

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the FACILITIES & FINANCE COMMITTEE held remotely via Zoom at 9.00am on Wednesday 24th June 2020

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

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies to receive.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. 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 were made.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the Facilities & Finance Committee meeting held on 12th February 2019 were approved as a true record and would be signed electronically as a result of the Coronavirus situation.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 4, Para 4 – Chartwells Catering Contract - Decision. The revised details of a one-year extension to the Chartwells catering contract from September 2020 were still awaited. The Business Manager agreed to forward full details for approval by email once received. It was confirmed that there was currently no catering provision at the School as it was not cost effective.

M Mulgrew

5. Item 6.2, Para 12 – Cash Flow Forecast Report - Decision. The Cashflow Forecast Report had not yet been revised and the Business Manager agreed to address the issue for future reports.

M Mulgrew

6. Item 7.1, Para 17 – Terms of Reference. Following the cancellation of the Full GB meeting in March 2020, the revised Terms of Reference for the Facilities & Finance Committee, now embedding the duties of the Audit Committee, had been approved by Governors by email.

9.08am – Steve Miles joined the meeting.

7. Item 7.2, Para 19 – External School Auditor. The meeting with possible external School auditors had not occurred. The Management Committee had now approved a one-year extension to the current School auditors, Edmund Carr, this decision would be ratified by the Full GB on 8th July 2020.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION

8. Chair’s Actions since the last meeting had included: the approval to the School’s auditors reported in Para 7 above and the approval of a new contract for School gas and electricity. Full details of both issues had been received by the Management Committee and approved.

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL UPDATE AND REPORTS

9. Item 6.1 – Income and Expenditure Report. The 2019-20 year-to-date Income and Expenditure

Report for Month 8 was received. The Business Manager advised that School finances were in a state of flux and changed daily. It was reported that the £40,000 contingency figure had been taken out of the forecasting figures. Insurance claims currently totalling around £70,000 had been filed but only one small claim paid to date. It was noted that there would be exceptional expenditure relating to the COVID-19 situation which would impact outturn. There had been one exceptional staff issue this year which had had a negative affected on staffing costs. Governors queried excess charges on trips insurance but this was stated to be negligible. School trip refunds to parents would be made when the results of the insurance claims were known.

10. Governors asked if there were any additional actions which could be done to protect the School's financial situation. It was noted that there were difficulties in relation to preparing for the next school year such as the teacher provisioning for extra-curricular subjects ie music and Mandarin, and also trip planning as any school trips booked now would not be covered by insurance, so none had yet been planned. The issue of Summer holiday lettings was queried and the Business Manager explained the situation relating to COVID-19, Government restrictions and risk assessments. It was hoped that it may be possible to make the swimming pool available in the near future and possibly a large performing arts letting at the end of August.

11. Item 6.2 – Cash Flow Forecast Report -. The Cashflow Forecast Report for May to August 2020 was received and noted.

12. Item 6.3 – Balance Sheet. The School Balance Sheet as at 30th April 2020 was received and noted.

13. Item 6.4 – School Fund Report. The School Fund (Unrestricted Funds) Report for Month 9 to 31st May 2020 was received and noted as being the most affected by the Coronavirus situation. Music tuition losses of over £28,000 were reported due to contractual obligations to teaching staff and income losses as students would not receive their full lesson entitlement. Two peripatetic music teachers had been furloughed and the Business Manager advised that from 1st July 2020 the Government would allow 2/3 furloughing. One of the peripatetic music teachers wished to take this option in order to renew her contact with students but it would cost around £1000 to the School. The meeting discussed the situation and noted the overall long-term benefit to the School. The Business Manager summarised the administrative plans for booking student music lessons for the next academic year but further clarification from the Government was still needed. There was then a general discussion about the possible schooling situation in September 2020.

14. **Decision**. It was agreed that the School would allow 2/3 furloughing of the peripatetic music teacher from 1st July 2020 and the associated cost to the School was accepted.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 7 – SCHOOL BUDGET 2020-21 & 3-YEAR FORECAST

15. The proposed School Budget for 2020-21 was presented and the Business Manager explained all the assumptions on which it was based. The biggest assumption related to student numbers in the Sixth Form in September 2020, a Year 12 intake of 140 students was assumed and the meeting discussed the situation. The School had been optimistic about achieving the proposed figure prior to the Coronavirus lockdown situation but noted that recent events may have affected this. The key effect of pupil numbers in September on finances was noted by the Committee. An in-year surplus of nearly £54,000 was currently forecast for AY2020-21. The Head confirmed that there had been no unusual changes in relation to Year 7 pupil numbers in September and gave details of ongoing welcome actions with the new students. It was also reported that the usual testing for the additional ten students in Year 10 in September 2020 had not taken place and would therefore result in a loss of £50,000 to School income for two years. Governors queried whether testing was still possible but the Head confirmed that it was not possible to organise the additional Year 10 entry at this stage.

16. The Committee questioned the assumptions on which the budget and forecasts had been made and received extra clarification. The Business Manager advised that all assumptions had erred on the prudent side. The Chair noted that the 3-year forecast figures were significantly more encouraging than those received in recent years. The meeting was informed that the Government

only required a one-year forecast to be submitted this year but that the Full GB needed to ratify the 3-year forecast.

ACTION

17. **Decision**. The School Budget Plan for 2020-21 was approved for recommendation to the Full GB on 8th July 2020. All the Budget assumptions were agreed.

Clerk

ITEM 8 – CCHS FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

18. **Decision**. Amendments to the current CCHS Financial Regulations which related to the level of Full GB authorisation limits for virements were presented for consideration and approved for recommendation to the Full GB on 8th July 2020.

Clerk

ITEM 9 – SSEF PROJECT

19. The Committee received details of a solar panel proposal from the SSEF building project managers. It was explained that the School could either agree to simply meet the environmental options of the planning permission requirements by having a small number of solar panels at a cost of around £10,000 or chose to have a larger installation, with all the associated energy-saving benefits, at around £70,000 in order to maximise payback to the School. The additional expenditure could be taken out of the SSEF project costs but it was also possible to have a funded solution via the School Energy Co-operative by paying for the initial capital expenditure via slightly higher electricity charges per unit with a 20-year agreement. It had been estimated that this scheme would produce energy cost savings of around £3,000 per year for the School. The meeting discussed the proposal and asked questions on the supplier and the terms and conditions relating to the agreement. The SSEF project managers had recommended the larger array of panels with the funded solution but the decision on how to proceed lay with the School. It was noted that there was no major hurry for a decision on the issue.

20. **Decision**. The Business Manager agreed to go back to the SSEF project managers for further information on: the terms and conditions of the School Energy Co-operative agreement, an operating versus financing lease, and to ascertain if other suppliers had been considered by the SSEF project managers to ensure value for money.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 10 – AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES

21. The ECC Internal Controls Evaluation (ICE) visits reports for January and June 2020 were reviewed and the actions taken by the School discussed. It was noted that all findings were of a very minor, procedural or advisory nature and reassured that the School's financial processes were correct. The meeting was advised that the School had to make an annual report on internal reviews to the ESFA at the end of the year and that these reports gave the required level of assurance to the School. Both documents would be presented at the Full GB meeting on 8th July.

ITEM 11 – LETTINGS POLICY AND RATES 2020-21

22. The current School Lettings Policy and Lettings Rates for Academic Year 2019-20 were received for review. In light of the current Coronavirus situation the School proposed that the Lettings Policy and Lettings Rates remain unchanged for the Academic Year 2020-21. The Committee discussed the proposal and a suggestion was raised that consideration should be given to temporarily reducing lettings rates over the Summer in order to assist the School's regular hirers in the current social distancing situation. It was noted that the proposal would assist companies in the local community as well as revitalising interest in School lettings. Details were received of what was allowed to be hired out at the current time given the Government restrictions, they did not include the astroturf.

23. **Decisions**.

- a. With amendment to reflect School term dates for 2020-21 plus a reduction of deposit rate to 20%, the Lettings Policy and Lettings Rates for Academic Year 2020-21 were approved.
- b. The Business Manager agreed to produce a reduced-rate Summer holiday letting rates proposal for Committee approval by email.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 12 – GDPR UPDATE

24. The annual School GDPR audit had been undertaken by ECC IGS and had received a rating of 'Good Assurance' with no major concerns. A few new GDPR changes had been introduced recently which would be addressed by the School. The written GDPR audit report would be received by all Governors at the Full GB meeting on 8th July 2020.

ITEM 13 – IT UPDATE

25. In light of changes to the School's financial situation, the Committee revisited a decision made at the last meeting relating the replacement of classroom projectors with touchscreen televisions and the previously-agreed expenditure figure up to £50,000 was reviewed. The IT Manager had obtained updated quotes and the cost of 7 units was now £31,153 and for 10 units was £43,092. The Business Manager advised that a minimum expenditure of £17,800 was required to replace broken units. The meeting discussed the expenditure in relation to the School reserves, the needs of the curriculum and the image of the School.

26. **Decision.** The Committee approved expenditure of up to £35,700 from the current Curriculum Reserves for touchscreen televisions and agreed that further expenditure would be re-assessed as soon as possible in the next academic year.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

27. The Facilities & Finance Committee and SSEF sections of the CCHS Risk Register were presented for termly review. It was noted that the School Risk Register did not currently contain any specific risks for a pandemic situation and it was agreed that additional risks needed to be produced relating to the infrastructure, curriculum and people.

28. Decisions.

- a. The Facilities & Finance Committee and SSEF sections of the CCHS Risk Register was approved as presented.
- b. The Clerk agreed to investigate model pandemic risks for the Risk Register.
- c. The need for additional pandemic risks would be raised with Management Committee.

ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

29. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

30. **Decision.** The dates for meetings in the next academic year had not yet been finalised and would be presented at the next Full GB meeting on 8th July 2020.

31. The Chair closed by thanking the Headteacher and Business Manager for their hard work over the past few months, and the work and dedication of School staff at all levels was highly commended. The Headteacher thanked the Governors for their ongoing support.

The meeting closed at 10.40am.

Agreed as a true record.

R Vass, Chair

ACTION

M Mulgrew

Clerk
Chair

All