Team and praised the professional contributions of the Site Manager in relation to the current SSEF expansion project. It was reported that an additional part-time member of staff had now joined the Site Team which had reduced the workload of the other Site Team members and had had a very positive effect on their well-being. The Chair asked that the thanks of the Committee should be passed to the Site Team.

**ITEM 14 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

29. No other items of business were raised.

**ITEM 15 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

30. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting **was changed** and agreed to be 7.45am on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

**All**

The meeting closed at 9.20am.

Agreed as a true record.

R Vass  
Chair

13<sup>th</sup> May 2020