



Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes

Wednesday 13 February 2019 at 4.10pm in the Board Room at the School.

Membership:

A Wright	Chair of Committee	Present
A Allan	Headteacher	Present
A Frain		Apologies
J Greenlees		Present from 4:22 pm
Rev L Jørgensen		Present until 5:48pm
M Ali		Apologies
M Piper		Present
Z Lawley		Present

Observers:

L Webb	Business Manager	Present
H Khan	Acting Deputy Head	Apologies
C Beaumont	Senior Finance Officer City of London	Present
T Shortland	City	Apologies
Madalina Brockmann	Clerk	Present

PART 1: Non-Confidential

Action Log

Item	Action	Responsible	By	Status
7.2 (item 11)	Work on a Lettings Policy for the next Committee meeting in February 2019 13.02.19 see item 18.2 of these minutes. The policy will be circulated electronically to the Committee for comments then be submitted to the following FGB for ratification.	Business Manager	27.03.19	PENDING
7.2 (item 16)	Approach Lightmongers Livery regarding funding for more efficient classroom lighting	Business Manager		PENDING
10.2	To re-work numbers employing headcount calculation for Early Years and submit to governors.	Business Manager		PENDING
10.3	The governors agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to review the SFVS with the Business Manager and formally approve it before it was sent off.	Chair of Committee / Business Manager	Beginning of April 2019	PENDING
10.4	Provide answer to governors on professional fees at the next Committee.	Business Manager		PENDING
10.4	Look into options for funding for the Strings Project. A decision will be required soon to set expectations for the two classes entering year 3 in September.	CB		PENDING
10.4	Have further conversations and report back to the governors	Business Manager and Headteacher		
10.6	The Clerk would send the Chair of Governors a list of governors whose business interests forms were outstanding. The Chair would remind everyone to send the completed forms to the clerk.	Clerk / Chair		
11.2	CB to send details of the Child Care Affordability scheme to the Business Manager.	CB		
11.2	Report on CCFC write-offs at the next Committee meeting.	Business Manager		

11.3	Circulate the analysis with the new budget figures at the next Committee meeting	Business Manager		
11.4	Prepare a list of all School accounts, with details pertaining to institutions, account signatories, sums, and proposed changes and submit to the next Finance Committee for approval	Business Manager		
18.3	Headteacher to locate 5 year plan which may include risks. Clerk to seek HLT guidance on appropriate risk template and circulate to Business Manager.	Headteacher Clerk		

<p>1. Opening prayer: The meeting was opened with a prayer. Proceedings started at 4:10 pm, 10 minutes later than scheduled, as the Clerk had experienced delays in transport.</p>
<p>2. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair</p> <p>2.1 AW stood for Committee Chair, and the nomination was supported by MP. AW was unanimously ELECTED as Chair by a show of hands.</p> <p>2.2 MP was unanimously ELECTED as Vice-Chair of the Committee.</p>
<p>3. Welcome</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.</p>
<p>4. Apologies and governor attendance</p> <p>It was noted AF sent apologies, which were not consented to, as per School practise. MA, who was newly appointed as governor and was attending all committees as part of his induction and to determine which committee to become a member of, had sent apologies. It was noted HK was not present. JG arrived at 4:22pm.</p>
<p>5. Declaration by Governors of any personal and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda not included in the Annual Business Register</p> <p>None were declared.</p>
<p>6. Dates of the forthcoming meetings and events</p> <p>It was noted that the next FGB would take place on 27 March 2019 at 4pm, in the School's boardroom.</p>

7. Minutes of the previous meeting; non-confidential minutes of committees and updates: minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 14 November 2018:

7.1 Approval

The minutes were duly APPROVED as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

7.2 Action points

Item	Action	Responsible	By	Status
7.1	Approach We Work	HJ (no longer in post)		DONE, LW
7.1	Ask parents if they have links to city companies for projects in the school that could benefit.	Senior Leadership Team		DONE, LW
11	Share plans for toilets, canopy and dining room with governors once discussed with Building working party.	Business Manager		DONE , as per the item of these minutes
11	Send fuller descriptions to members in the City in relation to the two credit cards users (Graham Watson and Jo Wheeler).	Business Manager		DONE
11	Work on a Lettings Policy for the next Committee meeting in February 2019	Business Manager	13.02.19	PENDING , see item 18.2 of these minutes. The policy will be circulated electronically to the Committee for comment then be submitted to the following FGB for ratification.
12	Review contracts and report back to governors in February 2019	Business Manager		DONE , as per the item of these minutes
13	Complete Performance Management Review for Headteacher	Panel		DONE
15	Approach Christ Church regarding benchmarking in addition to other identified schools	Business Manager		DONE , as per the item of these minutes
16	Approach Lightmongers Livery regarding funding for more efficient classroom lighting	Business Manager		PENDING
18.1	To consider and approve the Children's Centre SLA.	Governors		DONE

7.1 Matters arising

None were noted.

7.2 Chair's actions

None were noted.

8. Working Parties:

8.1 Fundraising Working Party

The governors noted the update as per the Business Manager's report, which had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

The Working Party was in the process of sending emails to nearby companies and liveries in order to secure funding, but certain funds were restricted only for charity use.

QUESTION: Could the PTA be established as a charity?

ANSWER: This is problematic and the current parents are not keen to do this.

QUESTION: Could donations to the school be received by the Foundation for the purpose of the school?

ANSWER: In principle this was possible, though the Foundation would need to approve its willingness in relation to each donation.

Headteacher reported two companies got in touch.

8.2 Capital works Working Party

It was noted the working group had met. Further information available under the Premises Update (see item 12 of these minutes).

9. School Improvement and Development

The governors noted the School was targeting Reading and English as per the School Improvement Plan, and the specific strategies had been agreed by the Curriculum Committee.

10. School Budget (as per the Business Manager's report, enclosed)

10.1 Monitor spending plan / school budget

It was noted that the budget information was for the old budget, period 10, and spending should be at 83.3%. The books had been closed, and very few orders were still going through. Staff were notified not to submit further orders until 1 April 2019. This aided the Business Manager and CB to make a forecast for the following year, in an effort to improve accuracy for the Government benchmarking and for the Consistent Financial Reporting.

It was noted that there was a significant amount of overspend. P10 showed an overspend of £64,000, however the reason for this was that various items needed to be journalled in relation to section 106 and basic grant monies. £19,000 is due from Tower Hamlets for SEN top up. *(Please refer to the School Business Manager's report).*

QUESTION: Did the Business Manager anticipate the budget would be underspent after the school meals refund and all necessary journals had been made?

ANSWER: This was unclear. The school has had a number of unexpected costs, including a severance and the canopy glass. Staffing expenditure had to be factored in for the remaining two months and money needed to be journalled around for section 106 and Basic grant expenditure. The final outturn was not known. Also we have yet to receive Additional Hours costs.

QUESTION: How was the £18,000 bursary approved without being budgeted?

ANSWER: There was some CPD money available. The change in the SCITT programme meant that the School had to take the member of staff through the salary route. Discussions were had and this will not recur.

QUESTION: It was noted there was no large overspend in staff expenses apart from the severance. Will the budget be in line?

ANSWER: Yes, the expectation is that the School staff costs would be in line other than for the severance costs.

It was noted that, in the coming year, budgets would be given to the leaders of learning so that there was less chance of overspend. Budgets would also be tightened this year. Assigning subject holders their own budgets allows for them to plan their year. This would enable them to be proactive rather than reactive. The Head teacher had had meetings with these staff and the leaders were excited about the development.

QUESTION: What contingency is planned for overall budget overspend?

ANSWER: This is still to be discussed as until all journal entries have gone through we will not know the outturn.

QUESTION: Will the leaders receive training on budget management?

ANSWER: LW and AA will speak at a Leaders of Learning meeting. It was noted ICT was overspent.

The School is holding some of the grant that was given to it by the Foundation as there were plans to purchase new music instruments for the bulge class. The funds will therefore accrue until that money is spent.

QUESTION: What is the update on swimming?

ANSWER: The School wrote to the Foundation, and this was included in Cass Benefits. Two terms money has been transferred. The remaining term has been held until the new financial year. The new bulge class will make a significant difference in relation to costs next year. Parents would be requested to organise zip cards during May half term. This would reduce the overall cost of travel to swimming.

CB identified £4,500 available to spend for CCFC and the School decided to spend the sum on roleplay, an area which needed more resources.

The governors commended the collaborative work of the Business Manager and CB.

Noted that the end of year report would be seen at the May committee.

10.2 Prepare and approve initial budget plan 2019/20

A second budget document was brought to the table for Governors as the day before the meeting it was confirmed by CB that the DfE were to pay the school £100,000 less than was expected from the original budget documents, which meant a deficit budget for the School of £44,000. However, CB was able to confirm that she had looked at the Early Years budget and she thought that the DfE would provide some further funds which could be apportioned.

QUESTION: Why was the School receiving less this year on the main budget?

ANSWER: It would receive more than the previous year; however the DfE is looking far more closely at the money it gives to the City. The anticipated monies had not been forthcoming.

It was noted £120,000 was given by the City on Early Years as a block sum, but CB and the Business Manager confirmed that if a headcount calculation was employed, as some families were qualifying for 30 hours, the School should be entitled to £198,000.

QUESTION: Is the £198,000 figure guaranteed?

ANSWER: The figure is based on the headcount at the January census so it is fluctuating funding. It was noted that even if the School lost 2-3 children, the headcount way would be preferable and would bring a higher sum than has historically been achieved.

The governors AGREED to move to the alternative headcount-based calculation.

ACTION Business Manager to re-work numbers and submit to governors.

QUESTION: Pupil premium is reduced?

ANSWER: This is the general trend.

QUESTION: Is this due to demographic reasons?

ANSWER: Yes.

10.3 School financial value standard

It was noted that the SFVS was due 13-14 April.

ACTION: The governors agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to review the SFVS with the Business Manager and formally approve it before it was sent off.

10.4 Approve 3 year budget plan

Q: What is the services income?

ANSWER: IO8 Play Centre £44,000.

The increase of £72,000 in teachers' pay was explained by staff returning from maternity leave.

It was noted that there was a £37,000 increase in superannuation, the employers' contributions increasing by 7%, and government funding was as yet unconfirmed. This issue was significant to the School, considering some staff were close to retirement age.

QUESTION: Is that the principal reason for the deficit?

ANSWER: Partly. The Business Manager had looked at projections of the budget last year and expenditure, incorporating the Head teacher's plans.

QUESTION: What does the Catering expense show?

ANSWER: £98,800 expense has to be shown, which is the £148,800 less £50,000 contribution expected from the City for Years 3 to 6.

QUESTION: Is the figure from the City not £72,000. Is only £50,000 to be received?

ANSWER: The City will contribute £3 per meal which does not cover the entire sum.

QUESTION: Are the City paying for Year 3-6?

ANSWER: Yes, but part of the difference is received in the form of Pupil Premium.

It was noted the Business Manager would tender for catering but as the contract exceeded half a million GBP, it required in-depth review.

QUESTION: Do teachers still do overtime?

ANSWER: This cost is partly in connection with supply teachers, and also because some teachers on old contracts do overtime for tutoring activities.

QUESTION: Can the old contracts be changed?

ANSWER: The contracts are not easy to change, but it is under consideration.

QUESTION: What is the furniture expenditure?

ANSWER: £5,000-6,000 has to be spent for tables and chairs for children in the bulge class.

QUESTION: The £17,000 cost for swimming appears high?

ANSWER: This includes swimming pool costs, for next year it will be for 90 children. It is indeed a substantial cost.

QUESTION: There was a discrepancy in E22 professional fees in the budget (£20,000 the previous year compared to £56,000 next year). What do the professional fees mean?

ACTION: Business manager to provide answer to governors on professional fees at the next Committee.

The Governors discussed the Strings Grant. The String Project Grant was originally a one-off grant but had been constantly renewed by the City. Last year the programme had been expanded to include Year 3. However, the School was now subsidising this project as music teachers' salaries were much greater than the grant. This was not sustainable in the long term. Unless the City was prepared to increase their contribution, the School would have to revisit the programme, possibly reversing its decision to expand provision to year 3.

QUESTION: Will the City increase the strings grant?

ACTION: CB will look into options for funding. A decision will be required soon to set expectations for the two classes entering year 3 in September.

QUESTION: Does the School require money for instruments?

ANSWER: No, the School has received funds from a grant from the Foundation which would allow instruments to be purchased. The School needs funds for the teacher's wages.

QUESTION: Could this represent a fundraising project?

ANSWER: As it is a long-term project, and part of the strategy of the School, this would not be very suitable as a fundraising project.

QUESTION: Who sets the charges for childcare?

ANSWER: The City sets charges and they have not been increased since 2014.

The governors noted a £23,000 deficit was predicted for CCFC.

ACTION: Business Manager and Headteacher to have further conversations and report back to the governors.

QUESTION: Was there a difference between budgets regarding childcare (CCFC) and the main school?

ANSWER: Yes, as this was the Local Authority budget. If it became overspent Theresa Shortland had to be notified. This was different to the School Budget.

The governors APPROVED the budget for CCFC and noted that the new school budget needed to be circulated. This would be considered again at its next meeting.

10.5 Key priorities for maintenance

It was noted the key priorities were in accordance with LDBS.

10.6 Agree delegated budget

It was noted the delegated budget could not be agreed, and this was delayed pending confirmation from DfE.

ACTION: It was noted that governors completing the business interest declarations was a statutory requirement, and a number of declarations were outstanding. The Clerk would send the Chair of Governors a list of governors whose business interests forms were outstanding. The Chair would remind everyone to send the completed forms to the clerk.

11. Income

As per the Business Manager's report.

11.1 Income Generation audit outcomes (December)

11.2 Debt recovery progress

The Dinner Money refunds were in progress.

CCFC write-offs

It was noted that debts will be written off for four parents, totalling in excess of £17,000, as a one-off write-off. The parents would be informed at a meeting and would be asked to sign an agreement that in future they would pay for services in advance, otherwise services would stop immediately. The School was conscious they were families with real need; and social services had historically been involved. The School felt that a clean slate would offer the families another chance, and benefit the children. The governors expressed some reservations, querying whether the School was confident the families could afford the service in the future.

ACTION: CB to send details of the Child Care Affordability scheme to the Business Manager.

ACTION: Business Manager will report on CCFC write-offs at the next Committee meeting.

The governors commended the development of issuing regular bills to parents.

11.3 Write offs/aged debt analysis

ACTION: Business Manager will circulate the analysis with the new budget figures at the next Committee meeting.

11.4 Review of Private Fund

It was noted that there had been no significant changes. The governors noted the monies received, and the grant approvals from the Sir John Cass's Foundation. The governors also expressed their thanks to the Foundation for the substantial grants.

ACTION: Business Manager proposed a review of School accounts to improve efficiency. Business Manager to prepare a list of all School accounts, with details pertaining to institutions, account signatories, sums, and proposed changes and submit to the next Finance Committee for approval.

11.5 Fundraising/Additional income update

The governors expressed their thanks to the donors for their contributions.

12. Premises Update

The governors noted the update as per the Business Manager's report, circulated ahead of the meeting, item 12.

It was noted that business cases had been submitted to the City for a number of projects. Some projects such as the boiler, library, and visitor system had had a significant impact on the School's finances. The governors noted the proposal to renovate the dining room and 2nd floor toilets, and that the proposal was approved by the Sir John Cass's Foundation.

The governors noted the Architects Fee proposals for the canopy. Following a procurement comparison the Business manager proposed to use Leadenhall PM, following strong recommendations from 3 other business managers and due to their high professionalism, price-effectiveness and expertise in working with listed buildings.

QUESTION: The proposal does not include the inside of the School?

ANSWER: The inside will be a necessary add-on.

The governors noted as this was a feasibility study, a design would be drawn up, and presented to the governors, the Foundation and City in due course.

QUESTION: Has the proposal been confirmed with the Foundation?

ANSWER: Yes.

13. Contracts Update

The governors noted the contracts under review, as per the Business Manager's report, item 13. It was noted that the Hygiene contract had been signed, and the Business Manager was working on Catering and Cleaning options to ensure savings.

14. (See the Confidential section of these minutes)

15. Update on Benchmarking Exercise

It was noted that the Business Manager (SBM) at Christchurch School had agreed to do an in year benchmarking exercise for 2019/2020.

16. Fire risk assessment update

As per the Business Manager's report.

It was noted the actions would be affected by the new budget but if money was available, the School wished to invest in fire doors and an upgrade to the fire alarm. This money would come from the Maintenance budget.

17. GDPR compliance

As per the Business Manager's report. The Business Manager would use BR's comments to produce an action plan ahead of the summer LDBS audit.

It was noted that almost all governors had been assigned School email addresses. All should make use of them for governance business, in line with GDPR.

The Clerk updated the governors on the possibility to access papers securely via the Hackney Learning Trust Box. All governors would be given access to the Box.

18. Policies

18.1 Whistleblowing: The policy was RATIFIED.

18.2 Lettings Policy

It was noted the policy would follow.

ACTION: Business Manager to submit the policy for review and ratification at the next FGB.

18.3 Risk Register

It was noted the risk register had operational areas only. The last version only contained the boiler, which had been replaced. The City held a risk register.

ACTION: Headteacher to locate 5 year plan which may include risks.

ACTION: Clerk to seek HLT guidance on appropriate risk template and circulate to Business Manager.

18.4 Debt Policy

It was noted the policy was seen at the last meeting. The policy was RATIFIED.

19. Any other business

The governors noted the areas of Education identified for the internal audit planning as per the Business manager's report (item 20). The governors RECOMMENDED focusing on school funding as the priority area for the audit.